NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT TRAINING DAY

TRAINING DAY Returns January 17, 2026!

NoVa District Training Day is an annual event designed to equip, encourage, and empower clergy and laity in their ministry. This year we will feature a special keynote address from **Dr. Ashley Boggan**, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History, on rediscovering our rooted holiness—faith acted out as love for all people, everywhere.

We are also excited to offer presentations on "AI Foundations — What It Is and Why It Matters" with **Jason Moore**, a tech leader and bestselling author at the forefront of integrating technology into ministry, and "The Four Pillars of Modern Worship Ministry" with **Faniel Pradel**, a music leader and presenter with the Institute for Modern Worship.

This year we offer **TWO** ways to engage with Training Day

In-Person Experience

Floris UMC, Herndon VA

Worship & Keynote Address

Workshops at 10 AM, 11:15, and 1:30 PM

Lunch Panel

Resource Kit

$50 Early Bird
(through Dec. 18)

$60 Regular
(Dec. 18 through Jan. 7)

Virtual Group Experience

Location of Your Choosing!

Livestreamed Worship & Keynote Presentations at 9 AM, 10 AM, and 11:15 AM

Resource Kit

$75
(Unlimited number of people)

** Only one person needs to register for the whole group

EVENT SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m. - Welcome & Worship
9:00 a.m. - Keynote (Ashley Boggan)
10:00 a.m - Workshop 1
11:15 a.m - Workshop 2
12:30 p.m. - Lunch with optional panel discussion
1:30 p.m. - Workshop 3
2:30 p.m. - Dismissal

REGISTRATION is **OPEN**!
novaumc.org/training_day

Keynote Presentations (Livestreamed & Recorded)

Welcome and Worship — 8:30 A.M.

We begin at 8:30 a.m. with welcome and worship. Doors open at 8:00 for gathering. The livestream will begin at 8:55. Virtual participants will receive instructions for accessing the livestream sessions and the Training Day Resource Kit.

"Wesleyan Vile-tality" — 9:00 A.M.

Dr. Ashley Boggan
General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History
Author of "Wesleyan Vile-tality: Reclaiming the Heart of Methodist Identity

"Wesleyan Vile-tality" reclaims the rebellious, love-driven spirit that gave birth to Methodism—John Wesley's willingness to "be more vile" by breaking convention, crossing boundaries, and taking God's love beyond church walls. Through vivid storytelling and historical insight, this keynote challenges modern United Methodists to revive that same courage: to risk comfort and reputation for justice, inclusion, and embodied grace. Ultimately, it calls the church to rediscover its rooted holiness—faith acted out as love for all people, everywhere.

AI Foundations — What It Is and Why It Matters — 10:00 A.M.

Jason Moore
Midnight Oil Productions

This session unpacks what AI actually is in clear, practical language and explains why the Church should thoughtfully embrace it. We'll explore the biblical and theological foundations that guide faithful innovation and discernment. Participants will get an accessible overview of today's AI tools — from chatbots to image generation — and how they fit into ministry.

The Four Pillars of Modern Worship Ministry — 11:15 A.M.

Faniel Pradel
The Institute for Modern Worship
Recruiting, equipping, and retaining local church leaders for fruitful ministry

In this workshop we will explore how the Institute for Modern Worship has uncovered what we believe are four foundational pillars of modern worship ministry in a United Methodist context. Wesleyan Theology (and lyrical theology), Worship Administration, Leadership Development, and Worship Artistry. Take a deeper look into the importance of each of these four pillars, and how you can help your worship ministry leaders thrive with the right resources and support in these four areas.

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WORKSHOP #1 10:00 AM

KEYNOTE: AI FOUNDATIONS — WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT MATTERS
Jason Moore, Midnight Oil Productions

This session unpacks what AI actually is in clear, practical language and explains why the Church should thoughtfully embrace it. We'll explore the biblical and theological foundations that guide faithful innovation and discernment. Participants will get an accessible overview of today's AI tools — from chatbots to image generation — and how they fit into ministry.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY FROM THE PULPIT: FAITH & POLITICS IN CONVERSATION (AND CONVERSION)
Rev. JP Hong, Christ Crossman UMC

There's a difference between being partisan and being political. Jesus wasn't partisan, but he was political. How we preach and hear the gospel week after week has the power to inform and transform our divisive partisanship into a deeper & inclusive politics shaped and informed by our shared agreement to following Jesus.

TALK LESS, STORY MORE
Rev. Katie Phillips, The Vine Church

Want to learn how to win hearts without power point (or three points and poem)? Jesus used stories to reveal deep truth, and you should too. Whether you're speaking from a stage or chatting over coffee, you'll learn how to craft personal, compelling narratives that connect hearts to the hope of Christ. No seminary degree required—just a passion for sharing the greatest story ever told.

THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE ON FAITH FORMATION
Jennifer Secki Shields, Founder, Discovery & Faith

Perceptions of conflict between faith and science contribute to the loss of 60% of our youth from both the church and the Christian faith. This workshop will discuss how those perceptions impair faith formation. We'll explore practical approaches and solutions to this challenge that can be implemented within your existing ministries and budget. Participants will be equipped and resourced to help their students of all ages experience a better, healthier understanding of the faith-science relationship.

RECLAIMING WESLEYAN DISCIPLESHIP
Rev. Don Jamison, Sydenstricker UMC

Using resources from Wesley, Schnase, Kotan and Maynard to name a few, this workshop will lay a foundation in how to reclaim a culture of discipleship for the local church. Sharing techniques that have successfully grown discipleship in the local church, Pastor Don opens the window in how to reclaim this important ministry of the church.

TELLING THE STORY: HOW NARRATIVE BUDGETS INSPIRE VISION, GENEROSITY, AND ENGAGEMENT
Rev. Tim Hazlett and Doreen Nkrumah, Andrew Chapel UMC

Narrative Budgets transform the way churches communicate ministry impact beyond traditional line-item spreadsheets to tell the story of your congregation's mission, discipleship, worship, outreach, and care. Learn what a Narrative Budget is and why it matters; how to translate financial categories into ministry stories; best practices for gathering information, visuals, and testimonies; strengthen stewardship, deepen engagement, and align with a church's vision; and steps to introduce a Narrative Budget to your church.

SUSTAINING CHILDREN'S MINISTRY WITHOUT HIRED STAFF
Kay Hwang, Children's Ministry Leader

Does your church have children but no children's leaders? Do you have children but can't afford to bring someone on staff? Qualified children's ministry directors are increasingly difficult to find. This workshop will demonstrate how your church can still develop a self-sustaining and growing children's ministry without the need for hired staff.

WORKSHOP #1 10:00 AM

GRACE IN EVERY LYRIC: LYRICAL THEOLOGY FOR MODERN WORSHIP
Faniel Pradel, Area Coordinator, The Institute for Modern Worship

In this workshop we will explore how the Institute for Modern Worship is guiding church leaders toward leading and writing songs that SING our theology. We will take a deep dive into some of the hymns of the past, and how we can better curate and design worship experiences and song sets that support and align with our theology as Wesleyan rooted United Methodists.

YOUTH MINISTRY TODAY: WHAT MATTERS MOST
Chris Sasser, Consultant, Ministry Architects

In an increasingly complicated world, today's teenagers are often anxious, confused, and trying to sort out what they really believe. As adults, we can easily get distracted by things that don't actually move the needle of faith and may not matter nearly as much as we think they do. In this conversation, we'll focus on a few key priorities that anyone working with the next generation needs to embrace in order to build an effective ministry that truly shapes lives.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: SESSION ONE
Rev. Scott Hopkins, Clarendon UMC

Accompany trained Spiritual Director Scott Hopkins and discover spiritual direction. This prayer-centered practice can help you become more aware of God's presence in your daily life and grow in spiritual freedom. Session One will focus on Silence & Intentionality.

ALL CALLED: PATHWAYS OF FORMATION AND SERVICE
Rev. Tianna Durbin (Arcola UMC) and Tom Feeney (District Lay Leader)

In the United Methodist tradition, we believe every follower of Christ is called—every story, every gift, every voice matters. We'll explore how to recognize the gifts already within you and how to discern where Christ may be leading you next. Together, we'll walk through several pathways of formation and service to help you understand what each one offers and which might align with the call God is stirring in you. We welcome both clergy and laity to attend!

MISSION CONNECTIONS: WHAT'S OUT THERE, PARTNERING LOCALLY, CONNECTING GLOBALLY
Revs. Phil Mohr (Centreville UMC), Nilse Furtado-Gilliam (Clarendon UMC), and Nancy Robinson (Virginia Conference)

This interactive session walks through three elements of the mission landscape: 1) Developing a database of resources to understand what churches in your region are doing in the missions area and what resources are available; 2) Exploring ways to partner with other churches to carry out local mission work; and 3) Connecting with other churches to launch mission efforts across the US and the world.

GROWING TOGETHER: INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRIES THAT BEAR FRUIT
Hannah Bryn, Director of Intergenerational Formation, Virginia Conference

This course, appropriate for ministry leaders committed to intergenerational spiritual formation in local churches and communities, will provide both an overview and theological grounding on intergenerational ministries as well as space for practical application and contextual workshopping. During this course, learnings and resources from the Hatching Faith Initiative will be shared.

WORKSHOP #2 11:15 AM

KEYNOTE: THE FOUR PILLARS OF MODERN WORSHIP MINISTRY

Faniel Pradel, Area Coordinator, The Institute for Modern Worship

In this workshop we will explore how the Institute for Modern Worship has uncovered what we believe are four the foundational pillars of modern worship ministry in a United Methodist context. Wesleyan Theology (and lyrical theology), Worship Administration, Leadership Development, and Worship Artistry. Take a deeper look into the importance of each of these four pillars, and how you can help your worship ministry leaders thrive with the right resources and support in these four areas.

BUILDING SPIRITUAL STRENGTH & FORTITUDE

Rev. Leigh Anne Taylor, Director of Connecting Ministry, Virginia Conference

United Methodists are people of prayer who've done mighty works through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This workshop will offer an exploration of spiritual practices for the body, mind, heart, and soul that build spiritual strength and fortitude for the works that God is calling us to do today.

VALUES-CENTERED DIRECTION

Rev. Jonathan Page, Director, Lewis Center for Church Leadership

For most of the late 20th and early 21st century, effective strategic planning in churches has been directed by statements of mission and vision. As we adapt to a post-COVID, post-disaffiliation mindset, what would it look like to center the values of a church, in their different forms, as the sourcing for directing the future of the church? In this session, we'll look at the four types of values introduced by Patrick Lencioni in The Advantage and talk about how to define these with a congregation and implement them for present and future purposes.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: SESSION TWO

Rev. Scott Hopkins, Clarendon UMC

Accompany trained Spiritual Director Scott Hopkins and discover spiritual direction. This prayer-centered practice can help you become more aware of God's presence in your daily life and grow in spiritual freedom. Session Two will compare and contrast centering prayer in the Ignatian examen.

"I ROSE, WENT FORTH, AND FOLLOWED THEE": A WESLEYAN WAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Rev. Matt Benton, Messiah UMC

Making disciples for Jesus Christ is our mission, but how? This session will look at John Wesley's experience of salvation and discipleship, mapped onto his understanding of grace, to discuss how churches today might announce the Good News that our chains have fallen off, we've been set free and we are called to rise, go forth, and follow Christ in the world.

GOD'S CREATION IS IN CRISIS! HOW WILL WE AS UNITED METHODISTS RESPOND?

Karen McElfish, President of the Virginia Conference UWF & Rev. Ellen Comstock, Retired Elder in the Virginia Conference, Clergy co-chair of Virginia Conference Board of Church and Society

Together we explore Creation Care as a Biblical mandate, historical and current United Methodist positions from John Wesley's thoughts to our Social Principles, actions of the General Conference, and recent statements from the Council of Bishops. What actions shall we take? What resources are available? Learn about the Virginia Conference Green Church Initiative, the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement, and more!

THE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY: TURNING WHAT WE BELIEVE INTO HOW WE BE-LIVING

Rev. JP Hong, Christ Crossman UMC

A practical theology is a practiced theology. The good news? Jesus demonstrates what a practiced life of radical inclusion can look like. The bad news? It'll get you crucified.

WORKSHOP #2 11:15 AM

WESLEYAN VILE-TALITY
Dr. Ashley Boggan, General Secretary of the General Commission on Archives and History

"Wesleyan Vile-tality" reclaims the rebellious, love-driven spirit that gave birth to Methodism—John Wesley's willingness to "be more vile" by breaking convention, crossing boundaries, and taking God's love beyond church walls. Through vivid storytelling and historical insight, this session challenges modern United Methodists to revive that same courage: to risk comfort and reputation for justice, inclusion, and embodied grace. Ultimately, it calls the church to rediscover its rooted holiness—faith acted out as love for all people, everywhere.

FROM INSIGHT TO IMPACT: FORMING TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WITH MISSIONINSITE
Rev. William T. Chaney, Jr., St. Stephen's UMC

This workshop will show how MissionInsite can reveal the real story of your community—its people, needs, strengths, and emerging opportunities—so your church can build partnerships that truly matter. Participants will learn how to translate demographic and lifestyle insights into community collaboration strategies that reflect Wesleyan missional theology and lead to meaningful disciple-making. By integrating data with Spirit-led discernment, churches can move from assumptions to actionable impact and form partnerships that transform neighborhoods and congregations alike.

AI IN ACTION & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
Jason Moore, Midnight Oil Productions

In this hands-on workshop, we'll walk step-by-step through building a sermon series, creating graphics, and using AI tools that support communication, worship, and administration. Alongside the demos, we'll explore the limitations, blind spots, and ethical concerns that come with AI in ministry. Participants will leave with both inspiration and a grounded understanding of responsible use.

[KOREAN LANGUAGE] HOW TO CULTIVATE LEADERSHIP
Rev. Hodae Kim, Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington

This workshop will be presented in Korean
This workshop will explore how to cultivate leadership amid change and the ongoing demands of ministry.

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WORKSHOP #3 1:30 PM

FRESH EXPRESSIONS & BLENDED ECOLOGY
Revs. Daniel (Restoration UMC) & Isaiah Park (Path 1, Discipleship Ministries)

In this workshop, Daniel and Isaiah Park will guide participants through the key steps of launching Fresh Expressions that extend the church's presence into the local community while strengthening the life of the inherited church. Participants will learn how to cultivate a blended ecology of church, where traditional and innovative forms of Christian community thrive together, expanding the health, reach, and missional impact of the local church. Discover practical tools, real-world examples, and a hopeful vision for growing vibrant, Christ-centered communities in new spaces and among new people.

YOUTH MINISTRY TODAY: WHAT MATTERS MOST
Chris Sasser, Consultant, Ministry Architects

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CULTIVATING COLLABORATIVE CONNECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY
Rev. Gayle Porias, Cokesbury UMC

Who do we connect with in the community? How do we cultivate these connections for ministry in the community? What does collaboration look like?

COMMUNICATING WHO YOU ARE IN A DIGITAL LANDSCAPE
Dylan Nichols & Rebeca Ervin, Northern Virginia District Staff

In an age where connection happens at the tap of a screen, the church has a powerful opportunity to extend its mission beyond the walls of the building. This workshop explores how to authentically communicate who *you* are, and how digital communication can help congregations reach people where *they* are, build deeper relationships, and share the Gospel with clarity and consistency.

JUST NEIGHBORS – IMMIGRATION HAPPENINGS AND RESPONSE
Erin McKenney, Executive Director, Just Neighbors

Immigration rules and enforcement are shifting rapidly. Erin McKenney, Executive Director of Just Neighbors, will share an up-to-date overview of recent policy changes and enforcement trends. She will also discuss Just Neighbors' work and response, and offer guidance on how churches and individuals can support immigrants in their communities, advocate effectively, and engage with Just Neighbors' mission.

10 WAYS TO USE AI IN THE CHURCH & THE AI SANDBOX
Jason Moore, Midnight Oil Productions

We'll explore ten practical, proven ways churches of all sizes are using AI to enhance mission, hospitality, discipleship, communication, and creativity. After that, the group will jump into an "AI Sandbox," experimenting together with tools that can immediately support their ministries. This session is designed to spark imagination, build confidence, and help leaders discover what's possible.

WORKSHOP #3 1:30 PM

THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE ON FAITH FORMATION
Jennifer Secki Shields, Founder, Discovery & Faith

Perceptions of conflict between faith and science contribute to the loss of 60% of our youth from both the church and the Christian faith. This workshop will discuss how those perceptions impair faith formation. We'll explore practical approaches and solutions to this challenge that can be implemented within your existing ministries and budget. Participants will be equipped and resourced to help their students of all ages experience a better, healthier understanding of the faith-science relationship.

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SPIRITUAL PRACTICES: SESSION THREE
Rev. Scott Hopkins, Clarendon UMC

Accompany trained Spiritual Director Scott Hopkins and discover spiritual direction. This prayer-centered practice can help you become more aware of God's presence in your daily life and grow in spiritual freedom. Session Three will compare and contrast *lectio divina* and imaginative prayer.

LUNCHTIME DISCUSSION (optional)

12:30 P.M.

In-person participants at Floris UMC will have the option of dining on your own or attending a Lunchtime Panel on the following topic:

The mission of all our churches is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. This panel of lay leaders from across the District will share stories about innovative projects they have launched to evangelize, make better use of their buildings, and forge connections with people who don't yet know Jesus.