

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **The Northern Virginia District Awards \$2 Million in Infrastructure Grants to 11 Churches**

The Northern Virginia District is pleased to announce the recipients of the first-ever District Infrastructure Grants. These grants, made possible through the sale of district property, are designed to empower congregations to expand their ministry capacity by investing in key capital projects or reducing existing capital debt.

A total of **56 churches** applied for funding, requesting **nearly \$10 million** in grants. Recognizing the depth of need and the diversity of ministries represented, the District Strategy Team (DST) faced the difficult challenge of narrowing the field. With only **\$2 million allocated**, the DST ultimately awarded grants to **11 churches**, ensuring that each funded project could be fully realized from start to finish.

While it was deeply difficult not to fund every worthy application, the decision to fund these 11 projects was guided by a desire to ensure successful, completed outcomes. Spreading the funds across all applicants would have left many projects incomplete or unviable. Instead, this approach enables impactful transformation at 11 churches, each of which is contributing **at least 15% in matching resources**, collectively committing over **\$4.1 million** toward their projects.

### **The recipients of the 2025 Infrastructure Grants are:**

- Arlington Korean UMC
- Bethel UMC (Woodbridge)
- Burke UMC
- Crossroads UMC
- Floris UMC
- Friendship UMC
- Grace UMC
- Mount Vernon UMC.
- Oakton UMC
- Saint Stephen's UMC
- Trinity UMC (Alexandria)

These churches represent a cross-section of our district, including **five large churches**, **four medium churches**, and **two small churches**. Among them is **one ethnic congregation**.

Projects receiving funding include: complete electrical rewiring of a church facility; renovation and upgrade of a church kitchen; sanctuary renovations including lighting, HVAC, carpet, painting, and accessibility improvements; a capital campaign aimed at reducing debt and supporting five mission initiatives; renovation of fellowship and education spaces including restrooms; installation of a new elevator to improve accessibility; infrastructure upgrades including HVAC replacement, A/V system installation, parking lot resurfacing, and signage improvements; replacement of 14 aging HVAC units; execution of a six-project capital improvement plan; construction of a secure, ADA- and code-compliant entryway; and the elimination of church debt to support food-based mission and future capital improvements.

Through this initiative, the District hopes to support congregations in living more fully into their missional calling by reducing financial burdens and investing in their physical infrastructure. Projects are expected to be completed by the end of the 2025–2026 Conference year. The first \$1 million is being distributed to churches so they can begin work. The remaining \$1 million will be distributed in stages in September 2025; March 2026; and June 2026, upon receipt of progress reports.

## **About the Grant Program**

The Infrastructure Grant Program was developed by the Northern Virginia District Strategy Team to strengthen churches by enhancing ministry spaces, improving accessibility, completing capital renovations, or reducing debt. All projects funded through this grant are expected to demonstrate a strong missional focus, a clear picture of the congregation's viability and sustainability, and a measurable benefit to the local community. Applications were limited to churches within the District and required at least 15% matching support from the congregation.

## **Review Process**

Applications were evaluated by a team of seven reviewers — three clergy and four lay persons — including members of the DST and other leaders recruited for this specific task. Each application was reviewed by at least two reviewers, with churches randomly assigned and then the list examined to ensure no reviewer assessed their own congregation or any with which they had close personal ties. Reviewers only saw the applications they were assigned.

The evaluation process included a detailed scoring system focused on application completeness, project clarity, eligibility, financial planning, and congregational support. Churches were assessed on nine components, including submission of a detailed work plan, letters of support, and a congregational self-study. Applications needed a score of at least 90% in order to be considered for full funding. Final awards were determined by the full Grant Review Team following a collaborative review of top-scoring applications and were affirmed by the District Superintendent and District Strategy Team.

## **A Difficult Decision, A Hopeful Future**

This grant award represents an exciting new chapter in the life of our district, as churches invest boldly in their futures and deepen their commitment to sharing God's love in tangible, transformative ways.

While not every application could be funded, the District Strategy Team is deeply grateful for the visionary leadership and faithful ministry each applicant represents. These 56 churches are a powerful testament to the vitality and creativity thriving across Northern Virginia. We encourage churches that did not receive funding to build on the work put into their applications by exploring other grant opportunities within the denomination and beyond. We celebrate all that is being made possible through this investment and trust that the work begun here will continue to ripple outward—blessing communities and advancing the mission of the Church in meaningful and lasting ways.

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## **About the Northern Virginia District:**

The Northern Virginia District of The United Methodist Church partners with, equips, and resources local churches to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. With a vision to inspire fruitful disciple-making in local communities, the district supports congregations in pursuing faithful and innovative ministry across Northern Virginia.

