

Chamber Event Hosting Guide

What is a Connect Gathering?

Connect gatherings are the Virginia Christian Chamber's regular networking events designed to help Christian business leaders build meaningful relationships, strengthen community, and grow together in the marketplace.

These gatherings are intentionally relational and interactive. During each Connect, we typically include:

- Member introductions
- Networking and relationship building
- Short breakout sessions and discussions
- Chamber updates and announcements
- Encouragement, collaboration, and connection

Connect gatherings are not formal conferences or sales presentations. They are designed to create authentic connection within the Christian business community throughout your city and region.

What a Host Can Expect

As a Connect host, here's what you can expect from your experience:

- Provide the venue or meeting space for the gathering
- Allow space for networking, introductions, and discussion
- Provide light refreshments, coffee, snacks, or lunch
- Share briefly about your business, story, mission, or marketplace impact (10-12 minutes)
- Be recognized and promoted by the Chamber as the event host

Host Benefit & Promotion

Hosting a Connect gathering is an exclusive Chamber member benefit and provides approximately \$350 in marketing value.

We actively promote your business before, during, and after the event through:

- Chamber email marketing
- Social media promotion

- Event announcements
- Host recognition during the gathering
- Exposure both within and beyond the Chamber community

We begin sharing and social media promotion on the Monday before your Connect, and a recap and highlight post on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook after the event. We also send a newsletter to our full database (members and non-members) inviting them to your Connect, and a recap newsletter goes out after your Connect meeting.

Hosting positions your business as a connector and leader within the Christian business community while introducing your company to a broader audience throughout your city and region.

As an additional host benefit, attendee lists are shared with the host following the event. This benefit is exclusive to the member host and is not distributed to other attendees.

Event Details

Schedule

- Connect gatherings are always held on Fridays
- Event Time: 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM
- Optional networking may continue afterward until approximately 2:00 PM
- Chamber staff and volunteers typically arrive around 11:30 AM for setup

Attendance

Most Connect gatherings typically gather approximately 20–30 attendees.

Location

Connect gatherings are typically hosted at the member's office or business location.

If you do not currently have a suitable office or meeting space, we can help coordinate an alternative location for you to host.

Connect Agenda and flow of meeting

The Virginia Christian Chamber team facilitates and runs the overall event. Our team handles:

- Welcome and prayer
- Introductions
- Teaching and discussion prompts
- Breakout conversations
- Membership recognition

- Closing prayer and networking

The Chamber team also manages event flow and timing, networking facilitation, member introductions, breakout sessions, Chamber announcements, and general coordination.

Our goal is to make the experience smooth, welcoming, relational, and valuable for both the host and attendees.

Typical Connect Gathering Flow

A typical Connect gathering lasts about 90 minutes and usually includes:

- Networking and relationship building
- A short host spotlight or featured conversation
- Community introductions
- Interactive breakout discussion and prayer
- Chamber updates and opportunities for engagement

The atmosphere is intentionally relational, encouraging, and Kingdom-focused — designed to help Christian business leaders build authentic relationships, gain encouragement, and grow in their marketplace ministry.

What Hosts Should Expect

Hosts should expect:

- Business leaders, entrepreneurs, executives, and professionals from the region
- A conversational and welcoming environment rather than a highly formal event
- Opportunities for visibility and relationship building for their business or organization
- The Chamber team handling facilitation and structure

Host Spotlight Opportunity

As the host, you will receive approximately 15 minutes during the gathering to share about:

- Your business
- What makes your company unique
- Why you started it
- Your mission and story
- Current projects, opportunities, or initiatives

This gives attendees an opportunity to better understand your company, connect with your story, and learn how they may support, refer, or collaborate with you moving forward.

Host Responsibilities

Venue Space

Hosts provide a welcoming environment where attendees can comfortably network and connect.

Food & Refreshments

Hosts provide food and refreshments for attendees. This does not need to be a full catered meal, but we do encourage something more substantial than simple coffee and cookies whenever possible.

Examples may include:

- Sandwich trays
- Pizza
- Wraps
- Finger foods
- Charcuterie
- Light lunch items
- Drinks and refreshments

Promotion

Hosts are encouraged to:

- Invite guests and colleagues
- Share the event registration link
- Help spread awareness within their network

Chairs & Room Setup

Formal seating arrangements are not necessary. In fact, attendees are often more engaged when standing and moving throughout the room rather than sitting classroom-style.

We recommend:

- A few chairs available if needed
- Minimal tables for food or materials
- Open space that encourages conversation and interaction

What We Need From You

To help us properly prepare and promote your Connect gathering, we ask for the following: (not all items are needed but helpful)

- Business name
- Business logo
- Address / location details
- Primary contact person
- Short business description or bio
- Photos of the space or business
- Parking instructions (if applicable)
- Social media links
- Any announcements, offers, or initiatives you would like highlighted

Contact Information

For further questions regarding hosting a Connect gathering, please contact:

covachristianchamber@gmail.com

Our Goal

The goal of Connect gatherings is simple: to create consistent environments where Christian business leaders can build relationships, strengthen one another, collaborate, and help shape the future of their city and region through faith-driven leadership in the marketplace.