

In this issue.



15 commissioned, ordained
Billy Keith Stewart was among three elders and 15 people total who were commissioned or ordained this year. See Page 7.



2024 separation funds
Conference trustees announce where funds from 112 2024 separating churches will be dispersed. See Page 3.



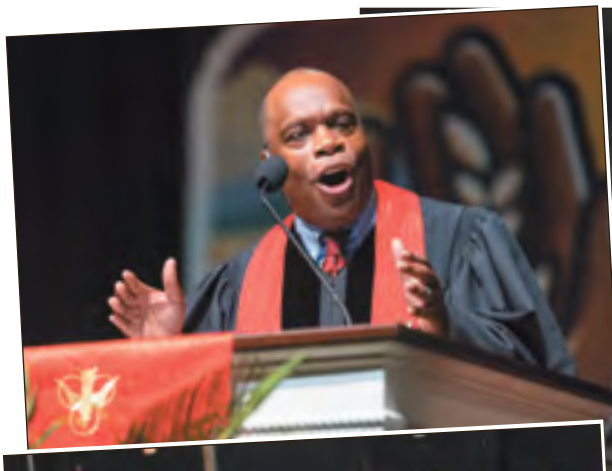
Called special session
Bishop Fairley called a special session of Annual Conference Oct. 18 to vote on Jeremiah Team recommendations. See Page 2.

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Sowing seeds

AC2025 brings passage of \$10.3M budget, called special session, voting on constitutional amendments



Photos by Matt Brodie

Clockwise from top left, Bishop Leonard Fairley leads opening worship. Juana Slade of St. Marks UMC Choir, Taylor, lifts her voice in praise and worship. Voters weigh in on a decision. Conference Secretary Mel Arant, Fairley and Parliamentarian Kay Crowe consider a matter. A youth delegate throws a stress ball during the session with a slogan reminding us the world will know we are Christians by our love.

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—With a call for the people of God to take holy risk and plant seeds of Christ's hope even when they can't see the outcome, Bishop Leonard Fairley brought an opening word for South Carolina's 54th session of Annual Conference centered on promise and perseverance.

"We've had some dark clouds over the horizon, difficult moments, valley moments, mountains that we've had to climb, rivers we've had to forge," Fairley preached to a chorus of applause and amens in his first sermon to delegates of the South Carolina Annual Conference. "But people of God, I tell you today: Gird up your loins, find your courage and plant new seeds of hope."

First reading John 12:24 and then reciting the lyrics of "Hymn of Promise" by Natalie Sleeth, which lifts up how a flower comes from a bulb and an apple tree from a tree, Fairley shared how sometimes we cannot even imagine what is to come. But God sees and knows, and we must trust that if we plant and sow the seeds, God will bring fruit somehow and some way.

Fairley shared the story of an old farmer sitting on the steps of his hut,

chewing on straw. A passing stranger approached and asked how the cotton crop was doing. But the farmer explained he didn't plant cotton or corn or anything else, fearful of the boll weevil and all the other things that could go wrong.

"I just played it safe," said the farmer.

"Friends, this is my prayer: that we are not afraid to sow the seeds of possibility, not afraid to plant the seeds of hope and love," Fairley said. "I pray at this annual conference we will find the courage to take holy risk, and I hope we don't become like the farmer afraid to plant a crop."

And with that, Annual Conference began. Held June 8-11 at the Greenville Convention Center, the four-day gathering saw passage of a \$10.3 million budget, commissioning and ordination of 15, voting on four constitutional amendments, passage of five new resolutions and one conference motion, celebration of 52 departed saints and the announcement of a called special session to review recommendations from the four Jeremiah Teams, which are tasked to assess and transform the conference.

Sunday celebrates 15 clergy, honors 32 retirees

Annual Conference kicked off Sunday, June 8, with a Commissioning, Ordination and Retirement Recognition Service. Presided and preached by Fairley, the evening ordained three full elders, ordained one full deacon, commissioned eight as provisional elders, commissioned two as provisional deacons and recognized the orders of one who was previously ordained in another denomination and is now a full member of the South Carolina Annual Conference. It also recognized 32 retiring clergy. (See article, Page 7.)

Monday: Resolutions, motions

Worship was also the start to Monday's full day of business. Fairley preached an opening worship service, then called the 54th session of Annual Conference to order.

This year's Annual Conference embraced the theme "See the Possibilities, the Promise of a Seed," drawing from Jeremiah 29:5-7. In addition to greetings, organizational motions and the consent calendar, Monday saw a

See "Sowing Seeds," Page 11



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Bishop calls Oct. 18 special session on Jeremiah Team recommendations

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—South Carolina United Methodists will see a virtual called special session of Annual Conference Oct. 18 at 9 a.m. to review recommendations from the four Jeremiah Teams.

Created by Bishop Leonard Fairley in November, the four Jeremiah Teams are tasked to assess and then transform how the conference is structured, how it operates and how it aligns with its stated priorities.

What are the UMCSC’s Jeremiah Teams?
The four teams are Missional Priorities, Strategy for the Black Church and Ethnic Ministries, District Alignment and Conference Staff Alignment.

The teams arose out of a desire for the conference to not only survive after a season of church separations and division but to thrive and do God’s work in a better way. “We have learned through this difficult season that the next faithful steps we are called to make will not be easy, but they will be full of God’s great possibility,” Fairley said when the teams were created, noting they will position South Carolina United Methodists to



Bishop Fairley calls a special session of Annual Conference Oct. 18.



Smith



Friday



Mitchell

live more meaningfully, nimbly, connectionally and practically. “The season we are currently living in calls for and affords us a unique opportunity for resetting, renewing a resilient course as we journey toward the future God has promised,” Fairley said. The Jeremiah Teams’ exact recommendations are not yet known, but at October’s special session, the body will be voting on whatever recommendations the teams bring

forward, including possibly reducing the number of districts in South Carolina.

What do the teams do?
The Missional Priorities Team, led by the Rev. Millie Nelson Smith, is evaluating the effectiveness of all current ministries and missions to help determine what things are essential for the conference to live into its stated priorities, including identifying a stop-do list to free the con-

ference to reach new people in new places and in new ways. The Black Church & Ethnic Ministries Strategy Jeremiah Team, led by the Rev. James Friday, is working to create and resource an effective conference strategy for strengthening the Black church and other ethnic ministries, focusing on new things God is calling for in these areas.

The District Alignment Jeremiah Team, led by the Rev. Cathy Mitchell, is reviewing district lines to recommend a reduction in the number of districts to create a more nimble, cost-effective structure that will allow district superintendents to spend more time as missional strategists with the people in their communities. The Conference Staff Alignment Jeremiah Team, led by Bishop Fairley, is examining the best ways to align conference staff with missional priorities and resources, to compensate staff properly for their work and leadership and to create space for staff to be creative and imaginative in their work. Anyone who has questions about the Jeremiah Teams is asked to email mat@umcsc.org, and their information will be shared with the appropriate team.

Youth delegates add voice, vote to AC2025

By Allison Trussell
GREENVILLE—A call went out, and youth from around the state answered. Eleven youth represented their churches during Annual Conference 2025 as a newly created Youth Delegation, and they discovered several more youth delegates upon their arrival. “Many see youth as the church of tomorrow,” said Chris Lynch, congregational specialist for South Carolina Ministries with Young People. “In reality, they are the church of today, and their voice needs to be heard.”

Ann Aiken, a delegate from Trinity UMC, North Myrtle Beach, agreed. “I want to take [what I’ve learned] back to my youth group. Being here shows everyone ... we are the now of the church and we have a voice.” Referring to 1 Timothy 4:12, Jolie Tandy, also of Trinity, said it was important that youth voices be heard. “Youth can prove ourselves to be equal even through we’re younger.” Others noted youth often bring a different and fresh perspective and want to advocate for themselves and other youth. “It’s important for the youth of the church community to be able to express their opinions on matters that affect them,” said Jetson Skelton, Lee Road UMC, Greenville. “Being able to have a voice, just like everyone else, is the most valuable part of being able to go to conference. Zyaire Kerr, The Brook UMC, Myrtle Beach, concurred, saying, “It’s important to help out and see the impact we have



Youth delegates present Bishop Leonard Fairley with a Spartanburgers hat during Annual Conference.

on the churches and vote for what we see fit.” SCMYP rolled out the Annual Conference Youth Delegate program this year to bring younger voices to the table and enable them to participate in Annual Conference. Youth delegates were in addition to their church’s regular delegates. Training for the program took place in March and April. The delegation sat together and participated throughout the week. On her fourth trip to Annual Conference, Annabelle Mowbray, Dacusville UMC, Dacusville, said this was the first time she’d been engaged in the activity. “It’s important for the future to know how to vote and do other things there. It’s changed me because it’s a way to be involved and engaged in my community and state.” While the youth are involved in their home churches, few of them had knowledge of how the Annual Conference and

the Conference as a whole works. “I didn’t really know what was going on [in the conference/UMC] before coming to Annual Conference,” said Laynee Lamont, Conway First UMC, Conway. “It’s great to see what’s happening!” Still others recognized the importance of this experience in their future faith journey. “Being part of these discussions helps us learn, grow and prepare to take on leadership roles in the future,” said Lelia Nelson, Wesley UMC, Hartsville. The youth fully participated in the conference, tossing stress balls to other delegates, speaking before the conference, going to the Spartanburgers baseball game and even giving Bishop Leonard Fairley a Spartanburgers hat on Wednesday. The SCMYP delegation were Annabelle Mowbray; Jolie Tandy; Sophie Phillips and Becca White, Trinity UMC, Blythewood; Jetson Skelton; Laynee Lamont; Ruth Ann Humphries, Church of the Covenant, Spartanburg; Ann Aiken; Zyaire Kerr; and Leila Nelson and Lorelai Knotts, Wesley UMC, Hartsville. Adult chaperones were Emma Rivers, Trinity UMC, Fountain Inn; Jeffrey Tadlock, Wesley UMC, Hartsville; and Joseph Patton, Francis Burns UMC, Columbia. All agreed they would be seeking more delegates for next year’s conference. “On behalf of this group,” said Patton, “We’d like to thank y’all for sowing seeds of possibilities and encouragement that you’ve given this group.”

Annual Conference.

Dispersement of 2024 separation fees announced

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—One year after 112 churches left the South Carolina Conference, United Methodists got to hear where their separation fees will be dispersed.

Conference trustees offered Annual Conference a detailed report sharing where the funds would go. Given during their report on the last day of Annual Conference, the announcement saw one amendment to the fund distribution that received much debate but was ultimately defeated.

“We have sought to uphold sacred trust and fiduciary responsibility, holding ourselves to what it means to be Christian and to the Wesleyan standard to do no harm, do good and stay in love with God,” said Trustees Chair Shannon Bullion told the body, noting that with funds from the 225 separations, they have worked hard to do many good things.

What are separation fees?

Separation fees were those fees paid by the 112 churches that separated in 2024 (and 113 in 2023) from the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. The separation process has now ended as the UMC Judicial Council ruled that conferences could no longer use *Discipline* Para. 2549 to allow churches to separate.

As part of the 2023 and 2024 separation process, each church agreed to certain financial obligations, including a tithe equal to 10 percent of the appraised value of all church property and liquid assets; all unpaid apportionment giving for the prior year, as well as for the year of closure up to the date of the Annual Conference vote to close the church; an additional 12 months of apportionment giving; all unpaid salary and benefits for clergy appointed to the church; a withdrawal liability equal to the church’s proportional share of any unfunded pension obligations; and satisfaction or transference of other financial considerations and legal liabilities of the local church, such as the disposition of any debts, loans, leases, endowments, foundations and cemeteries.

The 113 churches that separated in 2023 also had to do the same. (For where those funds went, read <https://advocatesc.org/articles/2023-separating-church-funds>.)

Where are the 2024 fees going?

The trustees reported in their addendum that the 2024 separating churches paid \$12.1 million in separation fees.

Of that \$12.1 million:

Trustees approved the disbursement of approximately \$2.2 million for 2024 and 2025 apportionments, \$27,306 for unpaid direct bill balances and \$42,742 for unfunded pension liability.

Trustees also set aside approximately \$4.5 million for its litigation fund, noting 56 churches are seeking



Trustees Chair Shannon Bullion shares where the 2024 church separation fees will be dispersed.

to separate from UMC and are in litigation with the conference. Combined with funds from 2023 separating churches, this will bring the total available for litigation expenses to \$6 million.

Trustees set aside \$1 million for its operating fund, as they recently paid about \$1 million of outstanding mortgages on church properties it received in the last 12 months through an interim closure.

Trustees set aside about \$800,000 to continue the payment of compensation and benefits for displaced pastors (displaced pastors are those serving a church that has entered litigation with the conference but the pastor is remaining with the UMC).

Trustees granted the remaining approximately \$3.5 million to the Cabinet for their Hope Fund with the request that the Cabinet use 75 percent of the funds to assist BIPOC congregations with no matching requirement and use the remaining 25 percent to assist congregations as they deem appropriate. (BIPOC is an acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Color.)

Trustees will invest a portion of the funds it holds in Wespath’s Short Term Investment Fund.

“Every church in the conference has benefitted in some way from these monies,” Bullion shared.

Bullion also noted that the litigation fund not only covers the 56 churches in litigation with the conference but also the unresolved Boy Scouts litigation.

Amendment proposed, rejected

While trustees had specified that 75 percent of the \$3.5 million going to the Cabinet’s Hope Fund would go to BIPOC congregations as determined by the Cabinet, Dr. Reginald Lee offered an amendment to this plan.

Lee proposed that the funds would instead be deposited with the Office of Congregational Develop-

ment, with a grant approval process to include standard application and interviews and with decisions made by South Carolina Black Methodists for Church Renewal, Congregational Development, the Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee and the Committee on the Status and Role of Women.

“We believe minority self-determination is an extremely important part of the new United Methodist Church,” Lee said. “We need an opportunity to do things and make decisions for ourselves.”

Several spoke both for and against the amendment.

The Rev. Stephen Taylor, who opposed the amendment, said the conference already has a very good office of Congregational Development that’s doing what this motion calls for.

“I don’t see the need for another group to do what we’re already doing,” he said. “It seems like we’re fragmenting the church instead of working to improve unity.”

Joseph James proposed a friendly amendment, requesting that the funds go to the BIPOC committee of the conference.

But Bishop Fairley confirmed there is no BIPOC committee, so the friendly amendment was deemed out of order.

The Rev. Matthew Alexander proposed the funds be held with Connectional Ministries instead of Congregational Development, but that was not approved.

The Lee original amendment also failed.

BIPOC committee to help guide Cabinet

After the amendment was defeated, Fairley noted he would name a group of BIPOC individuals to work with the Cabinet to make decisions on the grant distribution.

With that, the trustees report as a whole was approved.



Dr. Reginald Lee proposes an amendment regarding the fee distribution.

Service helps body surrender grief after separations, move toward hope

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—The last several years have been a difficult season in the life of the church, from strife over theological differences about homosexuality to the loss of more 225 churches in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

On the final day of the 2025 Annual Conference, the body took steps to heal with A Service of Lament to Hope led by Bishop Leonard Fairley. The service honored the pain experienced by many over division and grief in separation.

“The last several years have been tense, full of anxiety and discord. We have much to grieve,” the Rev. Cathy Mitchell offered. “We live in a world that is uncomfortable with hard emotions. When we are faced with pain, grief and hurt, it is tempting to rush ahead, to set the grief aside and run toward the next thing. But God is inviting us to stop, to be honest about our grief, to cry and rage and tell the truth, because the worst thing we can take with us into the



People placed stones in baskets to surrender lament, then move forward in hope.

future of who we are as United Methodists is a numbness toward the pain we are experiencing now.”

A symbolic surrender

The body sang “Come and Find the Quiet Center,” alternating verses with readings from Psalm 77. Then, all were given a rock to symbolize their pain, and various people offered petitions—mourning the uncertain church, the discord and division, the weakness of witness, those who lost churches to call

home, clergy who led churches who left the UMC and all who grapple with feelings of betrayal and confusion.

As the petitions were spoken, Fairley dropped a rock into the baptismal font, asking people to imagine they are handing over their laments to God.

“Lamentation, grief, is a necessary part of what we as children of God must travel with,” Fairley preached in a homily.

Fairley noted that when he lost loved ones, particularly his late wife, people urged him to remember an important lesson about experiencing grief: “There’s no way through this but to go through it. If you take a shortcut, you won’t go through it; you won’t come out on the other side.”

Indeed, Fairley reminded people that, as the old hymn reminds, “You’ll never come out as pure gold unless you go through the fire.” We must lament.

Next steps: Plant seeds

But, he asked, what happens when the lamentation is over? Then comes

hope, he said.

“What if we allow the tears that we have cried to calm the waters, to birth and fertilize and water something new?” Fairley asked.

He urged the body not to let their tears go to waste: “After the weeping is done, plant some gardens. Plant some seeds that sow love, peace and justice.”

Next, prayers were offered by various people asking God to renew our hope. Then people were invited to come forward to surrender their lamentations to God, placing stones in baskets in an effort to next move forward in hope.

With this complete, Fairley then led the body in the fixing of appointments, which cemented where each pastor will serve this conference year.

The service and entirety of Annual Conference closed with the body singing the South African hymn “Siyahamba,” triumphantly declaring they are marching, singing, praying and dancing, for the Lord is our light.



Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

No more playing it safe

My grandma used to tell me stories about the first television set they bought. Like other families in the 1950s, they would gather after dinner to watch news shows and sitcoms like “I Love Lucy” and “The Honeymooners,” my mom and her older brother and sister gathering around, rapt over the moving pictures right there in their living room. It seemed magical back then, amazing that regular people like them could own something so revolutionary and novel.

Yet that’s precisely when the decline of print publications began—in the mid-20th century with the rise of television and later, in my own teenage years, with the ascent of the internet, not to mention smartphones. The *Advocate* began to see a decline in its heyday then, too. Today, while thriving in reputation, we remain one of just a few print religious newspapers in existence. Most others are digital only or have disappeared.

Our funds are dwindling, too. While our subscription base remains strong and loyal, rising printing and postage costs meant the *Advocate* began to struggle financially.

So we started our own expansion, our own pivoting. We launched a website and a digital publication to supplement our print product. We started group plans and even online group plans, anything to make it easier for people to get their church news.

This spring, we rebranded with a new logo and design. We’re rolling out a new website this summer, plus an app. We’re dipping into our trust fund to launch new marketing campaigns to expand our reach and our resourcing.

What else can we do? We know there is much good news to be shared, and we also understand the ways people get their news have changed. Some prefer print. They prefer paperbacks over Kindles, newspapers over apps. Others prefer to read online—or not to read at all and, instead, to get their news by video or podcast. We want to serve them all. And that’s what we strive to do as we roll out these new plans.

At the end of the day, our mission is delivering the news, whatever that looks like.

It reminds me of the story Bishop Fairley shared at Annual Conference about an old farmer sitting on the steps of his hut, chewing straw. A passing stranger approached and asked how the cotton crop was doing. But the farmer explained he didn’t plant cotton or corn or anything else, fearful of the boll weevil and all the other things that could go wrong.

“I just played it safe,” said the farmer.

My friends, the *Advocate* isn’t playing it safe. We are taking bold, holy risks, dipping into our trust funds and starting new efforts to live into the new future God has in store for us. Sure it’s a risk, but it’s a necessary one. To serve God’s kingdom best, we need to step out in faith, trusting God will provide.

The truth is, we’re all called to take similar risks. Your risk might mean a new job or a new relationship, a new way to do ministry or a mission trip to a place that makes you nervous.

Don’t play it safe. It’s time to step out for Jesus.



Bishop’s Column

by Bishop Leonard Fairley

Freedom in the pruning

I thought about writing something for this month’s article on freedom and liberty since July 4 is the day we celebrate our country’s independence. It may seem a stretch, but what if true freedom comes with the courage of letting go?

Freedom comes with the courage to let go of what holds one captive. We must be willing to let go of one good so that another can be born.

The lawn maintenance guy cut our hedges so close to the ground, they look nothing like their former selves. He even cut the branches of our beautiful crape myrtle. I wanted to fire him on the spot.

“They will come back more beautiful than before,” he tried consoling me.

What I could not see—what I refused to see—was how beauty can be set free in the act of pruning.

What seems lost in the midst of the struggle is the very beauty waiting to be revealed. What if necessary endings make room for what is yet to be?

I have always heard that when someone loses their hair during chemotherapy it grows back more beautiful than before. I watch for signs of the spring, when daffodils return through “the cold and snow of winter,” and fruit trees begin to bear abundant fruit after pruning.

We rejoice in Jesus after the ugliness and brutal-

ity of the crucifixion when he breaks forth from the grave in Easter joy and triumph, granting us the hope of resurrection and freedom from the bondage of sin, evil and death.

“Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit,” John 12:24 reminds us.

What are you holding onto in your life that has you bound and captive? What are you longing to be set free from? Are you willing to go through the pruning to be set free and born again?

“Be the Gardener of My Soul”

Spirit of the Living God, be the gardener of my soul.
For so long I have been waiting,
Silent and still experiencing a winter of the soul.
But now, in the strong name of Jesus Christ,
I dare to ask:
Clear away the dead growth of the past.
Break up the hard clods of custom and routine,
Stir in the rich compost of vision and challenge,
Bury deep in my soul the implanted Word,
Cultivate, and water and tend my heart,
Until new life buds and opens and flowers.
Amen.

Richard Foster (“Prayers From the Heart,” 1994)

Correction.

In the article “S.C. Readies for Annual Conference” (June <i>Advocate</i>) we incorrectly identified the	location of the event in one area of the article. It should have stated the Greenville Convention Center.	We apologize for this error and, as always, strive to set the record straight.
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Letters to the Editor.

‘A Veteran Observes Memorial Day’

Written by retired Chaplain LTC M. E. Bowers on Memorial Day, 2025.

I was thinking of my dad, who rarely spoke of his WWII military service for reasons we never fully understood. Perhaps you will find it meaningful:

They wonder why I don’t talk about it much
All the pain, bullets, guns, blood and such.
It’s the kind of story that plays good on TV,
Risking life and limb so folks can be free.
Maybe it’s because I don’t feel like a hero
’Cause if I’d had another choice, I probably wouldn’t go.
Or perhaps having gone, I’ve had my belly full of war.
Why stir up stuff I’ve tried long and hard to ignore?
Some say talking it through will allow me to heal,
like my way of coping is somehow not real.
Kindly let me carry whatever pain I may feel.
One must understand that’s part of the deal.
Mental and bodily scars are not my biggest regret.
It’s my foxhole buddy that I dare not forget.
An unspoken promise we pledged each other
that whatever happened we’d honor one another.
It’s because of his sacrifice that I remain mute
And to his courage and devotion I render my quiet salute.
This day we honor those whose names are etched in

some wall
And the loved ones for whom they answered the call.
But for the Veteran who served alongside the fallen
It’s a day to recall our sacred obligation.
You see, Memorial Day is different for the combat veteran cause he knows he is one, only because of his late brethren.
So pardon me if I don’t readily share my story out loud
Just let me remember my pals and live a life so they would be proud.

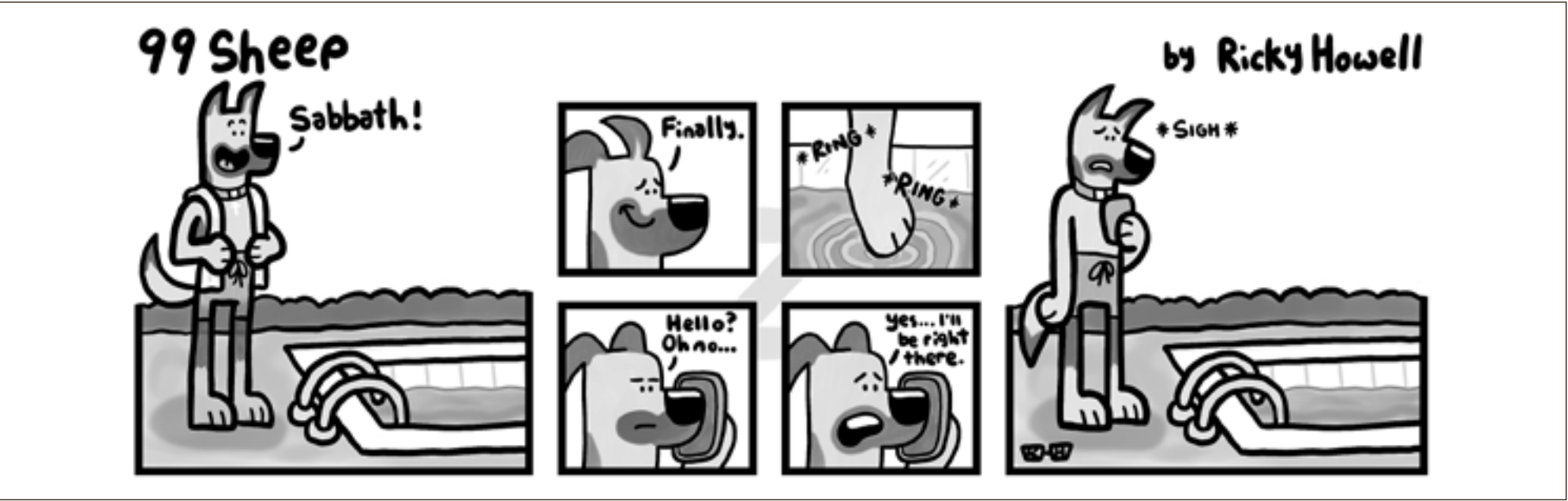
Rev. Mike Bowers, retired Landrum

SMC on a shoestring

On Tuesday at Annual Conference, the Rev. Jerry Gadsden, chair of the Board of Trustees at Spartanburg Methodist College, made a request to amend the 2026 CF&A budget line item to return SMC funding to 2025 spending levels, an increase of about \$225,000. Members of the budget team spoke against this amendment, stating that some organizations would need to tighten their belts until finances improved. But here’s the thing: SMC has been living on a shoestring for its entire existence.

For many students, SMC is an educational oasis,

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Commentary
by the Rev. Amiri B. Hooker

What about the children?

On a quiet weekday morning in late May, my youngest son, Omri Charles-Bernard Hooker, called me from Bamberg, his voice shaken.

His words broke my heart: “Daddy, they’re shutting down the Job Corps Center. People are packing their bags. Teachers are crying. Some students have nowhere to go.”

By 5 p.m. that day, an entire community of vulnerable youth—many of whom had escaped poverty, violence, homelessness and school failure—was unraveling. Students ran down the halls with tears in their eyes. Teachers were given pink slips. Dreams forged in welding workshops and GED classrooms were abandoned with little more than a vague promise that “other opportunities” would appear.

This wasn’t just a local tragedy—it was a national shame.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s announcement on May 29 that it would “pause” all contractor-operated Job Corps Centers sent shockwaves through more than 100 campuses nationwide. For many of these young people—mostly aged 16 to 24, and largely Black, Brown and poor—Job Corps wasn’t simply a school. It was home, hope and healing.

Despite reassurances that a “transition” is under way, students and families like mine have received few answers and even less compassion. The administration’s justification—citing budgetary deficits and program inefficiencies—fails to acknowledge the root problem: years of underfunding, mismanagement and systemic neglect.

These centers weren’t failing our children; we were.

Job Corps is not a luxury. It is a moral commitment.

Created in 1964 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty, Job Corps has long served as a second chance for those society often casts aside. The Department of Labor’s own numbers confirm that more than 20 percent

of Job Corps students were homeless prior to enrollment—and that figure doubles at some campuses. The closure will put thousands of young people back on the streets with no safety net.

As a United Methodist pastor and father, I cannot stay silent while the government turns its back on the vulnerable in the name of fiscal responsibility. This is not about dollars and cents. It’s about justice.

In The United Methodist Church, we proclaim that “every person has sacred worth.” We baptize our children in hope, we confirm them in faith and we commission them to serve the world in love. But if our society shuts down institutions that feed, house and educate the least among us, our liturgies become hollow.

The Gospel of Matthew reminds us: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these... you did for me” (Matthew 25:40, NRSVue). So I ask my fellow United Methodists:

- Where is our prophetic voice when schools are closed but prisons stay open?
- Where is our compassion when young people cry down the halls of abandoned dorms?
- Where is our advocacy when working-class teachers are sent home without warning?

What must we do?

Speak up. Contact your congressional representatives and demand a reversal of this unjust policy.

Support students. Reach out to local Job Corps alumni, staff and families to offer solidarity and support.

Tell the story. Share this article and similar testimonies. Make the invisible visible.

Be the church. Use pulpits, pews and policy boards to advocate for programs that uplift—not abandon—children.

Hooker is a United Methodist elder, author and social justice advocate serving in South Carolina. He is the proud father of a Job Corps student.



Commentary
by the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr.

Whose are we?

When we remodeled our home, we set up several television sets around the place. For the two of us, that meant there would be opportunities for our guests and grandchildren to have a place to view favorite shows and play games.

Today, these stations have come in handy for the two of us. We had hoped the clown shows would end in this past cycle, and we wouldn’t have to tolerate shenanigans from those we hired to lead us, because we thought the most powerful, godly nation would not allow it. We have learned an awful truth about this nation and its people that many of us had already known and experienced—that is that all the talk of God is just a Faust, a scheme perpetrated on well-meaning people to further their money-making ambitions on the backs of the powerless. My wife refuses to spend valuable time listening to professional liars that even professional fools are too smart to believe, yet too many of us fall for it. She views many things on TV but is committed to watching nothing if this is the best America can offer.

Well, that leaves me as the one who always insists on a window seat on every flight that I take. Even though I know I cannot change anything that is happening or may happen outside of the window, I want to see it if it does.

Some folks are starting to wake up, because corruption and injustices negatively affect us all in the end. I am sure God is going to move when we have learned our lessons, and yes, (there’s no need to lie) I am patiently waiting to see it, because America deserves better. She will be wiser, stronger, better and one day, greater, and won’t be so easily led astray by simpletons.

In the meantime, I ask, “Who in hell are we trying to impress?” I don’t believe there’s anyone in heaven slightly impressed when we steal from the children, take advantage of the vulnerable, plunder for ourselves and give America’s resources to our greedy friends and family under the guise of helping America. Whoever would have thought America would kidnap its own citizens and forcibly take them to foreign countries without due process? The courts of this great nation are impotent and, seemingly, implicit. If we are trying to deport law breakers, then why don’t some of us self-deport?

God does not bless a mess. Whose are we? A or B?

Abram is a retired elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

LETTERS:

From Page 4

the most affordable school to work their way out of generational poverty or work their way into more difficult four-year institutions. Its endowment doesn’t match that of her sister senior colleges; most graduates give small amounts when they can to the annual fund.

My mother, Doris Luther, spent years teaching and leading at SMC and often told us it was the most rewarding work of her career as a teacher and church musician.

Since this resolution did not pass, I

believe we are called as an Annual Conference to do whatever we can to share the importance of SMC’s ministry among our churches and individuals—including the existence of Extra Mile Giving—so that vital programs, including spiritual life and scholarships, will continue to be available to all who need them.

This will help us fulfill our commitment to campus ministry as one of our conference missional priorities.

Rev. Deb Luther Teagan, retired
Monument, Colorado

Reflection topic for August Advocate

Your turn: Have you experienced a season of lament over church separations? How are you dealing with this? Share with the Advocate at oped@advocatesc.org (include your church name and city).



Humanity Behind Bars
by the Rev. Nichole Middleton



Commentary
by Sandy Thrasher

Rethinking ‘inmate’

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.”—Psalm 19:14 (KJV)

I have been reflecting lately on the quiet but powerful connection between the words we choose and the beliefs we carry. Language is often shaped by our emotions—our tone, our pace, even our vocabulary shifts in the presence of fear, frustration, compassion or hope. As someone called to walk with people behind prison walls, I have come to understand that words do more than describe; they shape how we see, engage and ultimately value one another.

This realization became more personal as I began to reflect on a single word I have used countless times: “inmate.” It is so common in correctional settings that its weight often goes unnoticed. But recently, I felt prompted to pause and ask questions I had not considered before: Where did this word come from? Why has it become the standard? And could this seemingly neutral term carry traces of injustice I have unknowingly helped to perpetuate?

Historically, “inmate” simply referred to someone who lived with others in the same dwelling—a roommate or cohabitant. Over time, especially by the 19th century, the term evolved to refer primarily to individuals confined in institutions such as prisons, asylums and hospitals. As the meaning narrowed so, too, did its humanity. The evolution of the word aligned with a growing system of incarceration in the United States—one deeply entangled with systemic racism, economic exploitation and social control, particularly over Black and Brown lives.

Language, in this sense, is not neutral. When we refer to someone as an “inmate,” we often reduce them to a condition rather than affirm their identity as a person. It becomes easier to accept their suffering, to ignore their story, to forget their humanity. The label separates us, categorizes them and creates distance between “us” and “them.”

And perhaps most concerning, it becomes difficult to imagine them redeemed.

As a United Methodist, I cannot ignore that our tradition calls us to see Christ in all people, especially those most marginalized. John Wesley modeled a ministry of presence in prisons and among the poor. He believed that the means of grace included visiting those behind bars and advocating for the transformation of systems that dehumanize. Wesley’s faith was grounded in the belief that every person is capable of experiencing and reflecting the sanctifying grace of God.

And so, I return to that prayer from Psalm 19:14: “Let the words of my mouth ...” It is more than a benediction. It is a call to accountability. If I am to preach good news to the poor and proclaim release to the captives, then I must begin by naming them rightly. Not merely as “inmates,” but as people. People with names, stories, families, pain and promise. People beloved by God.

This reflection is not an argument for linguistic perfection, nor a judgment upon others who use the term. Rather, it is a pastoral invitation. What if we spoke of “incarcerated neighbors,” “siblings behind the fence” or simply “people”? What if our vocabulary refused to cooperate with systems that reduce and divide?

There is no shame in having repeated what we were taught—growth begins the moment we choose to see differently. But there is great power in awakening to their impact. And there is grace enough to change. In our baptisms, we covenant to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. Sometimes, that resistance begins with a word.

So may the meditations of our hearts be tender. And may the words of our mouths be bold enough to speak life, hope and dignity—especially to those who have been told they are only the sum of their sentence.

Middleton is an elder in the South Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church, endorsed by the United Methodist Endorsing Agency for prison ministry. She serves as a chaplain in the federal prison system, dedicating her work to providing spiritual care, advocating for justice and supporting the transformation and reintegration of incarcerated individuals.

From hurt to healing

I wish everyone could experience church the way I feel it now: fulfilled, fed, happy and blessed. Maybe you do. Maybe I’m late to the game. But if you’ve ever been hurt by church, questioned your place in it or wondered if God could still use you after everything, you’re not alone. I’ve been there.

Let me explain. In 1954, a family moved to the country, trading indoor plumbing for an outhouse. A neighbor got the family to church. One of the children, a 7-year-old girl (my mom), grew up, married and had children. That’s where I come in.

I was the first baby of our newly built United Methodist church, nursery, children’s choir and UMYF. Church was family. It was home.

Pastors come and go. Some liked familiar hymns; others preferred unfamiliar ones. Through the changes, I believed we loved like Jesus. We welcomed all, even when we disagreed.

I made choices. I didn’t follow the path hoped for. I was hard to understand, maybe even hard to love. I had a son outside of marriage, a beautiful biracial baby. Church was there. Marriage, then divorce. Losing my brother. A house fire. Losing my precious daddy. Being a single mother, my son’s milestones. Through it all, church held me ... until it didn’t.

COVID came, and so did a new pastor—a young visionary full of energy who happened to be Black. He brought fresh life and vision. His Gullah Geechee accent carried both tradition and truth. He reminded us of what church could be. We live-streamed. We worshipped outdoors. We grew through a pandemic.

He challenged us for Homecoming. We did it big, opening our doors, welcoming all. Our bishop preached. The Spirit moved. We were alive.

But a member stopped coming, and another left. We’d “accepted” a Black pastor, but had we truly?

Then, a group from Anderson Area Remembrance and Reconciliation came asking to place a historical marker to honor John Laddison, a Black man lynched in 1901 nearby. What an opportunity to embody the Gospel, choose justice, mercy and truth over defensiveness and denial. It was time to be the church.

The answer from the church? A resounding no. What? Why?

We placed Confederate flags in our cemetery every year, no questions asked. But honoring a lynching victim? Too “controversial.”

I was mad. Hurt. Angry. But more than anything, I thought about my son. Of what those flags represented to him. To our pastor. To others who looked like them.

That moment, the marker refusal, wasn’t

just about a sign. It was a sign. Then came the disinformation. They started saying the UMC no longer believed in the virgin birth. We no longer believed in the divinity of Christ. Drag queens would be in our pulpits. Doctrine was being abandoned. None of it was true. But it spread at Bible study in handouts and on screens. No one questioned it.

The “discernment process” didn’t feel prayerful. It felt like betrayal. Reasons to leave the UMC were shared. We met with our district superintendent. Nothing helped. No one listened. Some of us tried. We fought for truth, love and grace, but we were outnumbered.

The vote to disaffiliate failed (the first time). But the sign, the meeting, the hurtful things said, it was time.

The grief was real. It came in waves. It’s hard to describe the grief that comes with losing a spiritual family. It’s like a funeral with no flowers, casseroles or hugs. Just silence. Hurt. Even in that loss, God was still working.

Months before, I’d heard a local pastor preach. His message stayed with me, reminding me of the Jesus I grew up loving, the Jesus of justice, mercy and love. I learned my son was singing at that pastor’s church, South Main Chapel and Mercy Center.

The date? February 26, 2023. The day of the vote.

I walked into South Main grieving. I walked out with peace. There I saw Jesus in every handshake, every face, every note of worship. There were no conditions. No fine print. Just love. So I stayed.

At South Main, we worship side-by-side, people from all walks of life. We eat with sinners because we are sinners. We celebrate grace because we know we need it. We welcome everyone, not because it’s easy, but because it’s what Jesus did. After all, Jesus didn’t stand with the accusers. He stood with the woman at the well, the tax collector in the tree, the leper cast out from the community, the ones no one else would touch or trust.

He didn’t come to fix people so they could be worthy. He came because none of us ever could be.

So if you’ve been hurt by church, hear me: You are not alone. You are loved.

There is a place for you. For me, that place is South Main. If you haven’t found your place yet, don’t stop looking.

Because church isn’t just a building. It’s people. It’s Spirit. It’s love.

If God can use someone like me, with doubts, scars and broken pieces, he can absolutely use you. And he will.

Thrasher, Anderson District lay leader, is a member of South Main Chapel and Mercy Center, a United Methodist congregation in Anderson.

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Annual Conference.

Sowers for God

Sunday service celebrates 15 called into ministry, honors 32 retirees

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—Reminding them that God brought them to this day because God saw something significant in them, Bishop Leonard Fairley preached a Commissioning, Ordination and Retirement Recognition Service that celebrated 15 people called into ministry by the Lord and honored 32 who are retiring after many years of service.

“In a world plagued by so much deep polarization and division and injustice, you are called to be sowers of the seed of a more excellent way, to become sowers of a seed planted at your baptism,” Fairley preached to applause. “You are called to put your trust not in man but called to put your trust in the grace of Jesus Christ.”

In his sermon, “What God Sees in You,” Fairley shared that God has never called a person he has not equipped or who he will not empower.

“You are set apart to become sowers of God’s seed of love and justice,” he said.

This means sowing seeds of liberation over oppression, hope over despair and light over darkness.

In essence, he noted, they are being called to be “a spiritual Johnny Appleseed.”

“I believe you can do it because he



The Rev. Gary Rivas had his orders officially recognized during the service.

that is in you is greater than he who is in the world,” Fairley preached.

Ordained as elders were Leo Wesley Roy, Thessa Goodwin Smith and Billy Keith Stewart.

Ordained as deacon was Kim Moultrie Bryant.

Commissioned as provisional elders were Grayson Edward Fallaw, Joseph Brannon Gambrell, Rachel Elizabeth Headden, Faye Juanita Jones, Larry McCray, Fred Preston Moore Jr., Adrienne Elaine Stokes and Sheera Disher Yates.

Commissioned as provisional deacons were Heather Roberts Connor and Ronald Brent Crimm.

And with orders recognized in the United Methodist Church as a full elder member was Gary Lloyd Rivas.



Each retiree walked onstage to shake the bishop’s hand in celebration of their service.

Passing the mantle

After the ordination and commissioning, the service shifted to celebrate the 32 retiring clergy. Each came onstage as their names were read to shake hands with the bishop as they took their place for the passing of the mantle ceremony.

The Rev. Dwight Nelson, representing the retiring class, knelt at the altar with the Rev. Leo Wesley Roy representing the newly ordained class as the bishop placed a stole upon Nelson’s shoulder. Then, Nelson rose to place the mantle upon the shoulders of Roy.

“I transfer this mantle from our generation to the young, indicating thereby that the responsibilities and dedication of the older generation will be caught

up and carried on by the young, and the spirit of today’s Elijahs will rest upon today’s Elishas,” Nelson proclaimed.

Roy responded, “We who come after you take up the mantle which falls upon us. May we inherit a double share of your spirit.”

The Rev. Cynthia Taylor prayed over the new class to conclude the ceremony.

Retirees recognized were as follows: Morgan David Arant Jr., Christopher Edward Arries, Graham Miller Bennett, Robert Arthur Brawn, Harry Lee Brown, Dennis Jay Devorick, Jimmie Will Duncan, Edward Herbert Franklin Jr., Curtis Davon Harrelson, Bette Ann Hedden, William Allen Hightower, Mary Benton Holladay, Adlai Stephen Holler, George Palmer Hudson, Cassandra Pasley Jackson, Emma Roderick Jones, Marvin Wilbur Karn Jr., Steven Paul Keck, Joseph Gregory Martin, Mark Douglas Mitchell, Dwight Arnold Nelson, Irvin Vincent Plowden Jr., Rodney Keith Powell, Henry Lee Ravenel Sr., Dewey Lee Shaffer, James Ronald Singleton, James Moses Smith, Cynthia Cooke Taylor, David Carroll Taylor, Palma Duncan Thomas, Michael Cunningham Walker and Wade Anthony Wyatt.

The service ended with the singing of “Lift High the Cross,” followed by a reception.

AC votes on four constitutional amendments

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—South Carolina United Methodists joined conferences around the world in voting on four amendments to the denomination’s constitution:

- Worldwide regionalization;
- Expanding gender and disability inclusion in church membership;
- Standing against racism and colonialism; and
- Clarifying requirements for clergy-delegate elections.

The amendments were all passed by the required two-thirds vote at the 2024 General Conference. But because they will change The United Methodist Church constitution, they require ratification by at least two-thirds of the total voting members of all the annual conferences combined.

To clarify, that does not mean a two-thirds vote at each annual conference is needed but rather two-thirds of all 127 annual conferences around the world.

The results won’t be known until after all annual conferences—in the United States as well as in Europe, Africa and the Philippines—have held a vote. Votes are expected to be finished by October. Then, in November, the Council of Bishops is expected to tally all votes and certify any ratifications.

The language of the amendments could not be changed; votes were simple “yes” or “no” choices on four ballots.

What are the amendments?

The worldwide regionalization amendment is a package of legislation that will give the different geographic regions in the UMC equal decision-making authority. The United States and every central conference (in Africa, Europe and the Philippines) will become regional conferences, for a total of nine regional conferences around the world. The United States will be one of the nine). Each regional conference will have the ability to adapt the *Discipline* as missional needs and different legal contexts require. Previously, only central conferences could do this, but now the United States will be able to do so, too. This means each regional conference, if it wishes, will be able to publish its own hymnal, *Book of Worship* and regional *Book of Discipline*; set ordination and licensed ministry requirements for pastors; set standards for lay membership; develop practices around marriage ceremonies, funerals and other rites; etc. This will not enable regional conferences to create their own constitution or adopt any policy in violation of the constitution.

The inclusiveness in church membership amendment adds “gender” and “ability” to the list of things that do not



Delegates vote Tuesday on amendments to the UMC constitution.

Photo by Matt Brodie

block people from membership in a UMC. The language in Para. 4, Article IV, would state: “All persons, without regard to race, gender, ability, color, national origin, status, or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become professing members in any local church in the connection.” Essentially, this means pastors will not be allowed to deny a person membership if a person is male or female or has a disability.

The stand against racism and colonialism amendment strengthens the denomination’s racial justice stance. The new language in Para. 5, Article V, would state that the UMC “proclaims that from God’s goodness and love, God created all persons as God’s unique and beloved children. Racism opposes God’s law, goodness and love and diminishes the image of God in each person. Fueled by white privilege, white supremacy and colonialism, the sin of racism has been a destructive scourge on global society and throughout the history of The United Methodist Church. It continues to destroy our communities, harm persons, obstruct unity and undermine God’s work in this world. Racism must be eradicated. Therefore, The United Methodist Church commits to confronting and eliminating all forms of racism, racial inequity, colonialism, white privilege and white supremacy, in every facet of its life and in society at large.”

And the clergy-delegate voting amendment clarifies the educational requirements licensed local pastors must have in order to elect clergy as delegates for general and jurisdictional conferences. Specifically, local pastors must have completed their course of study or a Master of Divinity from a University Senate-approved theological school or its equivalent as recognized in a central conference and have served a minimum of two consecutive years under appointment immediately preceding the election.



Culp speaks to the body about the motion.

AC passes motion expressing concern over cuts to federal programs

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—Annual Conference passed a motion Monday to go on record expressing concern about the federal government making deep cuts to needed federal jobs, health care, education nonprofit agencies, universities and discrimination without justice against the vulnerable, immigrants and LGBTQ+.

Proposed by the Rev. John Culp, the motion further noted that the Council of Bishops has addressed the cutting of USAID for world poverty, and the General Board of Church and Society has released four social justice position statements reflecting this.

“We need to realize that racism and injustices are real today. Evil is real. There is great pain in our society. All is not well for the vulnerable and helpless,” Culp said, further explaining the need for the motion.

The motion passed overwhelmingly.

Annual Conference.

Passing the baton

Malambri leads memorial service that remembers 52 departed saints

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—Lifting up the valiant, Christ-led example they offered, the Rev. William F. Malambri preached a memorial service at Annual Conference Tuesday celebrating the lives of 52 clergy and spouses who died over the past conference year.

“These servants sought to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ,” Malambri proclaimed. “They sought to plant; they sought to water. Some did it with big booming voices and song, and some did it in gentle conversation, holding hands and praying softly in earnest.”

Regardless, these 52 men and women showed the world how to walk with Christ.

And now, Malambri said, “They have left the work ... to you and to me.”

In his sermon, “In the Presence of God,” which drew from 2 Timothy 4:1-8, Malambri shared how his own experience running a marathon reminded him of the encouragement these departed saints brought to others. When he was 42 years old, he decided to run the Charlotte Marathon, a 26.2-mile endeavor. He trained diligently, and all was well on race day—for the first half. Then he grew weary. Around mile 22, he came across one man who held up a sign encouraging him: You got this!

“I believed him,” Malambri said.

And with that, he completed the marathon.

As he enters his sixth decade, he said he’s realized, “I’m running a far more consequential race now—one I want to finish well.”



Above, flutes and bells honored those who passed on. Below left, the Rev. William F. Malambri brings a word for the body. Below right, friends and family stand for those they mourn.



He knows one day, people will reflect on his life and how he ran the race of life, just as those gathered today reflect on the race run by those saint now departed.

“What they gave and gave up for Jesus is consequential,” Malambri said. “It was consequential when they did it, and the effects continue. People’s lives are better and the church is better



Photos by Matt Brodie

because they served.”

Now they’ve passed the baton to us. “And so as the apostle Paul invited Timothy, so we are invited to look to them for our example and our encouragement, which we need,” he said.

“They’ve shown us. Let’s show others.”

As the bishop read the names of those honored, a candle was lit on the

altar and a bell rung in remembrance. Those named are as follows:

Retired Clergy: James Edwin Alewine, Archie Rufus Bigelow Jr., Lee Curtis Bines, Timothy Jacob Bowman, Thomas Nesmer Brittain, Billy Bowman Brown, Robert Brown Claytor, Joseph Bruce Cleasby, Lee Cothran Jr., David Willard Cox, Barbara Ann Derrick, Jerry Mills Hill, Richard Douglas Hopper, James Lewis Hyatt Jr., Milton Lee McGuirt, Patricia Pepper Orr, Harvey Ottis Peurifoy, Calvin Lee Smith, Rufus Horace White, Thomas Byars Wilkes Jr., Alfred Truman Wright and Ellen April Younker.

Spouses: Elizabeth Woodward Barber, Theodore Cathcart, Lee Dean Cox, Sammy L. Cruell, Linda Mumford Hall, Cynthia J. Hicks, Vicki Vassy Holler, Edith Fulton James, Patricia King Mims and Lee Ann Ussery.

Surviving Spouses: Mary Helen Bedenbaugh, Mary Jewell Bennett, Betty Mobley Bynum, Charlotte Crawford Cowart, Delores Jones Giles, Eartha Lee Goodwin, Eloise Pate Graham, Malinda Jennings Holroyd, Joyce Edna Kelly, Mary Katherine Millwood, Ruby Elise Templeton Osborne, Susan Culclasure Parker, Gladys Matilda Pyatt, Patricia Thompson Reynolds, Iola Elvenia Davis Risher, Corra Clare Sheffield, Alice Betty Smith, Eliza Victoria Sumter and Pauline Estelle Jackson Williams.

Other: Hazel Key Colcock.

The service ended with the closing hymn “Because He Lives” and a benediction.

Clergy offer encouragement at AC through Prayer and Praise services

By Allison Trussell
GREENVILLE—Annual Conference attendees received daily encouragement through the Prayer and Praise Services led by three different clergy members.

‘What would be your epitaph?’

The Rev. Luke Rhyee, an elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church serving as a missionary to Healing Guatemala/Bethesda Hospital, led Monday evening’s service, sharing his story of becoming a missionary.

As a child, he had huge life questions and tried to find the answers in books and even in Buddhism, but was unsuccessful. While in high school, he decided to try Christianity and found a church nearby.

“God embraced me so tightly that I found myself bursting into repentant tears but smiling in great joy,” he said.

One of his favorite places to wander and ponder the big questions was a nearby missionary cemetery that had become a park, where he found an epitaph on a tombstone, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). He knew with certainty that he’d found the answer to his question.

The verse struck him not because it was from the Bible, but because it was a testimony of this person in this grave. This was that man’s epitaph, and it struck Rhyee deeply.

After finishing medical and pastoral training, Rhyee arrived in the Columbia District and served local churches before going to Guatemala.

While he feels blessed with his calling, he acknowledged the difficulties of living apart from his wife and sons, who cannot live there for health reasons. His friends wonder why he continues to serve in this way, and he admits his own doubts. However, he knows “it’s because when I see the Lord face and face and have to reflect on my whole life, I want to make the



Bariou



Stokes



Rhyee

confession, ‘By your grace, it is done.’”

He said he’s not suggesting everyone sell everything and follow him to Guatemala.

“I am saying there must be something God wants to achieve through your willing and loving heart, your talent. I ask you again, “When your day comes, face to face with God, what confession do you want to make? What would be your epitaph?”

A promise of the seed

The Rev. Kathryn Bariou, a deacon in the conference serving as associate pastor of Trinity UMC, Anderson, led the second service, A self-admitted geek, Bariou said she loves everything from “Star Trek” to “The Hobbit.”

Bilbo Baggins, she recalled, was a hobbit who was called on a journey. During his journey he passed through a forest of huge trees and pocketed an acorn to plant when he returned home. A simple acorn with a promise of huge trees was Bilbo’s treasure.

“Why do I share this with you?” Bariou asked. “It’s because we know that inside every acorn is a promise of something greater. God created it for that purpose, and it’s a promise we can trust.”

The Scripture in the morning service, 2 Corinthians 1:18-20, told of Paul’s plans and his recognition that his promise of returning to Corinth would cause more harm than good.

“While people may give us yes and no [promises],” Bariou said, “in Jesus Christ, God’s promises are always yes!”

Everyone experiences times when a “yes” is needed. These last few years, watching friends and colleagues suffer have been hard on everyone, and some felt like walking away. But God is not walking away; he’s not given up on us or our churches, she said.

“There is a promise that every acorn contains a mighty oak. And we are promised that faith the size of a mustard seed is enough.”

‘Let that light shine’

The Rev. Adrienne Stokes, a provisional elder serving the Ruffin Parish, Ruffin, provided the message during Wednesday morning service.

One of her favorite places to visit is Hunting Island State Beach and its lighthouse. Lighthouses were designed to shine a powerful light visible over long distances to guide ships to safe routes and warn them of potential hazards. But they are also a sign of safe havens.

Surprisingly, she said, the bulb for a lighthouse is rather small and doesn’t take much power. It isn’t the bulb that works, it’s the Fresnel lens.

“Think about this: the Fresnel lens doesn’t shine by itself,” Stokes said. “Without a light source, it’s completely useless.”

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.”

“We are the lens,” Stokes said. “Christ shines through us a powerful beam that reaches people far beyond what we can imagine.”

She encouraged attendees to live their lives as beacons in their families, communities, workplaces and the world.

“The light has come,” she said, “Now let that light shine in us and let’s reach far places, shining the light in every corner.”

Annual Conference.

Annual Conference passes five resolutions

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—The body approved five resolutions at Annual Conference, four with little fanfare and one twice-amended that took an hour and forty minutes to debate.

The five resolutions passed are as follows: LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Ministry; Our Responsibility for Personal Health; Upholding the Dignity of All Mothers; Supporting South Carolinians Living with Dementia; and Recommit to Collegiate Ministry as a Priority of the Church.

Originally, only the four latter resolutions were automatically and properly before the body, as they had been properly formatted and submitted by a conference board or group. As it was not submitted by a conference board or group, the LGBTQIA+ Inclusion resolution was referred to Committee on Resolutions and Appeals, and many thought that resolution might not go to the floor.

But the Rev. Steve Simoneaux, chair of the Committee on Resolutions and Appeals, said they felt the LGBTQIA+ Inclusion resolution should go before the body.

“We acknowledge a lot of hurt and a lot of healing are needing to take place,” Simoneaux said.

The other resolutions passed with no debate, with the exception of Our Responsibility for Personal Health, which was amended slightly.

LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

The LGBTQIA+ Inclusion resolution asks the conference to create a conference-level South Carolina Inclusion Team to support LGBTQ+ people, amplify their voices and equip local churches with helpful LGBTQ+ resources.

The team will actively supporting the LGBTQIA+ laity, clergy, and candidates for licensed/ordained ministry; center and amplify the voices and experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community, especially those who have been marginalized by church and society; create resources to equip local churches; and collaborate with ministry-specific areas, particularly children’s ministry, youth ministry, and campus ministry in the desire to



Photo by Matt Brodie

The Rev. Rachel Headden asks a question about the LGBTQIA+ Inclusion resolution.

effectively be in ministry with and for LGBTQIA+ people of all ages.

The body amended the resolution to delete a call for monitoring conference committees and policies, as well as to specify that—as the team would begin this year, and as budget recommendations are made far in advance—the first two years of funds for the team would be provided by donations.

Delegate Lynn Shirley, one of the submitters of the resolution, stood to support the resolution.

Shirley said that, as an openly gay man, while his church has openly embraced him, he knows this is not the case in all churches.

The Rev. Meg Wilkes, minister of discipleship at Clemson UMC, Clemson, and another of the resolution’s submitters, said she believes the resolution is sorely needed.

“I am very tired, and I have been fighting only the last decade. I know people who have been seeking inclusion for decades and decades and decades,” Wilkes said. “I am ready.”

But others did not support the resolution. The Rev. Barry Allen, pastor of the St. Luke-Salem Charge, Lancaster, has experienced one of his churches leaving the denomination over disagreements with the UMC over sexuality, and he believes the resolution will further divide people in a deeply contentious time.

“How far are we going to push issues

of sexuality on our churches?” Allen asked, noting the General Conference decision to remove restrictive language from the *Book of Discipline* is more than adequate right now. “We do not need to keep pushing this stuff on the people called Methodist in South Carolina.”

The twice-amended resolution ultimately passed.

Our Responsibility for Personal Health

Our Responsibility for Personal Health was submitted by the Church and Society Work Area of Connectional Ministries.

The amendment passed with no debate, though a friendly amendment was made, adding “avoiding harmful substances” to the list of health commitments the resolution encourages.

The resolution encourages United Methodists in South Carolina to honor their bodies with respect and care; seek a balanced lifestyle that nurtures physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being; pursue wholeness by cultivating healthy relationships, practicing forgiveness and extending compassion; become educated in order to make wise decisions about well-being; support each other in making healthy choices; trust in God’s providence and guidance; and avoid harmful substances such as vaping and illegal drugs.

Upholding the Dignity of All Mothers

Also submitted by Church and

Society, this resolution invites South Carolina United Methodists to commit to working to ensure all mothers, regardless of their race or ethnicity, receive compassionate and equitable health care; advocating for policies that eliminate disparities and promote the well-being of all women; working to dismantle systemic racism and discrimination within the health-care system; supporting community programs that provide education, resources and support to expectant and new mothers, particularly those in marginalized communities; advocating for access to quality health care for all mothers; and empowering women with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions on maternal health, family planning and reproductive rights.

Supporting South Carolinians Living with Dementia

Also submitted by Church and Society, this resolution commits to supporting our neighbors living with dementia through education and awareness, compassionate care, family support, community involvement and faith and spiritual support. The resolution noted more than 125,000 residents of South Carolina are living with dementia, and that number is projected to increase by more than 50 percent by 2050.

Recommit to Collegiate Ministry as a Priority of the Church

Submitted by conference Board of Higher Education & Campus Ministry and several pastors and campus ministers, this resolution asks the conference to encourage congregations to prayerfully consider how they may be uniquely equipped to support their nearest United Methodist collegiate ministry and connect their graduating high school with the appropriate campus ministry; encourages the conference to continue to support campus ministry financially to the best of its abilities; encourages district superintendents to advocate for campus ministry; invites campus ministries to advise their respective districts on how connection can continue to be cultivated; and encourages the bishop to continue in his advocacy for this ministry.

Chancellor updates body on Scouting bankruptcy, need for church incorporation

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—Conference Chancellor Kay Crowe offered the Report of the Chancellor on Tuesday afternoon, updating the body on her work for the annual conference, which includes



Crowe

serving as a resource for lawyers representing the conference and churches in litigation; working with conference trustees by preparing leases, deeds, contracts and other documents; and assisting in drafting resolutions and resources for the conference and churches.

Crowe also shared that a 96-page ruling from the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in the Boy Scout

bankruptcy case was recently received. The decision may be appealed, but it has affirmed the complete bankruptcy plan, which Crowe called “very good news.”

As well, she continues to recommend that local churches incorporate

as a South Carolina nonprofit corporation, but she noted that Section 2529 of the *Book of Discipline* must be complied with in that process. This section requires that the local churches must be organized and operated in compliance with the *Book of Discipline* and cannot sever the connectional relationship to the UMC without the consent of the Annual Conference.



Photo by Matt Brodie

A raise for clergy

The Rev. Jon Hoin gives the report Tuesday of the Committee on Equitable Compensation, noting they are requesting a 2.5 percent cost-of-living increase for 2026 to ensure pastors can continue to pay their bills given the large amount of inflation seen in the past few years. “Just know the funds you provide allow ministry to happen in places where we would otherwise not be able to have a presence,” Hoin said. Conference approved the request.

AC closes six churches, merges two into one

By Allison Trussell
GREENVILLE—In a moment of solemnity Wednesday, the South Carolina Annual Conference remembered the ministries of six United Methodist churches who have closed since the last Annual Conference.

The churches who have closed are Grace UMC, Abbeville, Anderson District; St. Mark UMC, Columbia, Columbia District; Trinity UMC, Smoaks, Walterboro District; Good Samaritan UMC, Lake Wylie, Rock Hill District; Ebenezer UMC, Moncks Corner, Charleston District; and Woods Chapel UMC, Greer, Greenville District.

“In a Kairos moment, God planted the seeds of these churches,” Cabinet Secretary the Rev. Fran Elrod said. “Today we celebrate the lives of each of these churches and are thankful for their ministries and community involvement.”

Elrod invited all who had been in relationship with the churches to stand as the



Elrod

church name was read.

“We give thanks for each of these congregations, for the many ways they have shared the good news of the gospel,” prayed Bishop Leonard Fairley. “And now we need to change the status of each of these churches. May we remember what they have meant to us and give thanks for who they have been and who they are because the light and the hope of their ministry still shines.”

Elrod also reported the merger of Bethlehem UMC and Mount Nebo UMC to become Triune UMC, St. Matthews, Orangeburg District.

Charge Line Changes

The following charge line changes were approved and will be effective June 25:

In the Anderson District Grace, Abbeville, was closed ad interim, effective Feb. 1.

In the Columbia District, Shady Grove was attached to Capers Chapel, Pomaria, to form the Shady Grove-Capers

Chapel Charge, and St. Mark UMC was closed.

The Florence District had multiple changes. The Lake City Circuit was dissolved, making St. John and St. Luke station charges and attaching Lake Point to Ninevah to form the Lake Point-Ninevah Charge. The Johnsonville Charge was also dissolved, with Vox Memorial being attached to the Bethlehem-Johnsonville Charge and Brown’s Chapel attaching to Lake City to form the Lake City Charge.

Greenville District saw three changes. St. Mark, Greenville, was attached to Berea Friendship to form the Berea Friendship-St. Mark Charge, and Salem was attached to St. John, Greenville, to form the Salem-St. John Charge. Woods Chapel, Greer, was closed.

Multiple changes happened in the Greenwood District. The Pomaria Charge was dissolved, making New Hope a station church and attaching Capers Chapel, Pomaria, to Shady Grove in the Columbia District. The St. John-Warrenville Charge was

dissolved, making St. John a station church and attaching Warrenville to Langley and Capers Chapel to form the Langley-Warrenville-Capers Chapel Charge. The Ebenezer-Mathews Charge and Lowell-Street-Panola Charge were both dissolved. Ebenezer and Panola become station churches, while Matthews, Lowell Street and St. Paul, Ninety Six, were attached to form the Lowell Street-Mathews-St. Paul, Ninety Six, Charge. The Ridge Spring Charge was dissolved, with both Ridge Spring and Spann becoming station churches.

In the Hartsville District, both the North Sumter Charge and the Jefferson Charge were dissolved, with all four churches—Antioch, Shepherd, Fork Creek and Jefferson—becoming station churches. Hebron was attached to McBee to form the Hebron-McBee Charge.

Six charges were dissolved in the Orangeburg District. The Livingston-Pine Hill dissolution makes Livingston and Pine Hill station churches. The dissolution of the North Circuit makes North and Trinity,

North, station churches. The Edisto Charge was dissolved, with St. John, Orangeburg, and Wesley Grove, Cordova, continuing as Edisto Charge and Union, Cope, becoming a station church. The dissolution of the Pelion-Sharon Charge allows both churches to become station churches. The Eutawville Circuit was dissolved, with Eutawville becoming a station church and attaching Target and Gerizim to form the Target-Gerizim Charge. The Orangeburg Circuit was dissolved, merging Bethlehem and Mount Nebo to form Triune UMC, which was then attached to St. John, Orangeburg, to form the Triune-St. John Charge.

In the Rock Hill District, Good Samaritan was closed effective Sept. 17, 2024.

Walterboro District had two dissolutions: the Allendale Charge and the Smoaks Circuit Charge. The Allendale Charge dissolution allows Swallow Savannah and Gillette to become station churches. Green Pond and Little Swamp will continue as Smoaks Circuit, but Trinity, Smoaks, was closed.

Stewardship workshop focuses on ‘whys’ behind giving

By Allison Trussell
GREENVILLE—South Carolina United Methodists got the chance to learn more about why stewardship is important at Annual Conference.

Ken Sloane, director of stewardship and generosity at Discipleship Ministries, led a stewardship workshop during the lunch break June 9 and 10.

“Intentional discipleship should build generosity,” Sloane said, noting the Great Commission is the last word from our chief operating officer. It is on us to fulfill it.

“We are called to be fishers of men, not keepers of the aquarium.”

For many years, the church has focused on membership numbers. Sloane believes that has worked against the church. Membership numbers should be a beginning not a finish line.

As people grow in discipleship, generosity should be a part of that process. He asked the audience to think what they could do with 20 mature disciples: You’d have more than the same three people doing the work of the church, young people would have a broader group of mentors and offerings would increase, among other things.

“Investment in discipling means a future of the church.”

Sloane noted that Junious Dotson, former executive of Discipleship Ministries, set three priorities that continue serving the church: 1. Every church should have an intentional discipleship system; 2. Help people develop a mission; and 3. Go to churches outside the U.S. and repeat steps 1 and 2.

Churches need to figure out their



Sloane

“why.”

Sloane recalled an event that his church held annually: the Ladies Tea. His wife got to host a table, which meant making sure people outside the congregation were invited, setting up the table with proper china and making sure all was well. What this meant for him was their dining room table became the test table and he became a server. He spent the months leading up to the tea complaining and cranky.

When he got to the tea, he was told all proceeds went to buy food for the church’s backpack program and because non-church members were invited, the church perhaps would gain some members. Both of those were excellent “whys” for the tea.

He suspects that had he known the “whys” he might have been less grumpy.

“When you understand the whys, it all makes sense,” he said. “Unfortunately, churches too often focus on the ‘shoulds’ instead.”

As disciples own more of the ministry, they become more invested. As they grow, the church is strengthened, both economically and missionally.

Discipleship is both a personal and a corporate ideal. The people in the pews, Sloane said, are responsible for their growth. But it’s up to the church to offer opportunities to equip and empower the people in the pews.

Sloane offered several models of intentional discipleship systems, but emphasized that each church should create their own suited to their needs.

Discipleship Ministries has multiple resources available for local churches: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>.

A Legacy of Perseverance

Mitchell preaches AACW Luncheon

By Jessica Brodie
GREENVILLE—A crowd packed into the Greenville Convention Center Monday at Annual Conference for the African-American Clergywomen Luncheon, ready for a word and a celebration of 32 years of committed service to the Lord.

The Rev. Cathy Mitchell brought a keynote thanking her clergy sisters for the Christian encouragement they offer, not only today but in their early years as a group as well.

“Not many organizations survive 32 years and continue to grow in strength and numbers,” Mitchell said, noting AACW started with 13 women and now they are more than 100 strong, with supporters at every level of ministry.

“I’m proud to say I am a product of this ministry,” Mitchell said.

Lifting up the movies “Hidden Figures” and “The Six Triple Eight,” she shared how women often had to do more with less; the AACW is no different.

“Not only is this still happening but now we have a government that is turning back the hands of time every day,” Mitchell said to amens.

She shared how in Exodus 5:7, Pharaoh refused to give the people straw to make bricks; they had to go and gather their own straw.

African-American clergywomen have had to do the same. In seminary, her professor shared their father didn’t believe in women pastors—that is, until that father met a woman pastor who made him realize just how hard females have to work to serve the Lord. That pastor had to climb into a window to unlock a door to the church week after week—and rather than complaining, she kept going.

In spite of great obstacles and sometimes discrimination, Mitchell shared,



“We have got work to do, and we don’t have time for a pity party,” Mitchell said.

Photo by Matt Brodie

“Women—much like Israelites and the Hidden Figures and The Six Triple Eight—are expected to do the same as their male counterparts, to preach a word, to give someone hope on Sunday morning, still expected to serve their community, go by the hospital, teach.”

She added, “The South Carolina African-American Clergywomen have been climbing into windows to find our straw year after year, making sacrifices, serving two to three churches, sometimes while caring for children and parents.”

She closed by sharing some basic principles AACW have modeled on how to do this well and with joy, pressing on so their good work is complete:

- Be committed to standing on a strong foundation and strong shoulders;
- Be committed to God’s vision, not our own;
- Be committed to the itineracy;
- Be committed to perseverance; and
- Be committed to kingdom-building.

“We have got to work to do, and we don’t have time for a pity party,” Mitchell said. “Wherever there are people, there are people in need of a word, in need of Jesus.

“All we need is a heart for Jesus, and God will make a way.”

Annual Conference.



Photo by Matt Brodie

CF&A presents \$10.3M budget

Council on Finance and Administration President D. Smith Patterson, with Budget Subcommittee Chair the Rev. Sara White, share CF&A's proposed \$10.3 million budget for 2026. The budget is \$1.4 million less than 2025's budget. CF&A shared that an \$800,000 rebate from 2023 separating churches will be applied, so churches will only be apportioned \$9.5 million. Patterson applauded churches' faithfulness in achieving a 90.3 percent collection rate for 2024, especially given the "uncertainty of the challenges facing churches and the conference as a whole."



Photo by Matt Brodie

AC offerings net more than \$14K

Here, even the youngest got the chance to help pass the plate—or basket—at Annual Conference. Annual Conference had the chance to contribute to two offerings at the gathering, one Sunday night to the South Carolina Conference Seminary Students Scholarship Fund and one Monday morning to Healing Guatemala, both of these conference ministries. The scholarship offering brought in \$10,581.28 and the Healing Guatemala offering brought in \$3,980.96.



Photo by Matt Brodie

AC licenses 18 new local pastors

On Monday afternoon, Annual Conference examined and then licensed 18 new local pastors to serve the Annual Conference. Licensed were Kathy Brown Anderson, Minnie Pearl Boneparte, Valerie Denise Brooks-Madden, Gwendolyn Brown, Leslie Brown III, Jana Hitch Clack, Jeffrey Martin Collins, Antuan Levi Cromedy, Danielle Victoria DuBose, Josie Ann Fenn, Jeffrey Leon Godfrey, Kaprisha Dionne Grant, Sharome Demonn Henry, DiAndra Nicole Jefferies, Sandra Charlene MacMillan, Martha Ferguson Sass, Stephanie Lynn Schellinger and Angela Denise Thompson.



Welcome, newly elected members

Juliette Phillpot, chair of the Committee on Nominations, joined by Vice Chair the Rev. Louis Ashely, announces nominees for the various conference-related boards, councils, committees and agencies that were elected at Annual Conference.

Photo by Matt Brodie

SOWING SEEDS:

From Page 1

number of actions.

Annual Conference approved two changes to Standing Rules Monday, one to SR46 (adding the conference secretary to the list of members of the conference's Ministry Advisory Team) and one to SR50 (the change reduces the size of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits from 18 to 12, comprising one-third laymen, one-third laywomen and one-third clergy).

Annual Conference passed a motion proposed by the Rev. John Culp to go on record expressing concern about the federal government making deep cuts to needed federal jobs, health care, education nonprofit agencies, universities and discrimination without justice against the vulnerable, immigrants and LG-BTQ+. (See article, Page 7.)

Council on Finance and Administration President D. Smith Patterson, with the Rev. Sara White, offered the first reading Monday of CF&A's proposed \$10.3 million 2026 budget. The budget is \$1.4 million less than 2025's budget. CF&A shared that an \$800,000 rebate from 2023 separating churches will be applied, so churches will only be apportioned \$9.5 million.

The body approved five resolutions Monday, four with little fanfare and one twice-amended that took an hour and forty minutes to debate. The five resolutions passed are as follows: LG-BTQIA+ Inclusion in Ministry; Our Responsibility for Personal Health; Upholding the Dignity of All Mothers; Supporting South Carolinians Living with Dementia; and Recommit to Collegiate Ministry as a Priority of the Church. (See article, Page 9.)

On Monday afternoon, Annual Conference examined and then licensed 18 new local pastors to serve the Annual Conference. (See photo, this page.)

Monday ended with an Evening Service of Prayer and Praise preached by Dr. Luke Rhyee on "What Would Be Your Epitaph?", drawing from Philippians 1:21. (See article, Page 8.)

Tuesday: Called special session, voting on constitutional amendment

Tuesday at South Carolina's Annual Conference saw much business and holy conferencing, with voting on four amendments to The United Methodist Church constitution and the announcement of a virtual special session of Annual Conference this fall called by the bishop.

Fairley announced the called special session of Annual Conference to review recommendations from the four Jeremiah Teams, which are tasked to assess and then transform how the conference is structured, how it operates and how it aligns with its stated priorities. Set for Oct. 18 at 9 a.m., the Annual Conference Committee has determined the session will be virtual, which Fairley said would be best financially and otherwise. Their work is ongoing, so the teams' exact recommendations are not yet known, but the body will be voting on any recommendations the teams bring forward. (See article, Page 2.)

Also Tuesday, South Carolina United Methodists joined their counterparts around the world Tuesday to vote on regionalization and three other amendments to the denomination's constitution: expanding gender and disability inclusion in church membership; standing against racism and colonialism; and clarifying requirements for clergy-delegate elections. The amendments were all passed by the required two-thirds vote at the 2024 General Conference. But because they will change the UMC constitution, they require ratification by at least two-thirds of the total voting members of all the annual conferences combined. (See article, Page 7.)

The Committee on Equitable Compensation requested and received a 2.5 percent cost of living increase for 2026 to ensure pastors

can continue to pay their bills given the large amount of inflation experienced in the past few years.

The Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits reviewed their changes for the coming year, which impact clergy, deacons, lay employees of the conference and others under conference insurance. Those covered will see an increase in health care costs for this year, going up roughly \$100/month in 2026. They also reminded the body they voted to forgive \$3.4 million in unpaid direct billing costs for 90 churches. Currently, there 29 in arrears this year for a total of approximately \$160,000; 20 of these had their direct bills forgiven in 2024, and of that 20, five have paid nothing toward their bill.

Pamela Goodwine Glover and the Rev. Millie Nelson Smith gave the report of Connectional Ministries, lifting up the various ways they work to connect churches and people across the conferences.

The Committee on Nominations led elections for the various conference-related boards, councils, committees and agencies.

Kay Crowe gave the Report of the Chancellor, updating the body on her work and sharing that a 96-page ruling from the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in the Boy Scout bankruptcy case was recently received. (See article, Page 9.)

At the end of the day, the Rev. William F. Malambri preached a memorial service on "In the Presence of God," celebrating the lives of 52 clergy and spouses who died over the past conference year. (See article, Page 8.)

Wednesday: Budget, 2024 separating church fees

Wednesday at Annual Conference saw passage of the \$10.3 million budget put forth from the Council on Finance and Administration. As part of their report, CF&A lifted up the Columbia District, giving special recognition for being the district with the highest percentage of paid apportionments. (See photo, this page.)

Wednesday also brought a report from the conference trustees that included an update on distribution of fees from 2024 separating churches. The trustees, whose report was taken off the consent calendar, presented an addendum to their report detailing this. Separation fees were those fees paid by the 112 churches that separated in 2024 from the South Carolina Conference. The 2024 separating churches paid \$12.1 million in separation fees. Amendments to the trustees' plan failed. (See article, Page 3.) were heavily debated and ultimately failed.

Also on Wednesday, Annual Conference approved six church closings and the merger of two churches into one new church. Most of the closures were because of declining membership. (See article, Page 10.)

Annual Conference concluded with A Service of Lament to Hope and Fixing of the Appointments, led by South Carolina Bishop Leonard Fairley. (See article, Page 3.)

The service and entirety of Annual Conference closed with the body singing the South African hymn "Siyahamba," triumphantly declaring they are marching, singing, praying and dancing, for the Lord is our light.

Next year's Annual Conference will be June 7-10, 2026, at the Greenville Convention Center.

To view all photos from the 2025 Annual Conference, visit <https://www.flickr.com/umcsc>.

More photos and other news about what happened at Annual Conference will run in next month's Advocate.

Annual Conference.

Cabinet helps churches through 130 Hope Fund grants

The Rev. Cathy D. Mitchell gave the report of the bishop's Appointive Cabinet during Annual Conference, lifting up the efforts being made.

Given the challenges that separation and the economy have placed on churches, the Cabinet created the Hope Fund. Grants are funded from the por-

tion of separation funds granted to the Cabinet by conference trustees. Grants are given to churches who commit to remain United Methodist and demonstrate attributes such as evidenced potential, financial debilitation after a church went through the discernment process but voted to remain UMC,

cooperative parish development and more.

Mitchell reported that as of March 31, 130 Hope Fund requests have been received and approved by the Cabinet in the amount of \$4.9 million, with 42 percent going to African-American congregations, 56 percent to White congregations, 1 percent to multidistrict initiatives for young clergy leadership

development and 1 percent designated for an African-American congregational specialist serving the Florence and Marion districts.

Six remaining grants have been allocated to salary equity and capital improvement/maintenance projects, with five grants allocated to African American congregations and one to a White congregation.





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The Rev. Cathy Mitchell offers communion during opening worship at Annual Conference.



Cody Lidge carries the episcopal banner during opening worship on Monday at Annual Conference.



Bishop Fairley shows off his "By Our Love" T-shirt, which all were asked to wear on the last day.





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Annual Conference.



Conference Secretary Mel Arant smiles during a fun moment.



The Rev. Joseph Kovas leads song.



The Advent UMC, Simpsonville, Worship Band leads the body in song Monday morning.



Lynne Tyner offers praise during a worship song.



Becca White lights the candle during opening worship.



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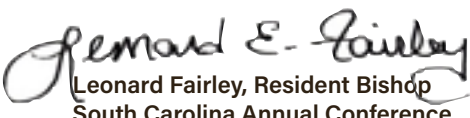
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Ministerial Appointments.

SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

By authority of *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, I hereby fix these appointments for the South Carolina Annual Conference for the 2024–2025 conference year. As commissioned, licensed, consecrated or ordained members of the covenant of ministry, let us offer ourselves without reserve to the responsibilities and opportunities of these appointments.


Leonard Fairley, Resident Bishop
South Carolina Annual Conference
June 12, 2025

STATUS KEY

AF Affiliate Member (¶¶ 334.5, 344.4, 586.4)	HR Honorable Location Retired (¶ 359.3)	PE Provisional Elder (¶¶ 324, 325)
AL Administrative Location (¶ 359)	LM Certified Lay Minister (¶ 268)	PL Part-time Local Pastor (¶ 318.2)
AM Associate Member (¶¶ 322, 369.1, 635.2h)	OA Associate Member of other Annual Conference (¶ 346.1)	RA Retired Associate Member (¶ 357)
DC Deaconess (¶ 1913.2)	OD Deacon Member of other annual conference (¶ 331.8)	RD Retired Deacon in Full connection (¶ 357)
DM Diaconal Minister (2004 Discipline ¶ 369.1)	OE Elder Member of other annual conference (¶ 346.1)	RE Retired Elder in Full Connection (¶ 357)
DR Retired Diaconal Minister (consecrated under provisions of 1992 or earlier Discipline) (¶ 357)	OF Full Member of other denomination (¶ 346.2)	RL Retired Local Pastor (¶¶ 320.5, 327.7)
FD Deacon in full connection (¶ 330)	OL Local Pastor on Loan (¶ 318.4) (NEW)	RP Retired Provisional Member (¶ 357) (prior to Jan 1, 2013)
FE Elder in full connection (¶ 335)	OM Elder Member of other Methodist denomination (¶ 346.1) (New)	SL Student Local Pastor (¶ 318.3) (New)
FL Full time Local Pastor (¶ 318.1)	OP Provisional Member of other Annual Conference	
HL Honorable Location (¶ 359.1)	OR Retired Member of other Annual Conference (¶ 346.1)	
HM Home Missioner (¶¶ 1913–1918) (New)	PD Provisional Deacon (¶¶ 324, 325)	

*Not a Disciplinary Code: **SY** – Other Supplies (Used by GCFA for assigned pastors)*

ANDERSON DISTRICT (38 CHARGES; 58 CHURCHES) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: STEVE A. PATTERSON JR. 8	¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: No One ¶344.1d: Other Valid Ministries: Laura-Allen Kerlin, Corporate Relations Manager, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Clemson CC 2 C. Lane Glaze, President/Chair, One Eleuthera Foundation of the U.S., Clemson CC 5 APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6 — No One APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1 Ryan B. Spurrier, Campus Minister, UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina Conference, Clemson CC 11 LEAVE OF ABSENCE ¶353.2a, 353.3: Person: Megan Augustine Boatwright, Clemson CC 5 ¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One ¶353.2c: TRANSITIONAL: No One ¶353.4: INVOLUNTARY: No One ¶351: SABBATICAL: No One ¶356: MEDICAL: Kitty C. Holtzclaw, Trinity CC 4	CHARLESTON DISTRICT (52 CHARGES; 63 CHURCHES) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: JEFFREY SALLEY 2	Stallsville — Robert L. Rabenstein III (RL) (1/2) 3 Summerville Parish — Darlene Brenda Richardson (PE) 3 (Murray, Wesley)	McFadden, Vivian Miller, Bonnie (RL) Murdock, Lena Elizabeth (RL) Myers, John David Nelson Sr. Dwight A. Nix, A. Robert Ott, Burton Rabenstein, Robert (RL) Ratledge, Jackie S. (FD) Richardson, Victoria (RL) Ripley, Leonard, III (RL) Rodeffer, Larry William Rogers–Berry, Richard Smith, David S. Smith, Debra Quilling Stafford, Virginia (RL) Stiltz, Edward J. (RL) Stonestreet, Cooper Taylor, Kelli W. Washington, Lillian Wilson Jr., Harlan E. White, Sara A.
ANDERSON: Anderson Circuit — Annie K. Jackson (PL) (1/2) 8 (Mount Pleasant, Mount Sinai, Emmanuel) Marshall Memorial-Ebenezer — TBS North Anderson Charge — TBS (John Wesley, Sandy Springs) South Main Chapel and Mercy Center — Kurt L. Stutler (OF)(¶346.2) 12 St. John's — Stephen L. Love 2 Thompson Centennial-Fairfield Charge — Hal B. Johnson (PL) (1/2) 9 Toxaway — Freda A. Brock (PL) (1/2) 10 Trinity — Roy M. Mitchell 6 Minister of Discipleship/Outreach — Kathryn M. Bariou (FD) 4 Zion — Beverly CroweTipton 10	HONORABLE LOCATION Active: John R. F. Evatt, Mount Zion CC Patricia A. Ginn-Griffeth, TBD CC Retired: George M. Workman, Union Grove CC	BONNEAU: Berkeley Circuit — TBS (Eccles, Hoods Chapel) CHARLESTON: Asbury-St. James — Timothy G. Shaw (PL) (1/2) 20 Bethany — Susan Pennock 3 Associate — Rachel Headden (PE) 1 Bethel — Susan P. Leonard 8 Centenary — Lorenzo Moses (1/4) 22 Cokesbury — Suzanne Walker 1 Epworth — Vivia L. Fowler (FD) (1/2) 4 Grace — Benjamin O. Burt 5 Associate — Kim M. Bryant (PD) (1/2) 3 John Wesley — Kenneth B. Timmerman 6 Associate — TBS Midland Park — Millard Cooper Stonestreet (RE) (1/2) 4 Mount Carmel — Nathan Smalls 6 New Francis Brown — Cindy S. Shaw (FL) 2 North Charleston — Meredith M. Dark 2 Old Bethel — David V. Washington (FL) 5 St. Andrews Parish — Brent L. Dehlbom (FL) 4 St. Mark — W. Michael Bruce (RE) 2 Trinity — Michael D. Wood (PL) (1/4) 3 Washington — Kerry Brisbon (PL) (1/2) 5 Wesley — Eleanora C. Ellington 4	APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection: John S. Poole (FL), Charleston Wesley Foundation Director 4 Jeffrey Salley, Charleston District Superintendent 2 TBS — Congregational Specialist Charleston/Walterboro Districts ¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: Jason D. Everson, Chaplain, US Navy, Chapel of Hope, Yokosuka, Japan, Isle of Palms CC 9 Daniel Flessas, Charleston Fire Department Emergency Management Division, Executive Department, Hibben CC 6 George H. Grant, Director of Research in Faith and Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, Bethel CC 26 ¶344.1d: Other Valid Ministries Carly K. Wicklund, Staff Chaplain, Pediatric Staff Chaplain UNC Health Care, Chapel Hill, NC, Bethel-Charleston CC 4 Bernett W. Mazyck (FD), President/CEO, South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations, Murray CC 13	COLUMBIA DISTRICT (44 charges; 47 churches) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: FRANCES M. ELROD 4
BELTON: Latimer Memorial-Homeland Park — Michael L. Vandiver (RE) (1/2) 2 Union Grove — Amy D. Bratton 14	DIACONAL MINISTERS Active: No One Retired: Carolyn Elaine Brashear, Trinity Ann Barton Fuhr, Lawrence Chapel	CROSS: Cross — Davie Sanders 7 (Jerusalem, Zion) Greater St. Paul — Raymond P. Gibbs (FL) 4	APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6 — No One APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1 Adriane M. Burgess, St. Mary's Road UMC, South Georgia Conference 7 Soon S. Nix (FD), Associate, Korean Church of Atlanta (3/4), North Georgia Conference 6	BLYTHEWOOD: Trinity — Scott W. Smoak 6 Associate — Julie Songer Belman 2 Upper Richland Charge — Robert V. McDowell (OR)(¶346.1) (1/2) 3 (Beulah, Oak Grove)
CALHOUN FALLS: Calhoun Falls — TBS	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	EDISTO ISLAND: Edisto Island — Len Ripley (RL) (1/2) 2 Wesley Memorial — TBS	ADRIANE M. BURGESS, ST. MARY'S ROAD UMC, SOUTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE 7 SOON S. NIX (FD), ASSOCIATE, KOREAN CHURCH OF ATLANTA (3/4), NORTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE 6	CAYCE: Cayce — Tom H. B. Wall (RE) 2
CENTRAL: Mount Zion — Joseph Gambrell (PE) 1	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	FOLLY BEACH: Folly Beach — TBS	LEAVE OF ABSENCE ¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: Reams, Richard H., Bethel CC 5 ¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One ¶353.2c: Transitional: No One ¶353.4: Involuntary: No One ¶351: Sabbatical: No One ¶356: Medical: No One	COLUMBIA: Asbury Memorial — Laurie G. Brandes (FL) 2 Ashland — Jonathan D. Harris 1 Bethel — Mason H. Cantey 2 Bluff Road — Stephanie E. F. Stafford (PL) (1/2) 3 Columbia — Kermit C. Moss (OF)(¶346.2) (1/2) 3 Executive Pastor— Ashley McCoy-Bruce 2 Fair Lawn — James T. “JT” Brown 1 Francis Burns — Geneva G. Stafford 7 Grace — Meghan L. Sweeney Cook 2 Heyward Street — Tammy A. Blom (OF) (¶346.2) (1/2) 10 I. DeQuincey Newman — Frank V. James (RE) (1/2) 4 Journey — George A. Ashford 19 Associate — Margo W. Williams (PL) (1/2) 1 McLeod — TBS Mill Creek — Sharon L. Long (PL) (1/4) 6 North Columbia — Ralph C. Young (RL) (1/2) 7 (Mount Pleasant, St. John)
CLEMSON: Clemson — Thomas B. Wilkes III 4 Associate & Campus Minister — Steven P. Simoneaux Jr. 13 Discipleship Minister — Margaret H. Wilkes (FD) 4	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	GOOSE CREEK: Goose Creek — Lisa Hawkins 1 St. James — Joshua W. Tietje (OM)(¶346.1) 4	HONORABLE LOCATION: Active: No One Retired: Cermette Clardy Jr.	NEAR EAST: Near East — Susan D. Culler (HL) (1/2) 5 Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
Lawrence Chapel — Justin Ritter 1	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	HUGER: St. Thomas Charge — Cheryl G. Johnson 4 Associate — Lee M. Johnson (PL) (1/2) 4 (New Hope, Stewart Chapel, Zion)	DIACONAL MINISTERS Active: No One Retired: No One	SHANDON: Shandon — C. Smoke Kanipe 10 Associate — James A. Grubb 8 Associate — Margaret R. Cantey (FD) (3/4) 2 Minister of Music and Arts — Donald E. Huss Jr. (FD) 15 Suber Marshall Memorial — E. Reggie Rowell 1 Trenholm Road — James L. McCoy-Bruce 4 Associate — Mollie B. Reddic 3 Director of Music Ministries — Sarah T. Fletcher (FD) (3/4) 17 Virginia Wingard Memorial — Sheila Elliott Hodge 2 Washington Street — Rebecca J. Shirley 5 Associate, Nurture/Discipleship Development — Alston F. Lippert (PL) (1/2) 9 Director of Family Ministries — Katherine L. James (FD) 2 Wesley — Tiffany D. Knowlin 11 Whaley Street — Susan D. Culler (HL) (1/2) 5
EASLEY: Ariah-Tabor — Roger M. Gwinn (RL) 22 Bethesda — A. Judson King 6 Easley Charge — Adrienne Stokes (PE) 1 (Easley Chapel, John Wesley) Fairview-St. Paul — J. Kevin Gorry (RE) (1/2) 10 First Church — Michael J. Hood 5	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	ISLE OF PALMS: First — Charles Andrew Phillips 4	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
HONEA PATH: Trinity — Shannon Bullion 1	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	JOHNS ISLAND: Johns Island Parish — Pattie E. Gordon 8 (Bethlehem-St. James, New Webster) Wesley — Doris R. Bright 4	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
IVA: Bethel-Ruhamah — Richard A. Powell (PL) (1/2) 2	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	LADSON: Wesley — Curnell Graham (OE)(¶346.1) 3	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
LIBERTY: Liberty-Zion — Vaughn E. CroweTipton (OF) (1/4) 3 Associate — Ronald E. Bentley (FD) (1/4) 5	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	McCLELLANVILLE: Sewee Santee Charge — Roye Lynn Kulik (RE) (1/2) 7 (McClellanville, Ocean Grove, Wren's Chapel)	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
PENDLETON: Pendleton Charge — Andre L. Gary Sr. (PL) (1/2) 2 (Bethel, Central)	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	MONCKS CORNER: Centenary — Eleanor Cooper Brown (PL) (1/2) 3 Joshua — Mae Frances Taylor 20 Moncks Corner — Rebecca Rowell (PE) 1 Smyrna — F. Debra Dowdle (RA) (1/2) 3	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
PICKENS: Grace — Valerie K. Mireb 5 Mount Bethel-Porter's Chapel — Joe D. Durham (RL) (1/4) 4 Co-Pastor — Brenda W. Durham (RL) (1/4) 4	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	MOUNT PLEASANT: Hibben — Sara White (RE) 1 Associate — Katherine A. Brock (FD) 5	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
SENECA: Ann Hope-Friendship — Ray Tavenner (SY) 1 New Harmony-Robinson Chapel — Shane Whitner (SY) 1 St. Mark — S. Alexander Stevenson 3	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	PINOPOLIS: Wesley — Shamond Riddy (OF)(¶346.2) 5	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
STARR: Starr Charge — Tom Cribb (SY) (1/2) 2 (Hebron, Starr)	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	RIDGEVILLE: Spring Hill — Robert Nix (RE) 2	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
TOWNVILLE: Dickson Memorial — TBS	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	ST. STEPHEN: All Saints Charge — Marvin Taylor Jr. (PL) (1/2) 4 (Cordesville, New Light) Bethel — Lillian Washington (RE) 2 Jehovah — Tony Richardson Sr. (PL) (1/2) 11 Mount Nebo — Richard Irving (PL) (1/2) 10 St. Stephen Charge — Lena Elizabeth Murdock (RL) (1/2) 3 (Rehoboth, St. Stephen)	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
WALHALLA: St. Luke — Kevin B. Lindley 8	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville	SUMMERVILLE: Bethany — Michael D. Ritter Sr. 4 Associate — W. Isaac Dusenbury 2 Boone Hill — Sheldon L. Withrow (FL) 6 Enoch Chapel—Grove Hall: (Enoch Chapel) — Victoria Richardson (RL) (1/4) 21 (Grove Hall) — Virginia B. Stafford (RL) (1/4) 22	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
WESTMINSTER: Double Springs-Rock Springs — James R. McDowell (PL) (1/4) 5 Hopewell — James R. McDowell (PL) (1/4) 8 Westminster-Chicopee — Jeffrey J. Hogan (PL) (1/2) 5	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville		DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
WILLIAMSTON: Grace-Pelzer — Susan Y. Sullivan (PL) (1/2) 2 Williamston Charge — Gwendolyn Brown (PL) (1/2) 3 (New Golden Grove, St. James)	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville		DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2
APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection A. Melton Arant Jr., Coordinator of Clergy Services/Secretary of the Annual Conference , Zion/Anderson CC 6 Steve A. Patterson Jr., Anderson District Superintendent 8	DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: Mary Lou Edens, Grace, Abbeville		DEACONESSSES Active: No One Retired: No One	WINDSOR: Windsor — Claire Van Den Berg 2

Continued on next page

Ministerial Appointments.

LEXINGTON:
Boiling Springs — TBS
Faith — Hope R. Morris 7
Lexington — James S. “Mack” McDowell 4
Associate — Meegian A. Gossard 3
Red Bank — Jeremy L. Howell 1
WEST COLUMBIA:
Brookland — Christopher Mark Payne (PL) (1/2) 7
Mount Hebron — Ann D. Kovan 1
Platt Springs — Debbie H. Miller (RL) 4
Shiloh — Sandra G. Stillinger (PL) (1/4) 8
Trinity — Darlene L. Kelley 2
WINNSBORO:
Fairfield Charge — Frances S. Connell 3
(First, Monticello)
Gordon Memorial-Greenbrier — TBS

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Fran M. Elrod, District Superintendent, Co-lumbia District 4
James L. Friday, Director of Congregational Development, Wesley UMC CC 7
W. Everette “Rett” Haselden, Conference Benefits Officer 2
Walter E. Strawther, Congregational Special-ist for African American/Columbia/Harts-ville Districts, Shandon CC 5
James D. Taylor III, Director, Wesley Founda-tion USC 2
Robert M. Vincent, President, SC United Methodist Foundation, Salem, Irmo CC 8
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Lara Caulder Byrd, Chaplain, United States Navy, Lexington CC 7
John D. Evans (RE), Pastoral Counseling, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Columbia, Washington Street CC 31
Adrienne H. Fink (FD), Chaplain, Prisma Health Department of Spiritual Care and Education, Washington Street CC 11
N. Nichole Middleton, Chaplain, Federal Bu-reau of Prisons, Trenholm Road CC 16
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Kenneth R. Kennerly (RE), Counselor V.A. Medical Center Addiction Treatment Unit, Columbia, Trinity, West Columbia CC 46
Elizabeth Murray (FD), American Church in Paris, Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults, Lexington CC 5
Luke Moon Taeg Rhyee, Missionary to Guate-mala, Mission Society 11
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6
— No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1:
Amanda T. Young, Mountain View Charge, Holston Conference 1
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal:
J. Scott Efird, TBD CC 2
Jon A. Hoin, Union (Irmo) CC 4
Sara E. Relaford, Union (Irmo) CC 4
James B. Rogers (PE), TBD CC 1
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional:
Jeri-Katherine Warden Sipes, St. Mark CC 1
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical: No One

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active:
M. Susan D. Culler, Washington Street CC 10
Scott G. Middleton, Washington Street CC 30
Retired:
M. David Arant Jr., Emmanuel CC 27
Benjamin B. Bishop, Cayce UMC CC 25
Glen McCoy, Columbia CC 24
English B. Percy, Trinity UMC, West Colum-bia, CC 25

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired:
R. Fletcher Carter, Virginia Wingard CC
Lillian Quackenbush, TBD
Cheryl Walker, Wesley CC
Carol Hart Watson, Columbia CC

DEACONESSSES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Adams, James C.
Alexander, Robert E.
Alley, Joseph W.
Anderson, David L.
Arant Sr., Athon M.
Arant, James S. (RD)
Arant, Ruth H. (RD)
Armstrong, Debra A.
Ballenger, Walter C.
Barnes Jr., Rudolph C. (RL)
Barwick, Kenneth W.
Bauknight, David D.
Bauknight, John M.
Bell, Michael C.
Borom, W. Robert
Bowman, Thomas J.
Branch, Charles S.
Bratton, Scott M.
Britt, W. Donald
Brooks, Boyce F.
Brum, Sonia E.
Buie, Franklin B.
Childs, William R. “Bill”
Chong, Yu Fong
Clyburn, David A.
Collier, Elizabeth Jane
Cooper, Wiley B.
Cox, Albert L.
Cox, Robert L.
Culp, John W.
Culp, Karin B.
DeDonato, David M.
Dodds, Roger R.
Edwards, Charlie A.

Etheredge, Ernest C.
Evans, John D.
Evans, William F.
Gramling, Roger M.
Griffin, M. Kathryn
Gunn, James H.
Harmon, Paul W.
Harmon, Samuel K.
Hays Jr., Lawrence F.
Henry-Crowe, Susan
Holler, John E.
Horne, R. Wayne
James, Frank V.
Johnson, Mary L.
Jones, Joel R.
Kennerly, Kenneth R.
Kinnett, Paul “Mac”
Laney, Sterling S.
Lavender, Phil C.
Lee, Young In “David”
Mayfield, Patricia P.
McDowell Jr., Edward H.
McKeown, Robert E.
Middleton, Albert
Middleton, Evelyn C.
Miller, Debbie H. (RL)
Miller Jr., Noble F.
Mims, John W.
Moore II, Raymond L.
Morris, Franklin D.
Moseley, Diane A.
Nates, James H.
Paik, Miyoung
Parrish, Patricia J.
Pearson, John C.
Phillips, Gary D.
Prill, Kenneth W.
Rodgers, Augustus
Rowell, Eldridge R.
Scott Jr., Otis
Simmons, Colin E.
Steil, W. Edwin
Summers, Thomas A.
Taylor, Cynthia C.
Taylor, Randy M.
Teague, Willie S.
Thompson, Mark E.
Tuell, James
Ulmer, B. Susan
Watson, J. Austin
Watson, Joe Cal
Westerkam, Diana C.
White, Toni L.
Williams, Robert T.
Williams, Thurmond
Wilson II, Joseph A.
Yongue, Neil
Young, Ralph C. (RL)

FLORENCE DISTRICT
(48 charges; 64 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
M. Terrence “Terry” Fleming 8

CADES:
Bethesda — Shawn Chestnut 4
Faith — Edward McKnight (PL) (1/2) 10
FLORENCE:
Central — Thomas Smith 7
Associate — Ronald B. Crimm (PD) 1
Minister of Faith Formation & Disciple-ship — Meg Jiunnies (FD) 9
Cumberland — Martin L. Quick 4
Dawsey — Matthew A. Price (PL) (1/2) 3
Friendship — TBS
Highland Park — Katherine Haselden Crimm 3
Mount Zion — Palma Duncan Thomas (RL) (1/2) 5
Quinby-Bethsaida — Gerald L. Truluck (RL) 21
Salem — Briant S. Mungo (PL) (1/2) 10
St. Paul — TBS
Wesley — James Peterson (PL) (1/2) 4
GREELEYVILLE:
Greeleyville Parish — John P. Thomas (RL) (1/4) 2
(Wilson Chapel, Long Branch)
HEMINGWAY:
Jeremiah — Norma Bartelle (PL) (1/4) 5
Mount Seal — Cynthia B. Williams (PL) (1/4) 5
JOHNSONVILLE:
Johnsonville Circuit — Grayson E. Fallaw (PE) 1
(Bethlehem, Johnsonville, Vox Memorial)
JORDAN:
Jordan Charge — B. Dawson Price (FL) 1
(Bethlehem, Jordan)
KINGSTREE:
Asbury —Patrick M. Wilson Sr. (PL) (1/4) 4
Bethel — Evelyn Fulmore (FL) 2
Elijah — L. Johnny Epps (PL) (1/4) 1
Jerusalem — Isiah Brown (RL) (1/2) 3
Kennedyville — Norma D. Bartelle (PL) (1/4) 11
Kingtree — George Howle (RE) 1
Mount Zion — Keith Hunter 4
St. Mary — Mildred M. Brown (PL) (1/4) 2
St. Michael — Barry S. McFadden (1/2) 10
St. Paul — Jerry L. Gadsden 7
LAKE CITY:
Lake City Charge — Carsten Aubrey Bryant 1
(Lake City, Brown’s Chapel)
Lake Point-Ninevah — Franklin D. James (RL) (1/4) 1
Mount Beulah — Benjamin Graham (RL) (1/2) 7
St. John — Mark Mitchell (RE) 1
St. Luke — Mildred M. Brown (PL) (1/4) 1
Wesley Chapel — Louis R. Ashley 2
LYNCHBURG:
Lynchburg Charge — Pat McGee (SY) 1
(Lynchburg, St. Luke, Trinity)
New Haven — Samuel B. Cooper (RE) (1/2) 11
St. Paul-Elliott — Pernerva Thomas (RL) (1/2) 3
St. Paul-Wisacky-Warren Chapel — Gracie L. Singletary (PL) (1/2) 2
MANNING:
Manning — David McManus Jr. 5

MORRISVILLE:
St. Paul — James Pressley (PL) (1/4) 4
NESMITH:
Friendship — Ernest Frierson 4
PAMPALICO:
Pamplico — Gary Newton Lowe (OF) (¶346.2) (1/4) 3
PINEWOOD:
Pinewood — TBS
(Pinewood, Paxville, Andrews Chapel)
SCRANTON:
St. John Charge — Jeffrey P. Cila (PL) (1/2) 1
(Scranton, St. John, Nazareth-Olanta)
SHILOH:
Shiloh — Corey A. LaSane (PL) (1/2) 2
(Asbury, St. John)
SUMMERTON:
Summerton — Jennifer Alana Price (FL) 3
TIMMONSVILLE:
Mount Zion — Willie Wilson (RE) (1/4) 2
St. Luke — Willie Wilson (RE) (1/4) 2
UNION:
Union-Elim Charge — Richard Carl Jayroe (RL) 4

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
M. Terry Fleming, District Superintendent, Florence District 8
Amiri B. Hooker, Congregational Specialist
Florence/Marion Districts 2
Regena L. Swanson, Methodist Manor Chap-lain (PL) (3/4) 3
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency
David Todd Morrison, Chaplain, United States Army, Highland Park CC 16
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6
— No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1 — No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical: No One

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active: No One
Retired:
Wright Turbeville

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESSSES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN THE CONNECTION
Lou Jordan (SY), Director, Francis Marion Wesley Foundation 12

RETIRED CLERGY
Abraham, Ebbie (RL)
Altman Jr., John M. (RL)
Bennett, Graham Miller (RL)
Bragdon, Dannye O.
Brown, Isiah (RL)
Brunson, Ashley C.
Cooper, J. Jeannetté
Cooper, Samuel B.
Crouch, John (RL)
Dean, Dewey L.
Duncan, Jimmie Will (RL)
Edwards, Joyce M.
Epps, Hazel (RL)
Gain, George R. (RA)
Ganes, Gusta Ger (RL)
Gaskins, Joshua (RL)
Graham, Benjamin (RL)
Hedden, Bette A.
Henderson, Michael B.
James, Franklin (RL)
James, Lindora (RL)
James, William S. (RA)
Jayroe, Richard (RL)
Lawson, Willie
Marcengill, Sam
McKnight, Shirley (RL)
Mitchell, Mark D.
Morehead, G. Dane
Parker, Greta Louise (RL)
Pietila, Thomas C.
Ridenhour, Jimmy (RL)
Sellers, John A. (RA)
Smiley, John C. (RL)
Snowden, Rufus (RA)
Thomas, John Pinckney (RL)
Thomas, Palma (RL)
Thomas, Pernerva S.W. (RL)
Truluck, Gerald (RL)
Wagnon III, Leon L.
Watson, Jerry M.
Williams, G. DeVere (RA)
Wilson, Charles K.
Wilson, Willie

GREENVILLE DISTRICT
(46 charges; 52 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS:
CHRISTOPHER M. LOLLIS
(Greenwood) 2,
CATHY D. MITCHELL
(Spartanburg) 8, &
STEVE A. PATTERSON JR. 8
(Anderson)

EASLEY:
North Easley Charge — Brian Lee Under-wood (FL) 3
(Dacusville, Antioch)

FORK SHOALS:
Lebanon — Carol Bratcher (LM) (1/2) 2
Pisgah-Oak Hill — Wally Culp 1
FOUNTAIN INN:
Trinity — Shawna Darnall Vandelune 4
GRAY COURT:
Gray Court — Pat Gannaway (RD) 2
Owings — Terry LeRoy (SY) (1/4) 5
GREENVILLE:
Aldersgate — Amanda Richardson 2
Berea Friendship-St. Mark — Sylvia Watson 1
Bethlehem — Valerie Brooks-Madden (PL) (1/2) 2
Christ — Larry G. Smith (RL) (1/2) 24
Disciples — Narcie McClendon Jeter 3
East Greenville — LaShelia M. Wyatt 5
(Wesley Chapel, Allen View)
Francis Asbury — Ronald Edward Cook (SY) (1/4) 4
Greenville Parish — Brenda R. Washington (PL) (1/2) 17
(Minus Chapel, New Beginnings Mission)
John Wesley — Daniel T. Hembree (PE) (¶346.2) 5
Laurel Creek — Keyla P. Edwards (PL) (3/4) 2
Laurens Road — Laura R. Bratton (1/2) 15
Monaghan — Patricia Dianne Boyer (RL) (1/2) 3
Open Hearts — Karen Lail Jones (FD) 3
Salem-St. John — Medina L. Miller Gentry (FD) (1/4) 1
St. Matthew — Kurt A. McPherson 4
St. Paul — Charles Brian Humphries 1
GREER:
Faith — Michael Goldston (1/2) 2
Few’s Chapel — Freddie Wells Parker (RL) (1/4) 1
Grace — Angela M. Etheredge-Erwin 3
Greenville Korean Mission — Kyu-Seok Shin 13
Greer Circuit — Amenti Sujai (PE) (1/2) 1
(Bethel, St. Paul)
Jackson Grove — TBS
Liberty Hill — Nelson L. Stokes (RE) (1/2) 9
Memorial — David B. Smith 2
Slater — Wesley Manly (PL) (1/2) 3
PIEDMONT:
Augusta Road — Shawn Armstrong 2
Piedmont — Richard W. Waldrep (RE) 4
SIMPSONVILLE:
Advent — W. Russell Freeman 2
Bethel-Ebenezer — Bradley Thompson (FL) 5
Hopewell — Donald R. Brown 9
Simpsonville — Joe Cate (PL) (1/2) 1
TAYLORS:
Lee Road — Rusty Godfrey (FL) 4
St. Mark — Carlton J. McClam Sr. 3
St. Matthew — James L. Drummond Jr. (PL) (1/2) 1
TRAVELERS REST:
New St. Luke — Bernetha Orr (PL) (1/2) 1
Travelers Rest — Christopher Brian Gilmer 3
Associate — Michelle Dellinger Cockcroft 2
WOODRUFF:
Emma Gray — TBS

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
James M. Dawsey, Professor, Emory and Henry College, Oak Hill CC 18
Cathy Louise W. Joens (FD), Director of Church Relations, Epworth Children's Home, Aldersgate CC 2
Edward McCutcheon, Director, Wesley Found-ation, Furman University 17
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Michael Hayhurst, United States Air Force Chaplain 18
Andrew T. Jones, Chaplain St. Frances Hospi-tal Systems (FD) 3
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Karen Kluever
Christine Reeves-Pendergrass, St. Matthew CC 3
Weston B. Pendergrass, Weston B., Grace CC 3
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6
— No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1
James Edward Elder (AM), Newman Spring/Graysville UMC, North Georgia Confer-ence 9
Angela Reneé Johnson (FD), Minister to Children, Sugar Hill UMC, North Georgia Conference 8
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal:
Matthews, Christine M., CC 2
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical:
Evatt, Perry D., CC TBD 3
White, Charles L., CC TBD 3

HONORABLE LOCATION:
Active:
Kristin M. Dollar, Prairie Village UMC CC 6
John Stephen Haney, Memorial UMC, Greer CC 20
M. Katherine Matthews, Apex UMC CC 11
Retired:
Cox, Christopher W., CC 18

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESSSES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Addis, Howard D.
Allison, Carol D.
Batson, Dan L.
Boyer, Patricia Diane

Callahan, John P.
Childers, R. Clayton
Cole, Joseph L. (RL)
Curtis, Brenda I.
Dennis, James D.
Elliott Jr., Richard F.
Errington, Joseph R.
Gannaway, Patricia A.
Gardner, Les (RL)
Gillespie, Steven D
Gilliam Jr, James O.
Goulart, Robert I. (RL)
Griffis-Woodberry, Debra
Guffee, Michael L.
Harrelson, Curtis Devon (RL)
Hicks, Granville A.
Howell Jr., Robert J.
Huff Jr., A. V.
Joens, Janet C.
Lee, Dennis R.
MacKeil, Alice E.
McAlister, J. Richard
Miller, John Teague
Parker, Fred W. (RL)
Patterson, James F.
Peterson, Gary L.
Pisor, Debra L. (RD)
Riser, George M.
Scott, George W.
Shaw, Charles S.
Smith, Larry G. (RL)
Smith, S. Randolph
Snow, Murray A.
Stanley, Dwaine C. (RL) `
Stoehr, Lorna Lee Curtis
Stokes, Nelson L.
Thames, George E.
Sullivan, Patricia A. (RD)
Thomas, George
Thomas, Redonia M.
Thomas, Tina
Treaster, Fred
Waldrep, Richard W.
Ward, Jon P. (RL)
Warren Jr., John L.
Watson, John H. (RL)
Wechsler, Christine M.
Williams, J. Tom
Wilmer, Paul David (RL)
Wood, Patricia S.
White, Lloyd E.

GREENWOOD DISTRICT
(41 charges; 56 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
CHRISTOPHER M. LOLLIS 2

CLINTON:
Broad Street — Morgan B. Byars 1
GRANITEVILLE:
St. John — TBS
GREENWOOD:
Aldersgate — TBS
Ebenezer — TBS
Kinards — Myra E. Taylor (PL) (1/2) 2
Lowell Street-Mathews-St. Paul Charge — John M. Williams III 1
Lupo Memorial — TBS
Main Street — R. T. Bowling III 1
Mount Carmel — Jo Ann Stone (SY) 2
Panola — TBS
Rehoboth — TBS
St. Mark — Jason Glen Wilson 3
Associate — Robert T. Lybrand (PL) (1/4) 5
Tranquil — John P. Bolin 5
Trinity-Harris Charge — Thessa G. Smith 4
JOANNA:
Epworth-Springdale — Joie Rogers (SY) (1/4) 3
KINARDS:
Hopewell-Sharon Charge — Kathy Cinna-mond (PL) (1/4) 3
LANGLEY:
Langley-Warrenville-Capers Chapel — Leo Roy 1
LAURENS:
Central-Trinity — Gregory Thompson (OF) (¶346.2) (1/2) 2
First — Asa Gray Stallworth (FL) 4
St. James — TBS
McCORMICK:
Plum Branch Charge — Susan Galasso (OF)(¶346.2) 5
(Republican, St. Paul)

NEWBERRY:
Central — Billy Keith Stewart 1
Epting Memorial-Lebanon Charge — TBS
Lewis Memorial-Ebenezer Charge — James H. Counts Jr. (RL) 16
O’Neal Street — Ed Stallworth III (AM) 2
Trinity — Myra E. Taylor (PL) (1/2) 2
NORTH AUGUSTA:
Grace — Catherine Jamieson 4
Associate — Patrick Taylor (FL)(¶347.2) 2
Associate — Ashley Buchanan (FL) 4

POMARIA:
New Hope — Jesse Rogers (FL) 5
PROSPERITY:
Zion — Joseph R. James Jr. 1
RIDGE SPRING
Ridge Spring — Laura A. Kohl (SY) (1/4) 1
Spann — Ross Ruark (SY) (1/4) 1
SALUDA:
Bethlehem — Charles Adams (RL) (1/2) 10
Crossroads-Martha’s Chapel-Mays — Gerald F. Clinkscales (PL) (1/2) 5
St. Paul — Cameron Levi 5
VAUCLUSE:
Vaucluse-Pentecost — Vincent S. Davis (PL) (1/2) 2
WARE SHOALS:
Mount Bethel-King’s Chapel — Michael Written (RL) 2
Ware Shoals-Harmony — Janice B. Hughey (PL) (1/2) 1
WATERLOO:
Soule Chapel — Emil Finley (RL) (1/2) 7
Waterloo — Dan S. Bradley (RE) 11

Continued on next page

Ministerial Appointments.

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Jennifer E. Copeland, Executive Director, NC
Council of Churches, Broad Street CC 11
Christopher Lollis, District Superintendent,
Greenwood District 2
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist
Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6
— No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 — No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical: No One

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active:
John M. Newell III, Grace, N. Augusta, CC 16
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Adams, Charles (RL)
Alford, Judy Ann Martin
Allen, Robert L.
Anderson, Vernon O.
Barnett, Ben L.
Bennett, Hazel (RD)
Bradley, Dan
Campbell, J. Taylor
Charles, Ada A.
Connelly, Jacqueline
Counts Jr, James (RL)
Curry, Eugene L.
Davis, James Ray
Eanes, Lisa Kim
Eidson, Donna (RL)
Finley, Emil (RL)
Goldie, Richard C. (RL)
Hadden Jr., O. Julius
Hadden, Miriam G.
Hightower, William A. (RL)
Hudson, Blaine S.
Long Jr, Joe Nichols
Lusk, T. Joseph
Morton Jr., Ted R.
Osborne, Jean O. (RD)
Palmer, Bruce H.
Pickens, John Gerald
Quarles, J. William (RL)
Rainwater, Brian T.
Rogers, Paul H.
Rogers, Sheila D.
Rogers III, William F.
Roof, Terry A.
Ruth, E. DeVon
Shoemaker, Mary Jane
Smyth, Dan (RA)
Taylor, Bobbie Opal (RD)
Tooth, Cheryl Dyke
Wiggins, Elwood Holler
Wray, Carol P.
Written, Michael Leonard (RL)
Younginer Jr., John M.

HARTSVILLE DISTRICT
(52 charges; 75 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
TELLEY LYNETTE GADSON,
DS 5

BETHUNE:
Bethel — TBS
BISHOPVILLE:
Bethlehem — Kay Adams-Best (RE) (1/2) 2
Hebron-McBee — Jerry Cal McManus Sr. (PL) (1/2) 14
Mechanicsville — Ann Hampton (FL) 2
Mount Zion — Michael Brisbon (PL) (1/2) 3
New Haven — Sharome Henry (PL) (1/2) 2
Spring Hill — Kenneth Carter (RE) (1/2) 2
CAMDEN:
Camden First — Norman Brown (RE) 2
East Camden — Jerry L. Dicks 7
(Emmanuel, St. Matthew)
Good Hope Wesley Chapel — Brenda J. Thomas 5
Lyttleton Street — Bishop Gary Rivas (OM) (¶347.1) 5
St. Paul — Leatha W. Brown 2
West Camden — Raymond Cook Jr. (RL) 2
(Rockspring, St. Peter)

CHERAW:
Cheraw Parish — Sammy Pazi 4
(Bethel, Mount Zion, Wesley)
First Church — Joseph Kovas 1
CHESTERFIELD:
Bethel-Ebenezer — Frederick N. Yebuah (RE) (1/2) 2
Chesterfield Charge — Charles E. Teal (PL) (1/2) 2
(Mount Croghan, Pleasant Grove)
St. Paul — Alisha Hansen 8
Wesley Chapel — Robin Miles (PL) (1/2) 5
DARLINGTON:
Darlington Cooperative Parish* — Reginald Lee 5
Associate — Lyndon B. Alexander II (PL) 4
(New Providence, St. John, Wesley Chapel)
Indian Branch-Epworth — Barbara Segars (RL) (1/2) 9
Shiloh — William A. DuBose (PL) (1/2) 1
St. James — Darren J. McClam (FL) 1
West Darlington — Daniel M. Hall (RL) (1/2) 5
(Bethel, Wesley Memorial)

HARTSVILLE:
Centenary-Kingsville — Rickey Stuckey (FL) 1
Kellybell — Mary B. Burnell (PL) (1/2) 3
Mount Beulah — Levern Epps (PL) (1/2) 5
New Hope — Jacob McLeod (RL) (1/4) 3
New Market — Corinthia Mack (PL) (1/2) 5
Sandy Bluff — Tiffany Redmond (OF) (¶346.2) 3
Wesley — Fred McDaniel 2
JEFFERSON:
Fork Creek — TBS
Hopewell-Wesley Chapel — Patricia Bowman (PL) (1/2) 1
Jefferson — TBS
Sandy Grove-Mount Elon — Marion L. Cooper (PL) (1/2) 10
LAMAR:
Lamar — Paige Wheeler (PE) 1
Lamar-Ebenezer Charge — James Elbert Williams (1/2) 5
(Ebenezer, John Wesley, Sandy Grove)
Lamar Parish — Emma Jones (RL) (1/2) 7
(Newman Swamp, Zion)

LUGOFF:
Lugoff Parish — Jeffrey Belton (PL) (1/2) 1 (Mount Joshua, Mount Prospect, Shiloh)
St. John — John Jordan 1
Unity — Charlie Thomas 3
OSWEGO:
Clark — Sarah Johnson (PL) (1/2) 3
Oswego Circuit — John Dicks (RE) (1/2) 2
(Mount Moriah, St. Mark)

PAGELAND:
Pageland — TBS
Salem — TBS
Zion-Zoar Charge — TBS
SUMTER:
Aldersgate — Regina H. Moore (OE) (1/2) 1
Antioch — Franklin Garrett (RE) 2
Emmanuel — James Moses Smith (RL) (1/2) 3
Mount Zion — Troy Cato (PL) (1/2) 3
Shepherd — Gwendolyn T. White (PL) (1/2) 2
St. James — Allen Nesmith 5
St. Mark — Darlene Dellinger (OF)(¶346.2) 3
Trinity — Angela Marshall (FD) 1

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Telley L. Gadson, District Superintendent,
Hartsville District 5
Millie Nelson Smith, Director, S.C. Conference Connectional Ministries, St. Paul-Camden CC 6
Walter E. Strawther, Congregational Specialist for African American/Columbia/Hartsville Districts, Shandon CC 5
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist
Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Rosetta Everna Ross, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Spelman College, St. Mark CC 30
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6
— No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 — No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical:
Carl W. Hunsucker, CC 4

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active:
Audrey G. Ritter, Jefferson UMC CC 15
Retired:
Linda E. McDaniel, TBD CC
Howard S. Waddell III, Lyttleton St CC 18

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESES
Active:
Selena Ruth Smith, Fire Prevention Educator, Sumter, SC Fire Department 13
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Ammons, Gene Sarvis
Bailey, Harold Jack
Beckom, Terry Martin
Best, Kay Adams
Boatwright Sr., Donald W.
Bowman, Charles Lee (RL)
Brown, Larry Richard (RL)
Brown, Norman A.
Cannon, Willie Mae (RL)
Compton, Charles Gary (RL)
Cook Jr, Raymond F. (RL)
Dargan, William “Bill”
Dean, Dewey Levan
Dicks, John B.
Flail Jr., Melvin W.
Frey, Paul
Garrett, Franklin R.
Griffith, Frank J.
Hall, Daniel M.
Jones, Emma R. (RL)
Josey, Roberta
Lane, James “JC” Charles
Ledbetter, Pamela
McFadden, Genova
McDowell, Julius L.
McLeod, Jacob L. (RL)
Miller, Blondell
Moore, James
Parsons, Barbee Olis
Ravenel Sr., Henry Lee
Ritter II, Carl F.
Segars, Barbara (RL)
Short, Charlie A.
Shugart, Steven L.
Smith, James Moses (RL)

Teal, Charles E. (RL)
Thackston, Thomas Reginald
Thomas Jr., Eddie (RA)
Wood, Mary Kay
Wood, Paul A.
Yebuah, Frederick N.

**The Cooperative Parish consists of churches on multiple charges. Churches are grouped in parenthesis based on charge.*

MARION DISTRICT
(36 charges; 49 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
STEVEN LEE BROWN 3

BENNETTSVILLE:
Bennettsville Charge — Larry McCray (PE) 3
(Aaron Temple, Ebenezer)
Bennettsville Parish — Maurice E. McZeke (PL) (1/2) 4
(Shiloh, Smyrna, St. Michael)
Bethel — William Frank Strickland (SY) (1/4) 1
Level Green — Brenda L. Toms (PL) (1/2) 2
Trinity — Judith A. Knox 8

BLENHEIM:
Parnassus — William Frank Strickland (SY) (1/4) 1

CLIO:
Asbury-Old Clio — Sandra D. Stubbs (PL) (1/2) 7

CONWAY:
Centenary — Alexander J. Stoops Jr. (PL) (1/2) 1
Conway First — Kyle D. Randle 14
Associate — Emily L. Kirby (FD) (3/4) 4
Associate/Carolina Forest — E. Tyler Strange 2
Salem — William A. Harvey (OM) 1
Trinity — William Hubert McCown III 3
Associate/Upper Horry Fresh Expressions — Michael D. Byrd (FL) 2

DILLON:
Dillon Parish — Anthony D. Caldwell (PE) 1
(Beulah, St. Luke, St. Stephen)
Little Rock Parish — Ronald I. McCall (FL) 29
(Bowling Green, McCoy Chapel, New Holly)
Oakland-Manning Chapel — T. Michael Summerlin (RL) (1/2) 14
Union — Phil Price (SY) (1/4) 2
GEORGETOWN:
Duncan Memorial — TBS
Herbert Memorial — Charles L. Wilbanks (RE) 5
Oak Grove-Sampit — Tim McKenzie (SY) (1/4) 2

LAKE VIEW:
Lake View — Joan E. Frenzel (RL) (1/2) 2

LITTLE RIVER:
Little River — Robert A. Adams 2
Wampee — Brenton Staul (PL) (1/4) 1

LONGS:
Ebenezer — Glen W. Dameron (OR)(¶346.1) (1/2) 4

LORIS:
Camp Swamp — TBS

MARION:
Centenary — TBS
Marion First — C. Nicholas Lyerly (FL) 3
Marion Parish — Anthony Alford (PL) (1/2) 5
(Bethel, Pleasant Grove, Springville)
St. Phillips — Ardell Washington (PL) (1/2) 11

MULLINS:
Mullins Charge — Kaprishia D. Grant (PL) (1/2) 1
(Beulah, Shiloh)

MURRELLS LEIAT:
Belin Memorial — William F. Malambri III 7
Associate — Sandra Stevens Poirle 2
Associate — TBS

MYRTLE BEACH:
Joseph B. Bethea — Kim M. Strong (RE) (1/2) 4
Socastee — Paula J. Stover (FL) 2
The Brook — Deborah M. Patterson (PE) 7

NICHOLS:
Nichols — Ed Dayton (SY) 1
NORTH MYRTLE BEACH:
Trinity — Eugene A. Aiken 4
Associate — Stephanie Schellinger (FL) 1
SURFSIDE BEACH:
Surfside — Mary V. Teasley 6
Associate — Tae S. Park 5

WALLACE:
Ebenezer — Juanita Raber (PL) (1/4) 2

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Steven Lee Brown, District Superintendent,
Marion District 3
Amiri B. Hooker, Congregational Specialist
Florence/Marion Districts 2
Emily L. Kirby, Director, Coastal Carolina Wesley Foundation (FD) (1/4) 4
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist
Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6
— No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 — No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical:
Samuel B. George III, Surfside CC 19
Steven M. Todd, Trinity, North Myrtle Beach, CC 7

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Leave of Absence:
Holt, Kimberly S. (DM), Conway First CC 22
Retired: No One

DEACONESES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Adams, Quay W.
Alexander, Jr., Boyd Mclver
Barber, William Lee (RL)
Clemons, Robert B.
Chamblee, Daniel Walker
Crews, Rowan
Daniel, Edmond (RL)
Devorick, Dennis Jay (RL)
Donigian, George H.
Dunn, Linda B.
Dunn, Robert E.
Dyer, Cynthia H.
Fenner, Jack L.
Forrest, Rebecca L. (RL)
Frenzel, Joan E. (RL)
Green, Mary E.
Grimsley, J. Preston
Harper, William N.
Hemingway, John T. (RL)
Heustess, William H.
Howle, George K.
Inabinet, Charles R.
Jennings, Charles T. (RA)
Land, Kenneth S.
Lazar, Julian H.
Lewis, Harold P.
Lockard-Hawkins, Joanne (RL)
Malachi, Maye E. (RL)
Malachi, Robert L.
Malphrus, Carolyn
Mclver, Leslie H. (RD)
Nason Jr., Maurice E.
Nuckles, Marie E.
Olive, George E. (RL)
Phillips, William H.
Roberts, Marsha R. (RD)
Shaw, Bobby
Smith, Ray K.
Strong, Kim M.
Summerlin, T. Michael (RL)
Timmons, W. Gordon
Vance, Margaret Hutcherson (RD)
Vickers III, John (Jack) Henry
Watson, Lawrence A.
Weber Jr., Stanley E. (RL)
Wicker, William T. (RL)
Wilbanks, Charles L.

ORANGEBURG DISTRICT
(50 charges; 72 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
KENNETH L. NELSON 6

AIKEN:
Trinity — Matthew L. Alexander 2
Wesley — Steven Moore McNeal (PE) (3/4) 1
BAMBERG:
Bamberg Circuit — Arthur Rose Jr. (OM) (¶346.1) (1/2) 9
(Bethel, Mount Zion)
Bamberg Cluster — Sheera Yates (FL) 2
(Franklin, Mt. Carmel, Orange Grove)
Barnwell Charge — George Judson Barnes (FL) 3
(Barnwell, Siloam)
Main Street — Javy Rudolph “Rudy” Gwaltney III (SY) 1
Trinity-Pleasant Hill Charge — TBS
BOWMAN:
New Covenant — Sheri Y. White 6
Pineville-St. Stephen — Sharon Spann Gamble 1
BRANCHVILLE:
Branchville-Bethel Charge — Kenneth W. Bundrick (PL) (1/2) 2
CAMERON:
Shady Grove — Mason C. Browder (SY) (1/2) 2
COPE:
Canaan — Jimmy Washington (RL) (1/2) 4
Edisto Charge — Willie W. Clark (OF) (¶346.2) (1/2) 1
(St. John, Wesley Grove)
Edisto Fork — Ellis White Jr. 11
Union — TBS
DENMARK:
Bethel Park — Javy Rudolph “Rudy” Gwaltney III (FL) 4
EUTAWVILLE:
Eutawville — TBS
Gerizim-Target — David Fields (PL) (1/2) 4
Silas — Whittaker V. Middleton (RE) (1/2) 13
HOLLY HILL:
Providence — TBS
JACKSON:
Wesley Chapel — Nancy Reed (RL) 2
LIVINGSTON:
Livingston — TBS
Pine Hill — Jim Smyrl (OR) (346.2) (1/2) 1
NEW ELLENTON:
St. Paul — Ray Camp (OF)(¶346.1) 1
NORTH:
North — TBS
St. Mark — Marvin A. Moss (OE)(¶346.1) 3
Trinity — TBS
NORWAY:
New Beginning — Thomas R. Sims (RL) (1/2) 9
Norway Charge — Gary Wayne Light (OF) (¶346.2) 3
(Lebanon, St. John’s)
OLAR:
Olar — Patricia Dangerfield (SY) (1/2) 10
(Kearse, Mizpah, Salem)

ORANGEBURG:
Cedar Grove-Forest Chapel — Harry L. Brown (PL) (1/2) 11
New Light — Enrique R. Gordon 6

North Orangeburg — J. Derrick Cattenhead 4
St. Andrew’s — Laura H. Whitt 1
St. Paul’s — Albert Shuler (OR)(¶346.1) 2
St. Stephen — Kenneth B. Middleton 2
Trinity — Eddie C. Williams 6
Triune-St. John Charge — Lawrence Cantey Jr. 5
PELION:
Bethel, Peachtree Rock — J. Scott Matthews 2
Pelion — David L. McElreath (SY) 1
Sharon — TBS
ROWESVILLE:
Mays Chapel — Alexander Thomas (RL) 4
Prospect — Minnie Boneparte (PL) (1/2) 1
ST MATTHEWS:
St. Matthews Charge — James W. Lewis Sr. (PL) (1/2) 3
(East Bethel, West Bethel, Mount Zion)
St. Paul — Mason C. Browder (SY) 2

SALLEY:
Clinton — Fred Andrea III (OF)(¶346.2) (1/2) 7
SANDY RUN:
Beulah — TBS
SPRINGFIELD:
Springfield Charge — TBS
(Neeses, Salley, Springfield)
SWANSEA:
Swansea-Wagener Parish — Jessica Kight (FL) 3
*(Calvary-Oak Grove) (Swansea) (Wagener)
WILLISTON:
Williston Charge — Melissa Williams (PL) (1/2) 4
(Blackville, Williston)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Shirley P. Gordon, Orangeburg Wesley Foundation, Campus Minister 7
Kenneth L. Nelson, District Superintendent, Orangeburg District 6
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist
Endorsing Agency:
Robert B. Collingwood (RE), Coordinator of Pastoral Care, V.A. Hospital, St. Louis, MO, Main Street, CC 37
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6
William Douglas Herlong, Candler School of Theology 1
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1:
Christopher C. Key, Advance UMC, Western North Carolina Conference, Duke Divinity School (SLP) 4
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical:
Robbie V. Hall (FL) 9
Pamela D. Richardson (PE) 6

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Abram Jr., Joseph
Anderson, Minnie P.
Belangia IV, Washington W.
Bennett, Jim T. (RL)
Boyd, Ollie M. (RL)
Brawn, Robert A. (RL)
Brown, Harry Lee (RL)
Buchanan Jr., Fred V.
Caughman Jr., K. David
Collingwood, Robert B.
Copeland, Franklin E.
Davis, Gerald E.
Eanes, L. Kim
Elliott, John H.
Evans, John Wesley
Frederick-Watts, Janice L.
Gibson, Jack (RL)
Gordon, Bobby (RL)
Griffin Jr, Alfred
Haywood, Velma M.
Lewis Jr, William Morgan (RL)
Martin, Terry
McClam, Mack C.
McCutcheon, Larry D.
Middleton, Whittaker V.
Miller, Anna G.
Miller III, Carey S.
Murdock Sr., Warren
Parker, Jere Keith
Parker, Larry R.
Peterson Jr., Hughie
Pettit, Ronald A.
Ponds, G. Bernard
Powell, Rodney K.
Preer, John C.
Reid, Barbara L.
Rucker, Bruce E. (RL)
Rucker, Matthew D.
Saylor, Lucinda L. (RL)
Scarborough, Kathryn W. (RL)
Shrawder Jr., Kermit O.
Sims, Thomas R. (RL)
Sistrunk, Annie H.
Stapleton, John Mason
Studebaker, Donald R. (RL)
Thomas, Alexander (RA)
Turner, Judy Hames
Williamson, David W.

**The Swansea/Wagener Parish consists of churches on multiple charges. Churches are grouped in parenthesis based on charge.*

Continued on next page

Ministerial Appointments.

ROCK HILL DISTRICT (36 charges; 53 churches) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: ANTHONY HODGE 6

CHESTER:
Bethel — Shannon Higgins (SY) (1/2) 3
Wesley Memorial — Shannon Higgins (SY) (1/2) 3

CLOVER:
Clover Parish — Fred Moore Jr. (PE) 1
(Clover Chapel, Green Pond, Mount Harmony)
First Clover — Scott Gilmer 1

FORT MILL:
Belair-Osceola Charge — Heather S. Baird 2
Philadelphia — Tammy N. Grey 1
Pleasant Hill — Peter K. Bernntson 3
St. John's — Karen H. Radcliffe 12

GREAT FALLS:
Mount Dearborn-Heath Chapel — David Owens Ussery (RL) (1/2) 14

HICKORY GROVE:
Canaan — TBS

KERSHAW:
Kershaw Charge — G. Eddie Usher (RE) 7
(Damascus, Hanging Rock)

LANCASTER:
Camp Creek-Bethesda — Michael E. Catoe (RL) (1/2) 15
Church of the Good Shepherd-Van Wyck — TBS
First Church — Neal Y. Woods 5
Grace Lynnwood-Tabernacle — Kendall L. Healy (PE) 2
Hopewell — TBS
St. Luke-Salem — TBS
Trinity-Fort Lawn — TBS
Zion — TBS

RICHBURG:
Mount Prospect—Ebenezer — Cecilia M. Davis (PL) (1/4) 6
Richburg-Pleasant Grove — Stacey C. Newlon (PL) (1/4) 5

ROCK HILL:
Aldersgate — Joy (Renee) Garrison 1
Bethel — Emily Scales Sutton 5
Cornerstone-Epworth — Cindy A. Rumsey 1
El Bethel — Nellie G. Cloninger (RE) 3
India Hook — Beth Drennen (RE) 2
Rock Hill Central Charge — Athena Dickey-Cathcart (PL) (1/2) 4
(Mount Olive, New Hope)
Rock Hill Circuit — Mallory J. Nickerson 2 — L. Michael Jarrell 2
Rock Hill South Charge — Dexter Williams (SY) (1/2) 2
(Bethel, Harmony)
St. John's — Cameron Treece 1
Woodland — Robin A. Griffeth 3

SHARON:
Western York Charge — J. Alex Maultsby III (OR)(¶346.1) 2
(Sharon, New Zion, Shady Grove)

YORK:
Philadelphia — Melissa Shortridge (OR) (¶346.1) (1/2) 2
Trinity — Wanda D. Altman-Shirah 5
York-St. James Charge — Thomas J. Bowman Sr. (RE) 2
(Hopewell, St. James, Wesley)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Laurel Capesius (OE), Director, Wesley Foundation, Winthrop University 2
Anthony Hodge, District Superintendent, Rock Hill District 6
Nona M. Woodle (PE), Congregational Specialist for Rock Hill/Spartanburg Districts 2

¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Kristen Richardson-Frick, Program Officer, Rural Church Division, Duke Endowment, St. John's, Fort Mill CC 14

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6 — No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1 — No One

LEAVE OF ABSENCE ¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical:
Shelly Ann Holder (FD) 6

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESSSES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Catoe, Michael (RL)
Chambers, G. Douglas (RL)
Chandler, Philip E.
Cloninger, Nellie G.
Correll, James L.
Drennen, Elizabeth
Drennen, Lowry T.
Farnum, Charlie (OE)
Fuller, Walter Gene
Gardner Jr., Carlos O.
Gibson, John Richard
Hammett, Michael L.
Holler, Adlai Stephen
Hook, Samuel Scott
Hope, Donald J.
Hudson, Betty Kay (RL)
Jackson, Cassandra P.
Jeffcoat, Ronnie L.
King, Larry S. (RL)
Leonhardt, Michael S.
Plowden Jr, Irvin V. (RL)
Shuler, Robert L.
Sloan, Candice Y.
Smith, Jonathan E.
Taylor, David Carroll
Taylor, Deborah W. (RL)
Usher, G. Eddie
Ussery, David O. (RL)
Vick Jr., Arthur D. (RL)
Walker, Michael C.
Warwick, Samuel S.
Wells, Curtis E.
Wolfe, Allen D.
Wyatt, Wade Anthony

SPARTANBURG DISTRICT (38 charges; 53 churches) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: CATHY D. MITCHELL 8

BLACKSBURG
Blacksburg Charge — Richard Charles Andrews (RL) (1/2) 5
(St. John, Sardis)

BOILING SPRINGS:
New Beginnings — Joseph Christopher Greene 6

CHESNEE:
Chesnee-Fingerville — Thomas A. Thornton (OF)(¶346.2) (1/2) 6
Friends in Christ — James R. "Jimmy" Lewis (PL) (1/2) 11

COWPENS:
Cowpens Charge — Wayne R. Major Sr. (RE) (1/2) 11
(Salem, St. Mark, St. Andrews)

CROSS ANCHOR:
Cross Anchor Charge — Brian P. Williams (PL) (1/2) 14
(Hebron, Cross Anchor Yarborough)
Golightly-Tabernacle — Tom Steagald (OR) (¶346.1) (1/2) 3

DUNCAN
Tyger River Charge — W. Michael Jeter (PL) (1/2) 2
(Duncan, Immanuel)

ENOREE:
Trinity — Mary S. Nichols (PL) (1/2) 2

GAFFNEY:
Asbury — Ricky Therrell (SY) (1/4) 2
Buford Street — David E. "Dave" Nichols (RE) (1/2) 7
Dunton — Jimmie R. Lewis (RL) (1/4) 2
Limestone St. — James Ronald "Ron" Singleton (RE) (1/2) 20

INMAN:
Inman Charge — Joe L. Blackwelder (RE) 3
(Aldersgate, Inman)

JONESVILLE:
Jonesville-New Hope — Angelia Price (RA) 2
LANDRUM:
Jacksons Grove — Timothy "Tim" C. Drum II (OE)(¶346.1) (1/2) 4

PACOLET:
Montgomery Memorial — TBS
SPARTANBURG:
Beaumont — Annie R. Crocker (LM) (1/4) 7

Ben Avon — Cecil "Edward" Enlow (SY) (1/2) 4
Bethel — William Bradford "Brad" Gray 6
Cannon's Camp Ground — Miriam Wilson Mick 3
Central — Bryan W. Pigford 1
Director, Christian Education & Programs — Paige M. Wolfe (FD) 9
Cherokee Springs-Liberty — B. Allan Burden (FL) 2
Church of the Covenant — Heather B. Humphries 9
El Bethel-Pacolet Charge — Phillip Wayne Park (OR)(¶346.1) (1/2) 4
Fairmont — Josie A. Fenn (SY) (1/4) 2
Gravely Memorial — Joaquin "Jack" Polin (PL) (1/2) 9
Silver Hill Memorial — Morris Waymer Jr. 2
Skylyn-Arcadia Charge — Robert L. "Skipper" Brock (PL) (1/2) 4
Spartanburg Parish — DiAndra N. Jefferies (PL) (1/2) 1
(Allen Chapel, Florence Chapel)
St. James — Andrew R. Wolfe 6
St. Luke — Thomas Thornton (OF)(¶346.2) (1/4) 2
St. Paul — Megan L. Gray 2
Trinity — Richard R. Howell Jr. 2
Whitestone — Annie Crocker (LM) (1/4) 2

UNION:
Bogansville — TBS
Grace — TBS
Union Charge — Merritt R. "Tuie" Wentz (FL) 14
(Bethel, Duncan Acres)

WHITMIRE:
Whitmire — Mary Schumpert Nichols (PL) (1/2) 3

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Timothy Drum II (OE), Chaplain and Director of Church Relations, Spartanburg Methodist College 10
Cathy D. Mitchell, District Superintendent, Spartanburg District 8
Phillip Lynwood Pace Jr., Chaplain, Oxford College, Emory University, St. James CC 16
Nona M. Woodle (PE), Congregational Specialist for Rock Hill/Spartanburg Districts 2

¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Traci S. Bennett (FD), Chaplain III, Tyger River Correctional Institution, Cannon's Camp Ground CC 19
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Martha Ann Timmons (FD), PS I Love You (3/4) & The Children's Resource Closet (1/4), St. James CC 5
Paige Matthews Wolfe (FD), Fostering Great Ideas (1/2) & Central UMC (1/2) 4

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6 — No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1 — No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE ¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family:
Wendy T. Hudson, Bethel, Spartanburg, CC 5
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical:
Jo Anna Fallaw, Bethel, Spartanburg, CC 6
David C. Inman, Ben Avon CC 7

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active:
Sherry M. Wood, Trinity UMC CC
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired:
Mary L. Miller (DR)

DEACONESSSES
Active: No One
Retired:
Mary Lou Miller (DC)

RETIRED CLERGY
Anderson, Thurman W.
Andrews, Richard C. (RL)
Bobo, Kenneth G.
Boshell, Donald C. (RL)
Bowers, Michael E.
Brewer, Jones L. (RL)
Brown, David A.

Brown, Will Rogers
Cannon, Carol R.
Cannon, Robert T.
Carter, James B. "Jim" (RL)
Culp, Wayne A.
Dillard, Jimmy W.
Duncan, Jason C. (RL)
Ervin, David F. (RA)
Fields, George D. (RL)
Fisher, A. Mickey
Fizer, George H. (RL)
Franklin Jr, E. Herbert
Gavalas, Anthony N.
Griffeth, James Ellis
Hill Jr, Thomas H. (RL)
Holt, Arthur H.
Hunter, James C.
Hunter, Kathryn O.
Hyder, Larry R.
Ivey, James W.
Jamison, Louis D.
Jenkins, Jane D.
Keck, Steven P.
King, Sandra S.
King, Steven M.
Kyllonen, Mitchell W.
Leonard Sr., Ronald Lee
Major Sr., Wayne R.
Nichols, David E.
Norrell, Thomas H.
Price, Angelia P. (RA)
Rawlinson, Carol M.
Reynolds, Edgar B.
Rickenbaker, Luther H.
Roper, Frances "Lee" (RL)
Ropp Jr, John Wesley
Singleton, J. Ronald
Sistare, James Bart
Teagan, Deborah Luther
Thompson, Elizabeth A.
Thompson, William L. (RL)
Tillerson, Elbert S. (RL)
Wilkes, Molly F. (RA)
Wilkins, Rebecca A.

WALTERBORO DISTRICT (45 charges; 73 churches) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS: M. TERRENCE "Terry" FLEMING (Florence) 8, KENNETH L. NELSON (Orangeburg) 6, & JEFFERY SALLEY (Charleston) 2

ALLENDALE:
Central Circuit — Sterling Harris (FL) 1
(New Hope, Simpson, Union)
Gillette — TBS
Swallow Savannah — TBS
BEAUFORT:
Carteret Street — Charles Bryson Williams Jr. 7
Holy Trinity — SanRoman King (PL) (1/4) 4
Port Royal — Anne Gregory Bridgers (RL) (1/2) 15
Waters Edge — Hans Jerome Hamm (PL) (1/2) 4
Wesley — Tracy P. Colleton-Glover (PL) (1/2) 5

COTTAGEVILLE:
Jericho — Antuan L. Cromedy (PL) (1/2) 1
Macedonia — Kendrick Williams (PL) (1/4) 2
Wesley Grove — Gregory Teasdell Sr. (SY) (1/4) 1
DORCHESTER:
Dorchester Circuit — Edward Jay Stiltz (RL) (1/2) 2
(Salem, Zion)

Dorchester Parish — Alfonza Jones Sr. (RL) (1/2) 1
(Oak Grove, St. John)

EHRHARDT:
Ebenezer-Rizer's Chapel — Stanley Bernard Ritter (PL) (1/2) 11
Ehrhardt — Lewis Christopher King III (PL) (1/2) 22
(Wesley Chapel, St. James, Zion, Lodge)
Friendship-St. Luke — Vivian Remona Lingard (PL) (1/2) 16

HAMPTON:
Estill-Black Swamp — Dewey L. Shaffer (OF)(¶346.2) (3/4) 12
(Estill, Furman, Mount Carmel)
Fairfax Charge — TBS
(Bellinger Chapel, Brunson)
Hampton—Varnville Charge — Jack W. Hutto (PL) (1/2) 2
Hardeeville — TBS

Toby's Bluff-Mount Nebo — Lamonte Darnell Hodges (PL) (1/4) 11

HARLEYVILLE:
Harleyville Parish — Martha F. Sass (PL) (1/2) 1
(Morris Chapel, St. Daniel)

HILTON HEAD:
Bluffton — Scarlett Tanner Hester 6
Church of the Palms — Randall L. Haase 1
St. Andrew By-The-Sea — Jonathan E. Tompkins 3

RIDGELAND:
Fisher Chapel-St. Stephen — William H. D. Bowser Jr. (RE) 9
Hardeeville — TBS
St. Luke — Christopher Lee Thompson 5

RIDGEVILLE:
Canaan—Sand Hill — James P. Smith 2
New Hope-St. Paul Charge — Lisa M. Way 1

RUFFIN:
Adnah-Williams Charge — Richard W. Kelly (SY) (1/4) 3
Bells Parish — Les Brown III (OF) (1/2) 2
(Red Root, Sykes Savannah)
Mount Pleasant — Schoneke Summerhill (SY) (1/4) 4
Ruffin Parish — Minnie Dickerson (PL) (1/2) 1
(Buckhead, Hickory Hill)
Smoaks Circuit — G. Palmer Hudson (RL) 1
(Green Pond, Little Swamp)
Springtown — Arthur L. Gamble (PE) 2

ST. GEORGE:
New Grace — Constance Nelson McLeod 5
Shady Grove — James B. Grant (PE) 2
St. George Parish — Anthony Rivers (PL) (1/2) 1
(St. Mark, Trinity)

WALTERBORO:
Bethel — Tresco E. Shannon 1
Bethel-Red Bank Charge — Walter Harley (PL) (1/2) 5
Colleton Circuit — Curtis J. Young (PL) (1/2) 22
(Bethel, Heaven Gate, Trinity)
New Life — Angela Ford Broughton 5
Walterboro Charge — Jeffrey Martin Collins (PL) (1/4) 2
(Mount Carmel, Peniel, Sandy Dam)
Walterboro Parish — Kathy Brown Anderson (PL) (1/2) 2
(Cumberland, Isaiah)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
No One
¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Wilhelmina Williams Thompson, Resident Chaplain, Duke Raleigh Hospital, North Carolina Conference 2
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6 — No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1 — No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE ¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical: No One

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESSSES
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Bowser Jr., William D.
Bridgers, Anne (RL)
Davis, Frederick R.
Geddis, Roosevelt
Harrison Jr., Jerry
Huggins Jr., Leonard
Lybrand, Frank E.
Maddox, Susan B.
Marchant, James D. (RL)
Ross, James Albert (RL)
Smith, Theron Walker



Kids Camp a success

Children have some fun at the Annual Conference Kids Camp, held Monday through Wednesday of the event to relieve parents' childcare struggles so they could be able to participate fully in Annual Conference. The camp was hosted by Open Hearts UMC, Greenville. Activities included an outdoor scavenger hunt, Bible story time, tie-dye T-shirt-making, a stepping stone craft, a service project and movie time.

Photo courtesy of Jana Clack



Advocate hosts book signing

Book lovers and Advocate supporters gathered at Annual Conference Tuesday during lunchtime for an Advocate Press Meet the Author/Book Signing. Many Advocate Press's authors showed up to talk to readers and sign copies of their books, which were also available for purchase. Here, the Rev. Meg Cook, author of two children's books, chats with a reader. To learn more about the 36 titles available, most by South Carolina United Methodist authors, visit <https://www.advocatesc.org/books>.

Photo by Matt Brodie



Cognitive Connection
by Dr. Mark Thompson

What I would want

In my 27 years of military service, I was very fortunate to be selected for a one-year residency in clinical pastoral education.

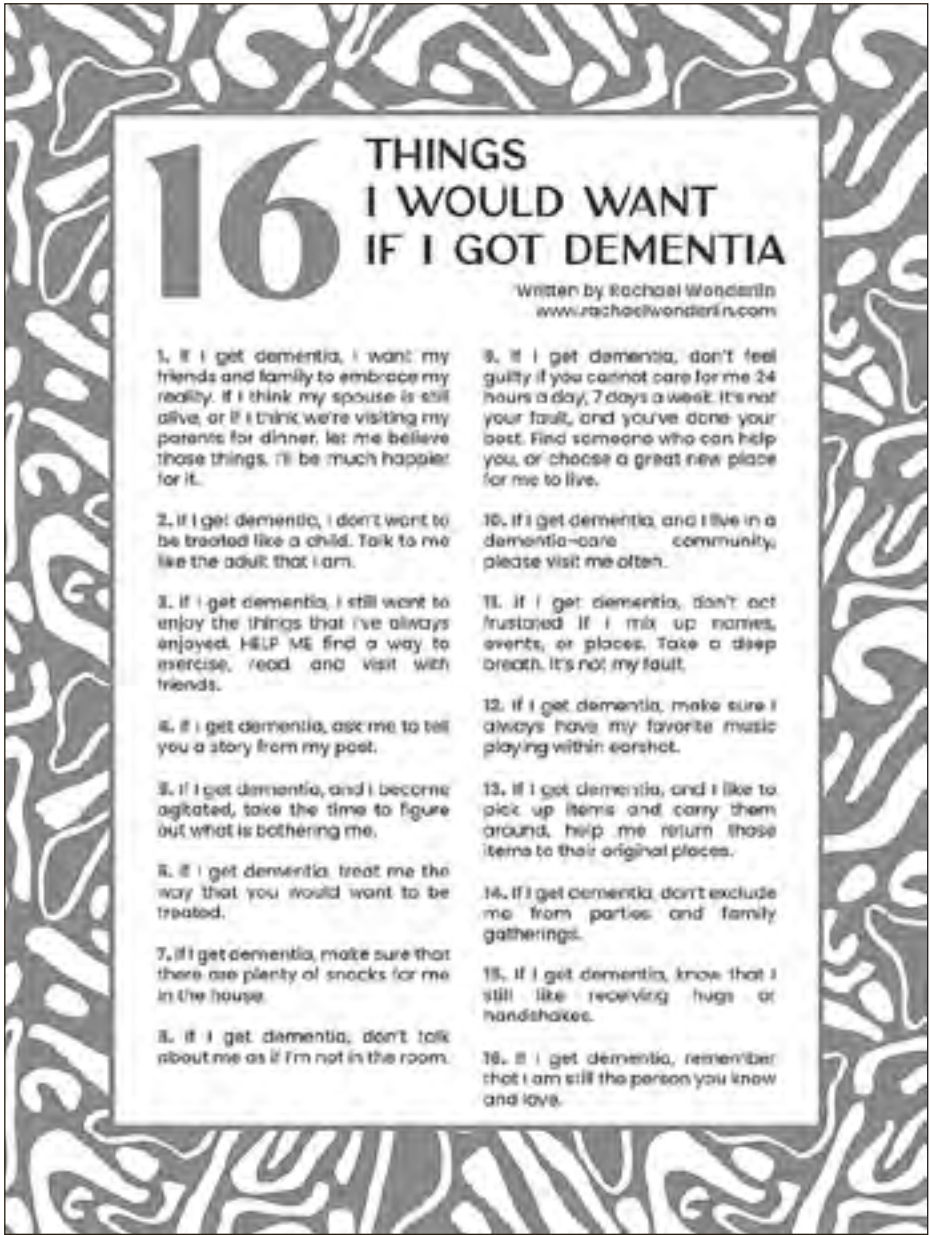
Ten of those years I spent as a hospital chaplain and was often asked by families to help them work with and understand how they could help their loved one with the effects of dementia.

The below poem was written by Rachael Wonderlin. I believe that if you, your family or a friend are having to work with someone with dementia, it is one of the best tools I have ever seen to help you in your struggle.

This should be hung in every dementia care home and in hospitals where there are patients with dementia.

If I get dementia, I'd like my family to hang this wish list up on the wall where I live. I want them to remember these things.

Thompson pastors Gilbert UMC, Gilbert.



Salkehatchie camps begin

Camps have begun across the state for Salkehatchie Summer Service.

The first three camps—Sumter, Win-yah Bay (Georgetown) and New Hope (Chesterfield)—ran June 7-14, with 11 more slated for June and 13 more for July.

“The first three of the 27 Salkehatchie camps have completed their week and helped 10 families with needed home repairs,” said Salkehatchie Board Chair Ward Smith.

“The home repair needs in more than 28 counties in South Carolina have drastically increased since Hurricane Helene in late September.”

Founded in 1978 by the Rev. John Culp, Salkehatchie brings youth, young adult and adult volunteers together to repair and rebuild homes for people in need, many of them living in poverty situations without the ability to fund the work on their own.

The weeklong mission camps offer youth and adults the opportunity to engage in meaningful home-repair ministry across South Carolina.

Over the years, hundreds of homes received new roofs, ramps, flooring, ceilings, bathrooms, kitchens and improvements in accessibility through the hands of youth at Salkehatchie.

Those who have or are planning to participate in this year’s Salkehatchie are invited to email photos for an upcoming *Advocate* article; send to news@advocatesc.org.

For more information about Salkehatchie, visit <https://www.salkehatchie.org>.

Native American Ministries.

An American Indian Affirmation of Faith

By Zan Tracy Pender

I believe in Grandfather God, the Great Spirit, the creator of all life and the maker of heaven, the universe and the earth. You have always been, and you will always be there.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his son, the man who walks on water, the Savior of all people, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

I honor thy father and mother, Father Sky and Mother Earth, acknowledging that I am a mere strand in the circle of life where all living things are connected. What I do to the web, impacts all things. I am only a tenant caring for God’s land.

I believe in the Sacred Circle remembering all of its teachings promising to walk a good red road keeping Grandfather God and Christ at the center of my life.

I shall follow the teachings of my ancestors. I will treat all things with respect. I will only take what I need and nothing more. I will honor all of my relations working for the equality of all. I will speak the truth and to the good of others. I will leave no tracks as I walk the earth on life’s journey.

I offer my confession to Grandfather God and Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of my sins and my life everlasting. This is my solemn commitment as an American Indian, a human being, and my affirmation of faith. I shall now go forth and seek that all my brothers and sisters in the circle of life join me. Aho, Amen.

Pender is NAC chair.



Photo by Matt Brodie

Virtual golf tourney a success

Killingsworth held a virtual golf tournament Monday, May 19, to raise funds for their ministry. The event was held at the Players Club in Columbia. Men’s winners were Dan O’Mara, Stephen Taylor, Rett Haselden and Chris Lynch. Women’s winners were Marlene Sipes, Margaret Jordan and Sisi Routh. Sipes was also the closest to pin winner with more than six feet for the win and a birdie.

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Epworth News
by Beth Williams

The critical need for early intervention

In Scripture, we are continually reminded of God’s love for children. Two of my favorite verses are Mark 9:36-37 that describe Jesus’s interaction with a small child. The Scripture reads: “He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me.’”

At Epworth, we follow Jesus’s teaching that the love of children is a way of welcoming him and God into our lives. We offer our services and programs to children of all ages, and one of our most successful programs is one that serves children at a very young age who are experiencing developmental delays and/or disabilities.

Epworth’s Early Intervention Center offers services to families and their children who benefit from special programs and instruction to address the special needs of these youngest of Epworth’s children. Early intervention for children with developmental deficiencies significantly improves their outcomes when they enter school. Studies show that roughly one-third of infants and toddlers who receive early intervention services do not have a disability by the time they enter kindergarten, according to the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice. A national study also found that 46 percent of children with developmental delays who received early intervention services did not need special education by kindergarten, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

The word “intervention” has several connotations in our modern world, but the simplest definition for Epworth’s intervention activities focuses upon taking action to improve the chances for young children with disabilities to be able to lead normal, healthy lives. Epworth’s Early Intervention Specialists work to develop curricula aimed at helping families with children who have special needs. Epworth designed a model preschool program for children ages birth to 5 years who have developmental delays, diagnosed disabilities and those who are at-risk for delays. Epworth’s staff members in the center on its Columbia campus develop individualized plans to help each child and use researched-based best practices for early childhood education. The center is nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation and is a contracted provider with the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.

The Early Intervention Center has a unique and special history. The center was established 45 years ago in 1980. At that time in South Carolina, preschool programming for children with special needs was not widely available, and Epworth responded to the needs presented by a group of parents of young children who had developmental disabilities. This group needed a preschool program that offered specialized services for their children. Working closely with the parents and community, Epworth developed the model preschool program that has been in operation ever since. Children without developmental delays were also included.

Over the years the Early Intervention Center expanded its services and added home-based intervention to the services offered to children with these developmental delays. Like the center on Epworth’s campus in Columbia, this program supports children from birth to age 5 who have been diagnosed with conditions that may lead to delays or disabilities. Through personalized, in-home visits, Epworth’s Early Intervention Specialists work with each child and family in their homes and other familiar locations.

Epworth’s home-based Early Intervention Program is family centered. Early intervention specialists assess both the child’s and family’s needs and create a customized intervention plan tailored to their goals. Services include family training, special instruction and service coordination. At Epworth, we’re committed to delivering compassionate, evidence-based early intervention services that support the whole family. Studies from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicate that when families are included in their child’s educational and developmental progress, especially in environments where they feel comfortable, their involvement and their child’s eventual success are greatly increased.

Originally these home-based services were only available in the Columbia area, but Epworth is pleased to announce that it has recently opened an Early Intervention Home-Based Program in the Upstate where children ages birth to 5 years can receive all the services that the home-based intervention program offers. Located in one of Epworth’s Upstate offices in Silver Hill United Methodist Church in Spartanburg, the early intervention office is now serving children and families in the Upstate.

Epworth is proud of this expansion of our work with young children who need a special boost in their early lives and of helping bring these services to children.

Williams is the CEO of Epworth.



ERT training held in Anderson
Zion UMC, Anderson, held an Early Response Team training May 17 to help people learn how to respond in the aftermath of a disaster Ward Smith led the training. If you’re interested in an upcoming class, contact Tammy Fulmer at tfulmer@umcsc.org or 803-735-8775.

Needed: Disaster recovery volunteers and churches to help support them

The conference’s disaster recovery team is hard at work seeking families who need assistance with home repair after a disaster, as well as volunteers who want to help.

If you are interested in helping, or if your church can help either by housing volunteer teams or by feeding volunteers, reach out to Ward Smith, director of disaster recovery and construction management, at wsmith@umcsc.org.

Also reach out if you know of a family in need.

Resource Center.
New Bible study resources

New Bible resources are available:

“Relaxed: Walking With the One Who Is Not Worried About a Thing”
(DVD2962WM=) Author: Marshman, Megan Fate. 7 sessions, 28-35 min/study guide/bk/2024.

What if everything isn’t actually up to you to figure out? Jesus was never in a hurry to be anywhere other than where he was, trusting and obeying his Father. Could the same be said of us? Join Bible teacher and spiritual formation leader Megan Fate Marshman for a seven-session Bible study on exchanging self-reliance for the trusting and relaxed posture seen in Jesus. CC. Age: YAS.

“Truth Plus Love: The Jesus Way To Influence”
(DVD2961CL=) Author: Brown, Matt. 6 sessions, 17-18 min/study guide/bk/2019.

Is it better to prove our point or just try to love? In this video Bible study, evangelist Matt Brown draws on the example of the apostle Paul to show how believers can influence their world with the truth while living in a way that reveals their love. CC. Age: YAS.

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Young Methodists.

A birthday gift for Jesus

How one church gave two golf carts to Epworth Children’s Home

By Wade Keyserling
BEAUFORT—As an eighth grader, I never imagined that I would be part of something as meaningful as delivering two golf carts to Epworth Children’s Home. But that’s exactly what happened at my church, Carteret Street United Methodist Church, after Pastor Bryson Williams told us a story about his visit to their Christmas tree lighting in early December.

Pastor Bryson is the chair of the Epworth Board of Trustees. While he was there, he learned that Epworth was in need of some new golf carts.

Pastor Bryson had once served at a church that had gifted carts to Epworth in the past. Because of this, Bishop Leonard Fairley’s wife, Dawn, jokingly said, “Why don’t you just tell Bryson?”

Even though she was joking, we wanted to help. Pastor Bryson shared the need with a few church committees, and everyone agreed that we should provide Epworth with a golf cart.

We named this task “OJBP,” or “Operation Jesus Birthday Present.”

To fulfill this operation, we assembled a team of six people: Pastor Bryson, my dad, Chris Pettit, Henry Pettit, Owen Pettit and me. Together, we created a de-

sign for the golf carts, set a financial goal and spread the word to our church and community.

But even though we did the work, we are not the ones to thank. The people who made this possible are all those who donated. Not only did we meet our goal but we exceeded it. We were able to purchase two new carts for Epworth Children’s Home.

Operation Jesus Birthday Present was finally completed, and we celebrated with a dedication ceremony in front of our church. On hand to receive the carts were Beth Williams and Lisa Fusco from Epworth.

It was truly amazing to see how much our community cared about helping the kids at Epworth. The golf carts will be used for transportation around the campus and to assist with activities and events for the children.

I’m so grateful I could be a part of this project. It’s a good reminder that by working together, a group of people can accomplish something great—and bring smiles to others. Together, we can do amazing things in Christ’s name. Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Keyserling is a member of Carteret Street United Methodist Church, Beaufort.



Wade Keyserling takes Epworth CEO Beth Williams for a spin.



Wesley Foundations by the Rev. John Sterling Poole

How you can support campus ministries

In my experience as director of the Charleston Wesley Foundation, most folks like what campus ministries are doing and they believe it is important. However, many folks do not know how to help.

Here are some ways that you can support your nearest campus ministry:

- 1) Pray: College has always been and will always be a challenging season in a young person’s life. So much is happening around the student that it can be hard to navigate. Praying for the students holds power, and every United Methodist should pray for college students and the campus ministries serving them.
- 2) Serve: Most, if not all, Wesley Foundations feed their students when they gather together for Bible study, fellowship or worship. These meals are an integral part of the ministry. The preparation of these meals takes valuable time away from the directors, interns and other support people. By volunteering to provide a meal, you free up the time and energy to go toward discipling the students, not to mention saving some money.
- 3) Give: Every Wesley Foundation has an operating budget, and these can vary in size. For reference: in 2024, Charleston Wesley had a budget of \$186,410.69 with \$97,334 coming from conference budget. This means that we had to raise an additional \$89,076.69 to do the ministry we set out to do. Your gifts make it so that the ministry can be accomplished without anxiety and with surety.
- 4) Witness: If you care about your nearest campus ministry, like their Facebook page and follow their Instagram page. Share their newsletters with other people. Tag your friends who would want to see some good news in their feed. Tell high school seniors to find a Wesley Foundation in college. Spread the message of campus ministry.
- 5) Connect: Every Wesley Foundation is unique just like every college campus is unique. Connect with the director and/or board of your nearest Wesley Foundation to see what other needs may arise, from care packages to birthday cards to Welcome Week help.

These five simple steps can make a world of difference for a campus ministry. The summer is a perfect time to reach out and connect on how you can support the ministry to the students.

Poole is director of the Charleston Wesley Foundation. To learn more about each Wesley Foundation and how to support, go to <https://linktr.ee/UMCSCWesley>.

S.C. United Methodists plant seeds through ‘Connecting Children’ grant

Window for 2026 Cohort applications opened June 10

By Toni Taylor
South Carolina United Methodists are witnessing progress in their landmark initiative, “Connecting Children in Worship and Prayer,” as the first year of the \$1.1 million Lilly Endowment grant unfolds.

This transformative effort is reshaping how congregations engage children and families in worship, prayer, and intergenerational fellowship across the state.

The initiative officially launched in May with a gathering at Shandon United Methodist Church, where more than 60 pastors and laity from 12 diverse congregations—urban and rural, large and small, multicultural and multigenerational—came together. The event was marked by laughter, prayer and a shared commitment to reimagining worship so that every generation feels valued and heard.

Toni Taylor, grant leader, welcomed participants and introduced the Grant Leadership Team, setting the tone for a collaborative journey ahead.

At the heart of the grant is a commitment to true intergenerational worship, moving beyond simply sharing space to fostering intentional relationships among all ages. Participants at the launch reflected on the unique voices each generation brings to worship and discussed ways to ensure everyone, especially children, has a place at the table. These conversations are shaping a new culture of belonging and inclusivity in South Carolina churches.

The grant’s five-year plan began with training for pastors and lay leaders from the initial 12 congregations. Each year, 12 more churches will join the cohort, with a goal of reaching 60 churches and up to 500 children statewide.

The first in-person training and online collaborative coaching session focused on intergenerational worship, exploring questions such as whose voices are missing and why that matters for faith formation. The next online session was held June 12, continuing the momentum of connection and learning.

Partnerships are central to the initiative’s strategy. Messy Church USA is helping

design family retreats and children’s worship day camps, empowering parents as spiritual leaders and encouraging children to plan and lead worship using the creative arts. Narrative 4 is providing training in story exchange, equipping participants to deepen empathy and understanding through sharing personal stories, a practice that builds stronger connections across generations.

The grant is already fostering new opportunities for fellowship and prayer. For example, The Brook UMC, Myrtle Beach, hosted an intergenerational event in May, bringing together seniors and youth for conversation, games, intercessory prayer and shared meals, modeling the kind of inclusive community the grant seeks to nurture.

The Grant Leadership Team, comprised of clergy and laity from across South Carolina, is guiding the initiative’s implementation, focusing on relationship-building, planning and ongoing evaluation to ensure the program’s success.

Conference leaders see the grant as an answer to prayer and a strategic investment in the future of the church.

“It will help children in our congregations develop in their faith while reaching out to children from extended families and within the community to connect and grow disciples of Jesus Christ who will be the ones who carry our faith into the future,” said the Rev. Millie Nelson Smith, director of Connectional Ministries.

Taylor, who led the grant application, emphasized the initiative’s potential to unite and revitalize the United Methodist community through intergenerational worship, fostering belonging and inclusivity for all—especially children.

As “Connecting Children in Worship and Prayer” enters its next phase, more churches will be invited to participate.

The window for 2026 Cohort applications opened June 10. For updates and information, visit <https://www.umcsc.org/children>. Contact Taylor or Nona Woodle with questions at ttaylor@umcsc.org or nmwoodle@umcsc.org.



Historical Society
by Dr. Roger M. Gramling

A look at the beginnings of the African-American Methodist denominations

From the earliest days, African Americans have been a part of American Methodism and have played a significant role in its growth and development. Missionary work among enslaved peoples was one of the church's earliest outreach ministries.

Among the charter members of the first Methodist Society in New York was an African-American servant girl. It is said that by 1810, 20 percent of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America were African Americans.

However, discrimination based on race and the mistreatment of African-American members soon reared its ugly head in American Methodism and led to a number of schisms in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the early part of the 19th century. Both slave and free African Americans were treated as "second-class" members and segregated in congregations.

As early as 1813, Peter Spencer, a freedman, led a group of African-American Methodists out of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Wilmington, Delaware, to form what came to be known first as the Union of African Members Church and later the Union American Methodist Episcopal Church. It was the first independent African-American denomination established in this country.

Among the two best known of the African-American preachers in early Methodism in America was Richard Allen. The other was Harry Hosier. Both are believed to have been present at the "Christmas Conference" in 1784.

Allen, born into slavery but later buying his freedom, settled in Philadelphia, where he affiliated with the Methodist Society at St. George's. Resentment grew among African-American members at St. George's over inequalities, including segregated seating in worship and not being allowed to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with the White members. In 1787,

African-American members were pulled from their knees during worship while praying in an area closed to them. The African-American members withdrew, and some followed Allen to his blacksmith's shop, eventually establishing a society known as Bethel Chapel.

While Bethel Chapel and several other African-American congregations similarly organized were led by African-American lay or local preachers, they remained under the supervision of White presiding elders of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Allen, ordained deacon in 1799 by Asbury, struggled to remain loyal to the Methodist Episcopal Church; however, a legal struggle developed over the control of Bethel property.

Finally, in 1816, Allen invited other African-American congregations to join Bethel in a common association resulting in the organization of the African Methodist Episcopal Church modeled after the Methodist Episcopal Church, but interestingly giving representation to local preachers in its legislative bodies. Allen was elected the new church's first bishop. The African Methodist Episcopal Church made significant membership gains in the South after the Civil War. Today the church claims 7,000 congregations in 39 countries and 2.5 million members worldwide.

A similar story can be found in connection with the John Street Church in New York. A pattern of discrimination convinced African-American members of the need for a separate congregation. In 1796, such a group led by James Varick organized an African-American congregation and built a church named Zion. At Zion, lay preachers were under the supervision of White presiding elders.

However, by 1821 Zion's members had severed their relationship to the Methodist Episcopal Church and organized the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Today, the African Methodist Episcopal

Zion Church claims 1.4 million members.

Following the Civil War, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South faced the question of how to deal with its remaining African-American members, now newly freed slaves. Some joined the African Methodist Episcopal or African Methodist Episcopal Zion churches. Some were organized into new congregations and conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church whose representatives were active in the South during and after the Civil War under the auspices of the federal authorities and the Union Army.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South initially organized its remaining African-American membership of about 79,000 into separate segregated charges and districts with African-American leaders. It was an organized effort that next led, at the request of the African-American members, to the establishment of a separate church in 1870 at Jackson, Tennessee, first called the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and later called the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church as it is known today. It adopted the polity and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which transferred property used by the African-American membership to the new church.

Though separated by segregation, for many years the Methodist Episcopal Church, South supported the work of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and the two churches enjoyed cordial relations.

By the end of the 19th century, the membership of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church exceeded 150,000.

Today the church claims a membership of 1.2 million.

Gramling serves as secretary-treasurer of the Conference Historical Society and is currently the president of the Southeastern Jurisdictional Historical Society and a member of the SEJ Commission on Archives and History.

Obituaries.

Rev. John Paul Callahan



Callahan

WOODRUFF—The Rev. John Paul Callahan, a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died May 23, 2025.

Prior to his retirement in 2004, Rev. Callahan served In School, Goose Creek, Lodge, New Zion, Laurens-Central, Stephenson Memorial-Faith, Duncan, Arrington Memorial-

Piedmont Park, Bethel-Poe, Bethel-Woodside, O'Neal Street, Zion-Beulah (Zion), Orrville-Anderson and Grace, Woodruff, charges. He continued serving Grace after his retirement.

Funeral arrangements were unknown at press time.

Rev. Callahan is survived by his daughter.

Michael Lloyd Guffee Jr.

COLUMBIA—Michael Lloyd Guffee Jr., son of the Rev. Mike and Winni Guffee, died May 19, 2025. Rev. Guffee is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

A memorial service was held May 28 at Shandon UMC.

Mr. Guffee is survived by his two daughters and parents.

Marrissa A. Jones

WALTERBORO—Marrissa A. Jones, sister of the Rev. Marvin Jones, died May 25, 2025. Rev. Jones is the pastor of Jericho United Methodist Church, Cottageville.

Funeral services were held June 1 at Faith Church.

Rev. William Henderson Tanner Jr.



Tanner Jr.

CHARLESTON—The Rev. William Henderson Tanner Jr., a retired local pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died May 7, 2025.

Prior to his retirement in 2013, Rev. Tanner served the New Hope, Ebenezer (Ebenezer-Smyrna Charge) and Ebenezer-Hood's Chapel charges.

Funeral services were held May 16 at Coastal Community Church with burial in Holy Cross Cemetery.

Rev. Tanner is survived by his wife, Shirley Tanner, daughter and son.

William Martin Wood

CHARLESTON—William "Bill" Martin Wood, brother of the Rev. Mike Wood, died May 11, 2025. Rev. Wood is the pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church and Ebenezer UMC, Moncks Corner.

A private memorial will be held.

Mr. Wood is survived by his daughter and mother.

Camps & Retreat Ministries.

The timeless serenity of nature



Photo of the lake, circa 1961.

Do you ever think about how all of creation has been here since the beginning? Landscapes and regions may change over thousands of years, but the mountains, ocean, sun, moon and sky are steadfast through it all.

Recently, I came across an old photo that made me realize the beautiful mountains we call home at Asbury Hills have seen so many campers over the last 64 years, and yet they remain

unmoving. From 1961 to now, campers and retreat goers have seen Table Rock as they descend into camp; they have creek-hiked in the chilly waters of Matthews Creek, and they have camped out by the fire on our 2,000 acres of property. They have worshiped at the lake or chapel. Above all, they have experienced God and his love for them.

It doesn't matter if you were a camper at the beginning, in

1961, or today, in 2025—we are all connected by Asbury Hills.

Every summer, new campers come to experience the magic of camp at Asbury Hills, and a part of that magic is discovering the awe and wonder of all that God has created. How amazing it is that everyone who comes to Asbury Hills can escape the busyness of life and are greeted by the same mountains, lake, creek, etc., as so many before us. We are excited to welcome

a new group of campers this summer who will have the opportunity to experience all that Asbury Hills has to offer, just as many have before them.

If you've been thinking about sending your child to camp, it's not too late to register. We hope that you can join in with all those who have come before to experience the joy and beauty of God's creation at Asbury Hills. Visit <https://asburyhills.org> to learn more.



Adult Lessons
by the Rev. Genova McFadden

A community of faith built
on Christ the solid rock

July 6
**Rooted and Grounded:
Building on the One
Foundation**
**Lesson Scripture: 1 Corin-
thians 3:1-23**
**Background Scripture: 1
Corinthians 4:1-5**
**Key Verse: 1 Corinthians
3:11**

First things first. Paul is all about community building—specifically building this new community of faith in the church at Corinth. In this letter, Paul is responding to their questions about issues that have arisen as the believers strive to build this church. The community finds itself in a state of infighting, jealousy and divisions, which threatens the harmony and unity among the people.

Paul is unwavering in his Christological approach: all through Jesus Christ, who is the sacred and solid foundation on which the community of believers stand. And Paul is unequivocal: “No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid”—Jesus Christ!

There is an African proverb that says, “When the root is deep, there is no need to fear the wind.” Applying this to Paul’s instructions to the church at Corinth, when a believer is “rooted” and grounded in Jesus Christ, in times of crises and chaos, there is no need to fear. You are safe. You are covered. You are standing on solid ground and not on “sinking sand!” On this one foundation, a community of faith grows and matures.

Today, many of God’s people are fearful and uncertain about the future, as the trusted “foundations” of society are threatened, challenged, crumbling or dismantled. This raises questions: On whom or what are we standing? Is our trust being misplaced? Is it time to rediscover, reclaim and build on the one true foundation of peace, love and unity as found only in Jesus Christ?

The present-day community of faith would do well to “listen as well as hear” Paul’s admonition to work in unity and harmony building on the foundation “that is already laid”—Jesus Christ!

July 13
Courage to Forgive
**Lesson Scripture: 1 Corin-
thians 6:1-8**
**Background Scripture: 1
Corinthians 6:1-8**
Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 6:7

Revenge. Retaliation. Retribution. Lately, these words have been tossed around rather freely, particularly within the political arena, as people exercise human tendencies to get back at those who they perceive as having harmed or wronged them. This is the same attitude the Corinthians seemed to adopt.

Paul addresses those Corinthian Christians taking legal action against other members of the community. To make matters worse, they are taking their disagreements (often over mundane matters) to those outside the community. In a society where the rich rules, this often meant the more wealthy in the society and in the congregation took action against those with lesser means. Paul is a proponent of believers being in communion and in community with each other and taking responsibility for one another. This is no way to build and sustain a unified community of faith with Jesus as its foundation.

In his continuing effort to bring the Corinthians together as a community of faith, Paul raises questions to make the people think—or re-think—these destructive actions against each other and the church.

Is it better to forgive one another than become embroiled in divisiveness that harms our fellow believers and hurts the church? What does Paul mean when he says “you have been completely defeated already”? In today’s climate of revenge, retaliation and retribution, what actions can or must we take to bring about harmony and unity among God’s people?

July 20
**You Are More than You
Know—You Belong to
God**
**Lesson Scripture: 1 Corin-
thians 6:12-20**
**Background Scripture: 1
Corinthians 6:12-20**
**Key Verse: 1 Corinthians
6:19-20**

The first lesson in this series establishes Jesus Christ as the one foundation on which the church is built. The emphasis is on their relationship with Jesus. The second lesson moves to the importance of the maintaining unity in community among believers. The emphasis is on relationship with one another.

Now Paul presses the community of believers to grasp that their bodies are an expression of their relationship with the Triune God. “Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit,” owned by God, and “bought at a price” (by the risen Savior). You are not your own—you belong to God. You are more than you know! You are not only a part of a community of believers, you are in sacred relationship with the Triune God. Therefore, you are to honor God with your bodies.

During my ministry with congregations in the South Carolina Conference, their most consistent yearning was to attract more young people to the church. As campus minister, I learned that many of the young, gifted and accomplished students that I encountered carried deep pain from prior hurtful experiences. Their needs were uncomplicated: a listening ear and a caring heart—sometimes just a loving presence with them as they worked through their pain. They needed to know they belong to someone.

Those who seek to be in relationship with young people may first take heed to Paul’s imperative to join in relationship with them, teaching as Paul does, you belong to God—body and soul. Your body is sacred, of worth and value because you are God’s own.

To honor God with your body is a high calling. How might you go about engaging a young person differently with a message of “belonging to God”?

July 27
This Bears Repeating
**Lesson Scripture: 1 Corin-
thians 8:1-13**
**Background Scripture: 1
Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:23-
24**
**Key Verse: 1 Corinthians
10:23-24**

About the Author

McFadden, MDiv., MSW, LISW-AP, is a retired elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. Blissfully living in gratitude, she holds degrees, credentials and titles from several outstanding institutions. She celebrates being a part of God’s creation and continues serving God’s people wherever they are. In collaborative pursuits with Mother Nature, she finds inspiration, peace and sanctuary in the natural world. Dedicated to the memory of the Rev. Louise B. Wright.



Children’s
Sermon
by the Rev.
Meg Cook

God’s helping line

Date: Sunday, July 13
Scripture: Amos 7:1-17

Time Frame: Three minutes (The average attention span of a child is about one minute per year of life. In our setting the youngest at children’s sermon are 3, so we aim for three or maybe five minutes at the most.)

Supplies: A simple plumb line (a string with a small weight at the bottom like a washer or a metal nut). Optional: A handful of wooden blocks to make a stable tower and an unstable tower.

Children’s Sermon: Welcome the children, settle them and sit down with them.

Say: Friends, have you ever tried to build something like a block tower or a blanket fort? (pause for answers). What happens if it is leaning or crooked? (Pause. If you are building a tower as an example, go ahead and build that quietly in a way that it falls down.) That’s right, it might fall down! Towers stand up better when they are straight up and down. (Move hand up and down.)

A long time ago, there was a man named Amos. Can you say “Amos”? (Pause for echo.) Amos wasn’t a fancy preacher. He was a farmer! But God gave him a big job: God called Amos to be a prophet and tell the people they had gotten wobbly and were heading for a tumble in their life choices. They were being unfair and unkind, and that hurt God’s heart. So God sent Amos to help.

Now look at this! (Hold up the plumb line and let it settle so the weight is dangling toward the floor.) This is called a plumb line. It’s a tool builders use to see if something is straight. If a wall is leaning or crooked, the plumb line helps the builder see that it’s not straight, or plumb, and the builder can fix it. See how the weight pulls the string straight down because of gravity? That means this string is always straight up and down, or what we call plumb. Isn’t that cool? (Leader, if you have time, use the blocks again. Set the blocks up leaning but not falling and hold the line near the stack. This will show the straight line and the leaning blocks.)

God showed Amos a plumb line—not because God wanted to tear things down, but because God was still trying to help. God hadn’t given up on the people. God wanted them to stand tall, to do right and to treat each other with love and fairness. God wanted them to fix their leaning lives. That’s true for us, too. God always wants to help us grow and do better—not because we have to earn God’s love, but because God already loves us and wants good things for us. God wants us to be upright people to live lives that are plumb (hold up the line again to reinforce the visual).

Let’s pray together: Dear God (echo), thank you for loving us (echo). Help us grow (echo) strong and kind (echo). Help us do what’s right (echo) and love each other (echo). Amen (echo).

Cook, the pastor of Grace UMC, Columbia, is also the author of two children’s books: “Herbert the Hippo” and “Herbert the Hippo In the Moment.” Find them at <https://advocatesc.org/books>.

Happenings.

Lake City UMC hosts ‘Crosses’ exhibition

By the Rev. Carsten Bryant
LAKE CITY—Lake City United Methodist Church host “Crosses,” an exhibition April 25 to May 4.
More than 40 crosses were displayed in the church’s fellowship hall for around 200 people who attended.

These crosses were crafted out of a variety of materials, from driftwood to oyster shells to copper wire. Retired Episcopal priest Dr. William “Roy” Hills, of McClellanville, started making crosses while he had extra time at home during the COVID pandemic and hasn’t stopped yet. They have previously been shown at Mepkin Abbey in Moncks Corner and will be at Sewanee’s School of Theology in the fall.
The crosses displayed ranged from delicate crosses one foot tall to a free-standing eight-foot-tall “Good Friday” cross. The “Old Rugged Crosses” are rougher, while others are painted or stained. Some incorporate other symbols like the sun, the Celtic-inspired interlocking circles of the Trinity, the rainbow or the Star of David.
Programs included an opening reception, an especially cruciform worship service featuring a sermon titled “Why the Cross” from the Rev.



The crosses ranged from delicate and tiny to a free-standing eight-foot-tall “Good Friday” cross.
Carsten Bryant, and a visual presentation by Hills, the artist, on the various forms that crosses have taken, particularly in houses of worship over the centuries.
“I was delighted to find a church home for a display this spring, and from our initial contact through the closing of ‘Crosses,’ Carsten was receptive and helpful in making it happen in the beautiful setting of LCUMC,” Hills said. “Our ecumenical endeavor during ArtFields was very successful, I continue to seek ways to improve the display, develop new crosses and seek new venues to host ‘Crosses’ and spread the word.”

New Zion hosts tractor and car show in honor of late pastor Donald E. Love

By Jerry Newlon Jr.
SMYRNA—New Zion UMC hosted a tractor and car show in honor of their former pastor, Donald Eldree Love, on May 17. Love passed away in 2023.

Pastor Love grew up on a farm in Smyrna, not far from New Zion, which explains his love of tractors. His brother and a nephew serve as pastors within the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, one of his sisters serves as a professor and the dean of a doctoral program for a seminary, and there are cousins who are also pastors in other denominations.
It was clear this entire family loves God with all of their hearts, minds, bodies and souls.
Love was passionate about God, family, community, leading and learning. An active lay member of the UMC for nearly all of his life, his passion for lay servant ministries led him into pulpit supply and, eventually, into the pastoral responsibilities for the Western York Charge (New Zion UMC, Shady Grove UMC and Sharon UMC).
“He loved tractors, community, missions and children,” Theresa Wilkins, of New Zion said.



There were tractors, cars and trucks on display on the lawn of New Zion.
In 2023, Love worked with Men N Ministry and the Rock Hill District to coordinate a conference-wide tractor and car show at New Zion in an effort to increase participation in men’s events and help strengthen men for ministry.
Two years after his passing from prostate cancer, his beloved family at the Western York Charge put this event together to remember him and continue his legacy of community love. There were tractors, cars and trucks on display on the lawn of New Zion. The event also hosted food trucks, and visitors were welcomed inside the church to view a slide show of his life while listening to



Organizers hope the show will honor Love’s legacy.
songs sung by a member of the Shady Grove faith community.
During his time in Smyrna and Sharon, he championed community health and life preservation by attempting to coordinate blood drives, hosting information sessions presented by volunteers from within the health-care community and encouraging as many people as possible to embrace servant hearts, as Jesus modeled.
Organizers said they hope this event will become a continuing tribute to Love’s life and love for God, family and community.
Newlon is Rock Hill District United Methodist Men president.

Photo by Jerry Newlon Jr.

Classifieds.

Announcements

The release/book signing of **The Maize of Life: Poems of Life** by the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr. is tentatively set for Saturday, July 26, 2025. For locations, orders or other information, call or text 803-707-1002 or 803-571-0158.

Jobs

Lexington UMC is Hiring for a: **Preschool Director**

For more info and how to apply please contact: Rev. Maeghan Gossard magossard@umcsc.org

Lexington United Methodist Preschool

Director of Music/Organist
The Director of Music/Organist at Marion FUMC, Marion, is a part-time position. Responsibilities include serving as the primary organist as well as the director of the choir at rehearsals and worship services; selecting and preparing anthems for the Adult Choir for Sunday morning services and other special services; directing the adult choir at weekly rehearsals; scheduling guest musicians; organizing and maintaining the library of music; and recruiting volunteers for the Adult Choir. The position is responsible for overseeing the maintenance and tuning of musical instruments owned by the church.
Applicants must be proficient in playing a pipe organ. Please send a letter of interest and current resume to tklauber@bellsouth.net.

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Event Calendar.

June June 19—Juneteenth (South Carolina United Methodist Conference Center closed)	June 27—Joy Night Worship Service, I. DeQuincey Newman UMC, Columbia, 6:30 p.m.	July 15—Advocate Community Listening Session (Florence), Lake City UMC, Lake City, 6:30-8:30 p.m.	Volunteers in Mission, Grace UMC, Columbia, 6-7 p.m.
June 20—Summer Solstice	July July 4—Independence Day (United Methodist Conference Center closed)	July 17-19—United Women in Faith Mission u, Spartanburg Methodist College, Spartanburg	Aug. 10—Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry Sunday
June 21—United Women in Faith Charter for Racial Justice Event, Zoom, 10 a.m.	July 5—United Women in Faith Limitless Event, 10 a.m.	August Aug. 2—Lay Servant Academy (Train the Trainer), Washington Street UMC, Columbia, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Aug. 22-24—“Journey to Joy: Lessons from the Letters” Women’s Weekend, Lake Junaluska, N.C. More information: lakejunaluska.com/joy.
June 24—Advocate Community Listening Session (Greenville), Open Hearts UMC, Greenville, 6:30-8:30 p.m.	July 14—Orangeburg District Connectional Ministries Meeting, St. Mark UMC, North, 6:30-8 p.m.	Aug. 5—United Methodist	Aug. 26—Advocate Community Listening Session (Hartsville), 6:30-8:30 p.m.



Church leaders gather to sign papers.

Friendship signs loan agreement for major building renovations

NESMITH—A significant milestone was reached recently as Friendship United Methodist Church signed loan documents to fund major renovations to its historic building.

Dr. Ernest W. Frierson, Trustee Chair La’Quandra K. Nesmith, Building Committee Chair Linwood E. Nesmith and Church Secretary Pearl K. Pressley gathered May 27 to finalize the agreement with Interfaith Federal Credit Union, securing financing that will support the much-needed renovations to the church.

The renovation project aims to correct the improper construction of the church when it was built 20 years ago.

This is a defining moment for the congregation and those members who tune in Sunday after Sunday near and far via social media platforms. These renovations are about more than bricks and mortar—they’re about renewing Friendship’s commitment to serve their members and community with love, excellence and care.

Renovations are set to begin within the next 45 days and are expected to be completed within six to nine months. Friendship invites members of the community to follow the renovation progress through its Facebook page.

Fundraising efforts are ongoing. For more information: <https://www.friendship-umc-sc.com/ourstaff.html>.

Recipe Swap.

Taco Soup

From the kitchen of Crystal Barrs, member of Camp Creek United Methodist Church, Lancaster

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained
- 1 (15.5 oz.) can pinto beans, undrained
- 1 (10 oz.) can Rotel tomatoes, undrained
- 1 (15.5 oz.) can chili beans, undrained
- 1 (15.5 oz.) can petite tomatoes, undrained

- 1 (15.5 oz.) can black beans, undrained
- Corn (optional)
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning
- 1 pkg. ranch dressing
- 2 c. water

Directions:

Combine and simmer for two to three hours. Serve with sour cream, shredded cheese and tortilla chips.

Have a favorite recipe? Share it with the Advocate: news@advocatesc.org.



Photo by Enid McClam

BMCR plants seeds of hope

Supporters and members of Black Methodists for Church Renewal headed to St. Mark UMC, Taylors, for the annual BMCR Worship and Soul Food Dinner. After dinner, worship began, with Dr. Carlton J. McClam Sr. serving as keynote speaker. The event was well attended, and Bishop and Mrs. Leonard Fairley attended both the dinner and service. The theme was “Planting Seeds of Growth.” A bus was available to transport people to and from the event from the Greenville Convention Center.

WSUMC hosts ‘Queerfish’ art exhibition

By Denise Wellman

COLUMBIA—Washington Street United Methodist Church celebrated seven queer artists this spring by hosting an art exhibition called Queerfish from April 27 to May 4.

The exhibition focused on a theme of hope and showcased more than 20 pieces of visual art and poetry by Columbia artists Evelyn Berry, Sophie Farthing, Wayne Hall, Daniel Hankinson, Ed Madden and Michael Naughton.

Launched last fall as part of SC Pride, Queerfish is a celebration of Queerdom and faith that seeks to bring communities of faith together in the pursuit of teaching love for all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or religious faith. As the artists of Queerfish explored themes of hope, identity, love and community,



Reconciling Spirituality, Michael Naughton, 2024, acrylic.

they offered unique insights to challenge societal norms and expand understanding of how to build more Christlike faith communities for all.

The artists of Queerfish intentionally chose to focus on the future and used their God-given creative gifts to help all in attendance engage in conversations about their experiences and their hope that together we can re-image the universal church

into an inclusive community.

“The LGBTQ+ community is inherently hopeful by its very nature, from our beginning struggle to achieve equality we have always looked for a brighter future where all are equally respected and loved,” said Hall, curator of Queerfish and one of the artists.

Supported by a very active Social Justice Active Team, Washington Street also hosted Dylan Gunnels of The Agape Table on May 1, who led a discussion on how to build community in the church amid theological, sexual and gender diversity and helped all consider how we can look more like Jesus in the midst of these differences.

This exhibition was in part funded by the South Carolina Arts Commission and Active Faith, a small group ministry of Washington Street UMC.



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