South Carolina
United Methodist Advocate
CONNECTING METHODISTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA SINCE 1837

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SC to vote on regionalization, other General Conference amendments

By Jessica Brodie

This year, South Carolina will join annual conferences around the world to vote on regionalization and three other amendments to The United Methodist Church constitution.

The amendments were all passed by the required two-thirds vote at the 2024 General Conference. But because they will change the United Methodist 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.

See "Amendments," Page 12

Three disaster response veterans to lead ministries

By Dan O'Mara

For decades, South Carolina has been home to strong and responsive ministries that serve the most vulnerable in the wake of devastating hurricanes, tornados, floods and other weather-related disasters.

While countless volunteers have served faithfully over the years, as churches have separated from the denomination, it has impacted the disaster response teams of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. As well, it takes committed professionals to help coordinate these volunteers' efforts and ensure they have the resources needed to engage in effective ministry.

To that end, the South Carolina Conference has reinstituted three key staff positions to help lead the reshaping and reinvigoration of its Disaster Response Ministries.

Dash

The Rev. LaTonya Dash, senior pastor of Easley Chapel UMC and John Wesley UMC in Easley, will serve as disaster response coordinator. The Rev. Sharon "Shay" Long, pastor of Mill Creek UMC in Columbia, will serve as disaster recovery volunteer coordinator. And Ward Smith, who has served in multiple conference roles, will be disaster recovery construction manager.

"The United Methodist Church in South Carolina is alive, active and ready to serve," said the Rev. Millie Nelson Smith, director of Connectional Ministries. "Under the guidance of these experienced leaders, we will rebuild our

See "Disaster Response," Page 13

Rise up! Rise up!

Photo by Jessica Brodie

Bishop Leonard Fairley urges South Carolina men to let Jesus use them to change the world.

Spiritual retreat urges men to make a difference in the church

By Jessica Brodie

COLUMBIA—Jesus took 12 ordinary men and changed the world. Imagine what he can do with us if we can surrender our hearts and make ourselves fully available to him.

"So let's rise up! Let's rise up and make a difference in this world. Let's rise up, and if our hearts are together, we can do this."

With those words, Bishop Leonard Fairley helped kick off "Rise Up! Rise Up! Steps of a Good Man," a daylong men's spiritual retreat held at Journey United Methodist Church, Columbia.

Two hundred men and scouts from across South Carolina gathered for the retreat, which featured speakers who filled men spiritually with powerful wisdom and faith inspiration.

In addition to Fairley, speakers included Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, now of the Alabama-West Florida and North Alabama

See "Rise Up!," Page 24

Native American elder basket program now brings statewide relief

By Jessica Brodie

One longtime ministry to elderly Native Americans has expanded into a food relief endeavor that now reaches both Native and non-Native people alike across South Carolina, all in the name of Jesus.

For years, South Carolina United Methodists have helped supply Native American older adults with what is called "elder baskets." Elder baskets are plastic clothes baskets filled with nonperishable items and given to older people in need—many of whom live well below the poverty line—to help them through trying times. The baskets contain canned food as well as items such as laundry soap, paper towels, toilet paper and other toiletries that cannot be purchased with food stamps.

But since the pandemic, and with the rise of even more food deserts in the state, the elder basket ministry has exploded into a full-blown hunger-relief project bringing the ten state and federally recognized Native tribes together with United Methodist and other Christian relief ministries. And today, it's a massive project feeding an incredible number of people.

See "Elder Baskets," Page 13

'Like a family'

After 47 years of employment, longtime conference staffer Pat Mack still going strong

By Jessica Brodie

You know someone loves their job when they've worked there so long they can barely remember a time when they didn't.

That someone is Pat Mack, who this year celebrates 47 years of working for the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. That's longer than some conference employees have been alive.

"I love it," Mack says simply, gesturing to the paperwork stacked neatly on her desk in the lower level of the UMC Conference Center. "I still love what I do."

Today she serves as the administrative assistant to Conference Secretary the Rev. Mel Arant, but over the years, Mack has seen many changes, both

See "Like a Family," Page 11

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UWF Legislative Advocacy Day champions educational inequity

By Jessica Brodie

Scores of women from across South Carolina gathered at Epworth Children's Home March 18 to learn how they can help the fight against inequality, particularly when it comes to children and youth.

In what was the first Legislative Advocacy Day held in-person since the pandemic, United Women in Faith's Social Action Committee organized the day to enable women to understand the injustice and inequities that can occur in our school systems.

Women heard from three speakers with deep personal and professional knowledge about some of these injustices: Jennifer Rainville Esq., education policy attorney with the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center; Dr. Quantina Haggwood, executive director of the South Carolina School Improvement Council; and Vivian Anderson, founder and executive director of EveryBlackGirl Inc.

One by one, the women shared how their work to champion those Jesus called "the least of these" is something we all can take part in.


Anderson


Haggwood


Rainville


Photos by Jessica Brodie

It was the first Legislative Advocacy Day held in-person since the pandemic.

A shameful first-place

Rainville began by sharing a startling statistic. South Carolina holds the distinction of being the top state in the nation in the numbers of preschoolers suspended. These preschoolers aren't bringing weapons to school, and sometimes the behavioral problems that get them kicked out of school speak to deeper needs, such as disabilities or some of the effects of poverty. As Rainville noted, it's hard to learn when you're hungry.

"If this happens in preschool, what do we think happens in kindergarten or first grade?" Rainville asked, noting we kick them out and then don't put in strategies to remedy the problem. "This tells the child, 'You're not welcome here; school isn't for you.'"

She noted that 62.2 percent of students in public school are living in poverty in South Carolina, and some of them struggle with food and security daily. One of the kids she represented was a kindergartner who couldn't sit still. He had needs that needed to be met, she said, yet he was receiving no services, and the so-called solution was to kick him out.

This ultimately perpetuates the larger problem, Rainville said, which United Women in Faith have been addressing, ending what is known as the school-to-prison pipeline.

She told attendees there were a number of bills pending seeking to ban or reduce preschool suspensions or expulsions, and she urged the women to get the South Carolina Legislature Mobile App to track and stay on top of the bills, including H-4068 and H-3974.

Much work to do

Next, Haggwood spoke about her work with the South Carolina School Improvement Council, which strives to foster high-quality public schools across the state, serving as an advisory body to help the schools. Unlike parent-teacher organizations that work to raise extra funds, the SIC is mandated by South Carolina to be in every school in the state, but many community members don't know their help is needed or how they can get involved.

Haggwood, a first-generation college student and former middle school principal, has seen the needs firsthand and knows how important it is for people to be engaged and help the schools.

"We have to come together so schools are not run by people outside communities but parents and businesspeople locally," she said, noting their priorities include chronic absenteeism, early childhood behavior, mental health, family engagement and teacher wellness.

Finally, Anderson shared how her work advocating for Black girls in the school system is as important now as it was decades ago.

Anderson began her talk by reading a poem she wrote 25 years ago on "Why I Do What I Do," tearing up as she recalled how the needs then are still very much present today.

In 2015, while working with Momentum Teens and with BlackLivesMatter NYC, she heard about how a school resource officer at Spring Valley High School in Columbia brutally assaulted a Black female student, Shakara, for refusing to hand over a cell phone, then threatened and arrested another, Niya, for standing up for Shakara. Inspired, Anderson moved to South Carolina and started EveryBlackGirl Inc., which organizes and provides programming to address the conditions leading to Black girls being pushed out of schools and becoming at risk for arrest, confinement and incarceration.

"Discipline and violence are two different things," she said, recounting the problems that face not only Black girls but so many students of all races and genders across the state.

But often, the attention is on helping young Black men. Yet females need advocacy, too.

"The idea is the girls are OK, but they're not," Anderson told the crowd.

All means all

The presenters had an opportunity for a round table panel discussion after their individual talks, then a question-answer session designed to help women understand the issues and what they can do about them.

Haggwood shared how when she was young, everyone she knew wrote her off. "I wasn't supposed to make it," she said. "I was headed down the wrong path, but through my mom not giving up and prayer and people who helped me, I made it. And every single kid deserves that opportunity to make it. The work I do is my little part in making that happen."

She urged all gathered in the room to do their part, too.

"Get educated and get resources," Haggwood said, urging them to call people out on untruths if necessary. "Help us get the truth out about things impacting our community."

Rainville agreed. "All means all, and all kids deserve that chance to get a good quality education," she told the crowd, urging people to be as informed and as involved as possible and learn the educational rights each child has.

Anderson shared that the church has far more might than it believes.

"The church is one of the most powerful institutions that can move and make change," she said, encouraging attendees to read and truly take to heart Jesus' words in Matthew 18:6. "We need to take that on," Anderson said. "We need to ask, 'What do I need to do so our children don't stumble?'"

'The fight is still on'

After, some women headed over to the South Carolina Statehouse, where state legislators have the opportunity to address many of these issues.

One of those legislators, Dr. Jermaine Johnson Sr. of South Carolina House District 52, was present at Legislative Advocacy Day and spoke words of welcome at the beginning of the gathering.

Rep. Johnson shared how he grew up in a difficult home environment, and much of his childhood was spent moving from hotel to motel. Yet thanks to a basketball scholarship and hard work, he rose above his circumstances. After a time as a professional basketball player, he went on to dedicate his life to helping people break negative cycles, founding the New Economic Beginnings Foundation.

After his election to the House in 2020, he's worked hard to champion the voiceless.

"I never realized how many people felt voiceless until I began to speak out," Johnson said, urging those gathered to stand firmly in their own work to advocate for women, children, youth and others needing a voice. "Thank you for doing the hard work you do."

His words echoed what others shared during the gathering.

As Social Action Chair Patricia Armstrong said in her welcome, "For more 155 years, United Women in Faith has been committed to advocating for women children and youth, and the fight is still on."

Debra Schooler, South Carolina United Women in Faith president, agreed.

"United Women in Faith are bold, and we take action," School said, telling those gathered, "I pray you will leave this event inspired and ready to go."

United Methodists organize service of lament after brutal murder of girl

By Jessica Brodie

COLUMBIA—United Methodists deeply grieving the horrific killing of a young girl in Columbia organized a community prayer vigil in the aftermath to help the community express lament and cling to hope.

Ka'Niyah Baker, 13, was brutally murdered by two other teen girls in a vacant home in Columbia Jan. 15. Police Chief Skip Holbrook described her death as "heinous, vicious and monstrous."

Washington Street United Methodist Church hosted "A Service of Lament, Confession, Hope and a Call to Action Following the Death of Ka'Niyah Baker" Jan. 28.

"We had a work and a witness to share together," said the Rev. Sheila Hodge, pastor of Virginia Wingard UMC, Columbia, who helped organize the vigil, which was also a call to action.

Hodge said what struck her about Ka'Niyah's killing was that she was Black, and the girls who killed her were also Black.

"They killed and mutilated themselves," Hodge said. "That's serious stuff going on."


Ka'Niyah

The vigil began with greetings from the Rev. Becky Shirley, Washington Street's pastor, followed by words from Hodge.

After a solo by the Rev. Fadetra Boyd, the Rev. Meg Cook of Grace UMC, Columbia, brought words of grace and Scripture, then the Rev. Antoinette Gaboton-Moss of Northeast UMC provided a litany for children hurt by violence.

"We cry out 'Lord, help us!' as we pledge to lock arms in solidarity to notice and care for all the Ka'Niyahs in our community," the litany proclaimed in part. "Let our voices be heard as we speak on behalf of the welfare of all children and youth, for we know we are called to do what is just and right."

The Rev. Tiffany Knowlin of Wesley UMC led a call to confession, then the Rev. Geneva Stafford of Francis Burns UMC led a prayer for God's hope and strength. After a hymn, Congregational Specialist the Rev. Walter Strawther offered a poem by Marian Wright Edelman, "I Care and I Am Willing to Serve."

The service closed with a reflection and candle lighting, proclaiming, "Together, our light is stronger than the darkness of fear. Together, we lift our lights, and we pray for courage."

MenNMinistry to host leadership revitalization meeting April 6

COLUMBIA—South Carolina MenNMinistry is trying hard to get healthy, strong and vital again after the pandemic and church split caused a slowdown.

To kickstart their efforts, South Carolina Resident Bishop Leonard Fairley is inviting all South Carolina United Methodist men to a MenNMinistry Bishop's Leadership Event, set for Sunday, April 6, from 4-5:30 p.m. at Ashland UMC, Columbia.

Men can attend in-person or via Zoom.

Men's ministry leaders said they need to build and grow our men's ministry leadership in order to have strong men's involvement in every district in South Carolina, from the Upstate to the Lowcountry and everywhere in between. South Carolina men have long been viewed as leaders in the UMC connection, and now they need both existing and new leaders to move them forward.

The men plan to refocus their leadership to engage connection with other ministry groups and agencies, including lay leaders, lay servants, United Women of Faith, disaster responders and more. As they noted, it is all about long-term, committed relationships.

Areas of focus include but are not limited to scouting, disaster relief and United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, Salkehatchie Summer Service, mission events, United Methodist college foundations, camps and retreat ministries and prison ministries.

All men are invited to the leadership meeting. To register or for Zoom information: https://www.umcsc.org/mennministryreg.

Salkehatchie Summer Service back for 2025 with 32 weeklong camps

By Jessica Brodie

Salkehatchie Summer Service returns this year with 32 weeklong mission camps, offering youth and adults the opportunity to engage in meaningful home-repair ministry across South Carolina.

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.

Volunteers must be at least 14 years old, and all adult volunteers must do a background check. Cost is $250 per volunteer and covers the cost of shingles, building supplies and other materials. Lodging and meals are included.

Registration is open now for the camps, which go directly into communities of chronic poverty and repair the homes of local families there.

Salkehatchie's main focus is serving God. 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.

Although it began as a South Carolina United Methodist venture, volunteers today are from many denominations and some come from out of state. Salkehatchie's doors are open to all.

June 7-14: Sumter, Winyah Bay (Georgetown), North Augusta, New Hope (Chesterfield)
June 14-21: Baker Creek (McCormick), Penn Center, Union, Catawba (Fort Mill)
June 21-28: Sandriver (Aiken), Bishopville, Piedmont, Marlboro-Flowers (Bennettsville), JET (Johnston, Edgefield, Trenton), Clover, Circuit Rider (Johnsonville), Rock Hill
June 28-July 5: Lake City, Foothills
July 5-12: Bamberg, Edisto Island, Moncks Corner, Santee
July 12-19: Fairfield, Black Swamp (Hampton County), Columbia Camp, Lake Murray, Emerald City
July 19-26: Calhoun County, North Strand, Dalzell
July 20-26: Newberry, Creekfront (Murrells Inlet)

While much of the experience involves home repair, volunteers say Salkehatchie is so much more than this. Days of hard, sweaty work in the South Carolina summer sun are followed by nights of fellowship, reflection, music, worship, team-building and fun.

To register, go to https://www.salkehatchie.org.

Jeremiah Teams making strides toward report to Annual Conference

By Dan O'Mara

The four Jeremiah Teams commissioned by Bishop Leonard Fairley to help envision a thriving future for local churches and other ministries in the South Carolina Conference are making progress toward bringing formal recommendations to the 2025 Annual Conference when it meets in June.

The teams were inspired by Jeremiah 29:11, in which God reveals plans to give us "a future with hope." Fairley invited lay and clergy across the conference to take the lead in developing recommendations in four areas: Missional Priorities, Strategy for the Black Church and Ethnic Ministries, District Alignment, and Conference Staff Alignment. Here's what they are doing:

The Missional Priorities Team

The Missional Priorities Team, led by the Rev. Millie Nelson Smith, director of Connectional Ministries, is broadening its assessment of missional priorities beyond the area of Connectional Ministries. Members are trying to rethink all areas of missional work, rather than just those under the organizational umbrella of Connectional Ministries. Multiple themes have emerged from their research and conversations, touching on connection, communication and identity.

Communication drives our connection, and local churches don't always connect and communicate with each other. Districts and churches may not connect and communicate with each other in certain areas. And the Annual Conference and districts may not be connecting and communicating with each other in certain areas.

The team has discussed the need to reclaim who we are as United Methodists, to understand that it's OK to be United Methodist and not keep our heads down because of a season of disaffiliation and separation.

The Black Church and Ethnic Ministries Strategy Team

The Black Church and Ethnic Ministries Strategy Team, led by the Rev. James Friday, director of Congregational Development, continued its research into the existing Black and ethnic ministries of the conference, and began turning toward looking for what next steps might look like.

Team members discussed opportunities for reorganizing existing ministries around missions or new church starts, as well as revitalizing what is already being done. Beyond their meetings, they are dividing up the work of researching what types of resources may be needed to restart, for example, ministry with Hispanics/Latinos in South Carolina.

The team is investigating the potential for ministry in places across the state where ethnic minority populations have increased significantly in the past decade or two. That includes what we may need to start doing differently, and finding new funding sources to help pay for that ministry. They also are:

- exploring development of an assessment tool or framework to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the conference's ethnic ministries;
- researching and documenting the narrative of ethnic ministries in the conference over the past 10 years;
- assessing the current status and funding of the Ethnic Local Church Concerns committee and its initiatives; and
- looking for potential funding sources and partnership opportunities outside of the local church to support ethnic ministries.

The District Alignment Team

The District Alignment Team, led by the Rev. Cathy Mitchell, superintendent of the Spartanburg District and dean of the Cabinet, is organized into two sub-teams: one to look into geographical implications in the alignment of districts and another to consider the work that must be done at the district level, regardless of how the districts are aligned. Their research has become more granular in recent weeks, such as logging the actual distances between local churches and district parsonages, and between district parsonages and district offices; and the cost of maintaining parsonages and district offices, as well as the salaries involved.

Currently, 10 superintendents are covering the 12 districts, which means six superintendents are covering extra churches outside of their own districts. The team has determined that, when determining future coverage, it's not so much about the number of churches, but the distance superintendents have to travel. From a workload perspective, the team is reviewing job descriptions of district administrative assistants, as well as comparing what *The Book of Discipline* delineates as the responsibilities of a superintendent with what they do.

The Conference Staff Alignment Team

The Conference Staff Alignment Team, led by Fairley, has been studying a 30-page report from the General Council on Finance and Administration. GCFA conducted a personnel audit of conference staff. Fairley said the GCFA report provided a solid broad assessment that will inform the team's continuing conversation and work. He stressed that, while GCFA made some specific recommendations, the team will determine what recommendations will eventually be presented to Annual Conference for approval.

Anxiety during uncertain times is understandable, Bishop Fairley said, but he encouraged everybody "to be at peace."

Advocate's Anderson listening session is April 29

This month, the *Advocate* continues its listening sessions, which are being held monthly to gauge the needs and interests of its readers.

The listening sessions began in February and will run through December in every district in South Carolina.

Columbia's session was Feb. 24 at Mount Hebron United Methodist Church, West Columbia; Rock Hill's session was Feb. 25 at St. John's UMC, Rock Hill; and Greenwood's session was March 25 at St. Mark's UMC Rivers Street Campus, Greenwood.

The April session will be April 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at St. John's UMC, Anderson.

Free pizza will be served at every session, and the meeting will be a townhall-style event where people can learn about the *Advocate* and share ways the newspaper can improve.

All are welcome.

The listening sessions are part of a wider effort combining surveying, focus groups, interviews and events so the *Advocate* can deliver relevant and reliable news and information so people can make important decisions and participate fully in making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Future sessions are as follows (all from 6:30-8:30 p.m.): May 15: Spartanburg (location TBA); June 24: Greenville, Open Hearts UMC, Greenville; July 15: Florence, Lake City UMC, Lake City; Aug. 26: Hartsville (location TBA); Sept. 30: Marion, First UMC, 1001 5th Ave, Conway; Oct. 28: Orangeburg (location TBA); Nov. 17: Charleston, Stallsville UMC, 255 Stallsville Loop, Summerville; and Dec. 1: Walterboro (location TBA).

To RSVP or for more information, email krenfroe@advocatesc.org.

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AdvocateSC.org/survey

Viewpoints

Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

United in the important things

I'll never forget the time one of my readers called me out on a picture of my family wearing shorts while working on a Salkehatchie home.

In addition to my work at the *Advocate*, I have a "Shining the Light" ministry that includes a weekly faith blog, and while many of my readers are American, many of them span the globe. In the picture, my daughter, stepdaughter and I stood smiling, covered in dirt and holding up tools—but our legs were bare, and this was the issue with which my reader took exception. In his eyes and cultural context, it was immodest and improper for godly women to show their legs, he wrote with kind fervor. While to me as an American, there is absolutely nothing wrong with a modestly dressed female wearing shorts while doing the work of the Lord, to him, it was a proclamation of improper values and disrespect.

So now, out of respect to him and my other international readers, I don't share pictures of myself and my family members wearing shorts anymore. I don't "have" to do this, and it certainly doesn't change my mind about wearing shorts during 100-degree Salkehatchie weeks, but it seems like the kind and respectful thing at least not to share pictures about this.

To me, this example gets to the heart of why the regionalization amendment is important. On Page 1, we share an article about how at this year's Annual Conference, South Carolina will have the opportunity to vote on regionalization and three other amendments to The United Methodist Church constitution. Essentially, regionalization allows each region of the UMC worldwide to make decisions that will best support outreach and ministry efforts in their specific setting, whether that's Africa, Europe, the Philippines or the United States. Regionalization basically acknowledges that the people who comprise God's church are different, and different people have different understandings of what it looks like to follow God.

Living faithfully while following the Lord can look like a lot of different things depending on your culture and your context. And it's important to respect that other people see things and do things quite differently.

The reality is that on this side of heaven, I'm not sure all Christians will ever agree on everything about Christianity. I hope we can all agree that Jesus Christ is our Lord and savior, who died for our sins and is our path to salvation, and as part of following him, we are supposed to repent from our old ways and strive to live as a new creation. Beyond that, following Jesus can look quite different from one person to another. Only Jesus is the judge of whether we're living right by him or not.

Our church isn't perfect, and our differences often cause division. But I think regionalization is a good way that we, as God's people, can remain together as the UMC, united in the important things while agreeing to respect other cultures' different contexts.

"Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval."—Romans 14:1-4 (NLT)

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Bishop's Corner

by Bishop Leonard E. Fairley

'It's Friday, but Sunday's coming!'

"Therefore, lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed." Hebrews 12:12-13 (NRSVA).

I absolutely love the late Tony Campolo's story about the preaching contest.

The old preacher tells the polished preacher, "Son, that was pretty good, but let me show you how it's done." The old preacher stumbles to the pulpit, and all he says is, "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming." He says this about three more times growing louder each time. "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming." By this time, the congregation and the old preacher are one. The church is on fire with the Holy Spirit.

We have been through the darkness in so many ways. We are suffering from the effects of painful church and denominational trauma.

It's Friday, but Sunday's coming.

Jesus has traveled the dark night of his passion. He has suffered the agony of betrayal and the cross. He was placed in a borrowed tomb, and his disciples have scattered. It's Friday but Sunday's coming, and we will be reminded again that we are Easter people.

The power of the resurrection rises up into salvation, redemption and reconciliation, making all creation born anew. Although it often feels like Good Friday in our world, we are Easter people, and we know a light that no darkness can put out. We are Easter people.

It has been rightly said, "We have a love that can never be fathomed, a life that will never die, a peace that can never be understood, a joy that can never be overcome, a hope that can never be disappointed, a glory that can never be diminished, a purity that can never be defiled, a wisdom that can never be baffled, and resources that can never be exhausted."

Friends. there might still be Fridays to come, but "because he lives, we can face tomorrow."

Mary Magdalene has come from the empty tomb with joy in her heart, shouting "He has risen!" Can you hear her, South Carolina United Methodists?

"It's Friday, but Sunday's coming." The Holy Spirit will give us second wind and touch us with a new fire. Jesus has risen. He is alive!

Jesus has risen, alleluia!

Letters to the Editor

We already have a king

The excellent commentary in the March *Advocate* by the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr., "Be Careful What We Ask For," really hit home to me when I saw the cover page of the March/April Upper Room devotional.

The scene portrays Christ standing, hands bound, back exposed for the lashes to come, with the crown of thorns on his head. Pilate is seen proclaiming to the crowd, "Here is the man."

But Pilate was wrong. This was more than the man. This was and is the King of Kings, Lord of Lords.

In view of that, I hope it is not too late for those in the United States of America who claim to be followers of Christ to wake up to the fact we already have a king. We do not need for anyone else to declare themselves our king and for us to glorify their actions, which are grounded in selfish ambition and vain conceit.

Instead, we need to stand up and speak out for truth. We need to hold our leaders accountable and let it be known we are tired of the chaos in our country. There are ways to lawfully address changes that are needed, and many changes are needed. But this does not include pledging our allegiance to those who seem to have never heard the words, "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

Margaret Comer Baker, member
Bethesda United Methodist Church, Easley

Crucified

Our nation is blessed to have food, medicine, doctors, shelter, schools, water, electricity and many other resources that many countries do not have. The United Methodist Church has always sent missionaries and lifesaving resources to countries that needed help. As John Wesley said, "The world is my parish."

Humanitarian aid and disaster relief have always been a priority with The United Methodist Church. It is wrong to destroy USAID by our government. People will die, especially children. Harvest Hope provides thousands of food items to the needy because of the support of federal funds. This is needed. There is a fear these funds will stop.

Jesus said we are to love our neighbor and the world.

Rev. John Culp, retired
West Columbia

Artificial intelligence

In a short time, perhaps a very short time, artificial intelligence may become the dominating force in personal, community, national and international life. Most of us have no idea what that might mean, but we read that AI calculates thousands of times faster than the human brain, that it writes computer codes, composes poems containing original thought that expresses human emotions and value judgments.

A recent issue of a national news magazine reports that Microsoft is investing $10 billion anticipating that AI is becoming a new category in science, business and finance.

The genius of the human brain is that, in addition to governing our bodies, it can collect information from varied sources and organize it to produce desirable outcomes: houses, aspirin, penicillin, automobiles, trucks, tractors, planes, ships, pizza, skirts, shirts and Big Macs. Just look around: Many of the things you see are products of human intelligence. That includes medical miracles, war machines and space travel among countless products both good and not so good!

See "Letters," Page 5

UMCSC Recipe Swap

Vanilla Dream Boat Dessert

From the kitchen of: Crystal Barrs, of Camp Creek United Methodist Church, Lancaster, and Good Shepherd Methodist Church, Lancaster.

Ingredients:
1 regular bag of Vanilla Oreos, finely crushed (about 36 cookies)
6 T. butter, melted
1 pkg. (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
2 T. cold milk
1 tub (12 oz.) Cool Whip, divided
2 pkg. (3 oz.) Instant Vanilla Pudding
3¼ c. whole milk, cold
1 bag of white chocolate chips
1/4 c. granulated sugar

In a large bowl, combine Oreos and butter, and mix until crumbs are fully coated. Press the crumbs into an ungreased 9x13-inch baking dish. Place the pan in the refrigerator while you work on the additional layers.

In a medium bowl, mix the cream cheese until light and fluffy. Add 2 T. milk and sugar and mix well. Fold in 1 and 3/8 cup of Cool Whip.

Spread this mixture over cookie crust in refrigerator. In another bowl, combine the vanilla pudding with 3 and 1/4 cup milk and whisk until pudding starts to thicken. Spread pudding mixture over the previous cream cheese layer. Let the dessert rest for about 5 minutes so pudding can firm up further.

Spread the remaining Cool Whip over the top. Sprinkle white chocolate chips evenly over the top. Place in the freezer for one hour or refrigerator for four hours before serving.

Recipes Wanted

Do you have a favorite recipe? Email news@advocatesc.org, and don't forget to tell us your name, church name and city.

LETTERS: Sounding off

From Page 4

Not long ago, the news media reported the death of the top Hamas leader, the man who launched the current war between the Israelis and the Palestinians. He was killed by a rocket launched miles away to destroy the car in which he was a passenger. In an era in which such pinpoint targeting is possible, we are all vulnerable.

In the world of artificial intelligence, we can't hide. If Hitler had had artificial intelligent weapons he would have reduced London and all her inhabitants to cinders.

Does that mean the day has come when machines can mimic both our good and bad behavior? It is difficult to imagine what our homes and communities will be like if or when that becomes a reality. It might mean that machines would be mobile, self-directing and creative, perhaps able to duplicate themselves. Not a very welcomed thought!

The television commercial featuring a lady kicking a rebellious home appliance may be a harbinger of the future. Rebellious children can make life difficult. Rebellious carpet sweepers, coffee pots and cars could make life unbearable.

The positive side to AI is almost beyond imagining: cotton mills producing fabric and General Motors rolling out vehicles with no human workers involved!

Yet, it seems unlikely that the positive will outweigh the negative among AI consequences. Could we trust AI to act on our best interest? Self-aware machines could boobytrap all products coming out of the plants. Could they be held accountable, prosecuted and put away?

What does faith mean in an AI world? It means we should pray that our engineers, philosophers, and investors can devise methods to guard against AI's negative possibilities!

It also means that we should pray to become better versions of ourselves.

Rev. Mickey Fisher, retired
Spartanburg

A poem: The Song Inside the Wounds

The song inside the wounds
Sings louder than the storm;
The melody of mercy
Comes from a crown of thorns.
The blood of my Lord Jesus,
The perfect, spotless lamb,
Cries from the earth 'receive me!'
Until he comes again.
Riding on the clouds, his raging glory
breaks
Through sky and sea and bosom
Unknowing of his grace.
So while ye may perceive it,
Let thine heart be stirred;
Enter 'neath the blood of Christ
That speaks a better word.

(Excerpted with permission from the author's second published book, "Notes from the Hem," a collection of Christian poetry and prose.)

Autumn Leigh Waite
Bluffton United Methodist Church, Bluffton

Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Amiri Hooker

Being a good neighbor in the light of Easter

During this Easter season, we are reminded that Jesus is the true source of life in abundance. His resurrection is not just a moment in history but a call to a new way of living—one defined by love, compassion, and the radical inclusion of others. As I reflect on this, I find myself drawn to the simple yet profound lessons of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood and how they align with the gospel's call to be a good neighbor.

Fred Rogers, an ordained minister, infused the heart of the gospel into every episode. His message was clear: Differences should not divide us but create opportunities for understanding and love. Regardless of wealth, nationality, age or background, every person was worthy of dignity and care. Being a neighbor, he taught, was about more than proximity—it was about presence, empathy and action.

His show also featured King Friday XIII, a ruler obsessed with control and maintaining the status quo. King Friday issued decrees that served his own interests rather than those of his people. His arrogance and selfishness stood in stark contrast to the values of humility and service.

Our world today is filled with leaders—political, corporate and even religious—who behave like King Friday, prioritizing power over people. They enact policies that harm rather than protect, cutting humanitarian aid, reducing housing assistance and devaluing the lives of the poor, the immigrant and the orphan.

One of Jesus' central teachings is the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). When asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus responded with a story that shattered societal norms. The hero was not the religious elite but a Samaritan—a person despised by Jewish society. The Samaritan did not question whether the wounded man was deserving of help; he simply saw a need and met it.

Today, society often asks the wrong questions: Who deserves help? Who is worthy of assistance? But the gospel asks, How can I be a good neighbor? Following Jesus means seeing the needs of others as holy. Feeding the hungry, housing the homeless and caring for the sick are not optional acts of charity—they are fundamental to our faith.

Unfortunately, the United States has recently slashed vital humanitarian programs, putting millions of lives at risk. The U.S. Agency for International Development has faced devastating cuts, affecting food aid, refugee assistance and global health initiatives. Faith-based organizations like Catholic Relief Services and World Vision, which rely on government funding, are now struggling to continue their work.

Domestically, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has suffered deep budget cuts, leaving disaster-stricken areas and low-income communities even more vulnerable. The Federal Housing Administration, which provides mortgage insurance for millions, is now underfunded and struggling. These decisions aren't just fiscal—they're moral failures. They will cause suffering, and as people of faith, we cannot turn a blind eye.

The early Christian church understood that discipleship was inseparable from social responsibility. Yet some in power argue that compassion fosters weakness, that helping the poor encourages dependence and that welcoming the immigrant threatens national security. This mindset is not only unbiblical but directly opposed to the teachings of Jesus.

The world needs fewer "strong men" and King Fridays and more good Samaritans. We must reject leadership that prioritizes power over people. We must resist policies that create suffering instead of alleviating it. Being a good neighbor means offering life to the dying, not causing death through neglect and indifference.

Fred Rogers understood this. He spoke to children with gentleness and sincerity, teaching them that kindness was a choice and that they had the power to make the world a better place. As adults, we must take those lessons to heart. Being a good neighbor means standing up for the poor, fighting for the marginalized and ensuring that our policies reflect love rather than cruelty.

Jesus calls us to be more than passive believers—he calls us to be active disciples.

This Easter, as we celebrate the risen Christ, let us also rise to the call of discipleship. Let us embody the abundant life Jesus offers by loving our neighbors, both near and far.

And in a world that often chooses division over unity, may we be living witnesses to the power of resurrection love.

Hooker is an elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church and the congregational specialist for the Florence and Marion districts.

Are you passionate about an issue facing your community, state, nation or world? Consider writing an opinion piece for submission to the Advocate. *All voices are welcome; we strive for fairness and balance. Email news@advocatesc.org.*

Guest Commentary

by Dr. Anthony Hodge

Who's on your list?

Recently I had the opportunity to speak with some clergy who I have the utmost respect for. These clergy have retired from active clergy status but still assist the bishop and Appointive Cabinet when needed.

In my estimation, the clergy I spoke with have done outstanding work in the church over the years, and I felt they should be considered for conversation.

I was led to do this based on the fact that over the years, while engaging in ministry but even beyond ministry, there have been persons in my life who have played a pivotal role for me and for so many others. Honestly, when I reflect upon almost 34 years of pastoral ministry experience, I have been blessed to serve with both clergy and laity who have, with God's help, been instrumental in helping to shape me into the pastoral leader I am today.

The older I become, the more I value persons who have impacted and continue to impact my life in positive ways. My experiences are no different from anyone else. We are all recipients of relationships that have helped us get to places we find ourselves in life.

In reflecting on the Paul and Timothy relationship I had with my deceased mentor, Dr. George Watson Sr., I'm reminded of a quote he would often utilize in our conversations regarding persons and where they found themselves after years of ministry. Watson would say, "If you see a turtle on the top of a pole, the turtle didn't get there by itself." As crazy as that quote sounded at the time Watson was sharing it, I am able to understand it much better now.

That quote from Watson is applicable in every phase of our lives whether it is related to ministry or anything else that you and I can imagine in terms of relationships we have had over the years. Think about the relationships we had or still may have with our parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, coworkers, neighbors, friends and the list could go on. How have or how are these people positively impacting your life?

As you reflect on your life today, who comes to mind who has made a lasting impression in and on your life? If you had the opportunity to speak to them, what would be the things you ask them so they could share with you how they arrived at the place or places where they were in a position to positively influence others?

My initial list led me to speak to the Rev. Jeannette Cooper, Dr. Granville Hicks, the Rev. Janice Frederick Watts and the Rev. Willie Wilson.

I am very appreciative that Rev. Cooper, Dr. Hicks, Rev. Watts and Rev. Wilson were willing to spend some time with me responding to questions I had posed prior to our conversation. I am so thankful I had an opportunity to connect with each individual I've already mentioned because in those conversations, I was able to glean from each clergyperson how they saw God working in their life from the time they responded to God's call on their life until they transitioned into a retired status as a United Methodist clergy.

I want to challenge all of us to continue listing persons who have made positive contributions to the church by helping to influence us in this life. As stated previously, not only have our lives been positively impacted by those who have shared their gifts and graces for ministry with us, but also through family relationships, working relationships, neighbor relationships and whatever other relationships we may have had over the years.

Scripture talks about that great cloud of witnesses watching over us, but we don't have to wait until someone transitions from this life to benefit from positive relationships. We can begin or continue to spend quality time with persons who have made significant contributions in our lives and in the lives of others. So why not connect with people you know God has used to make a difference in this life for us and for others?

I plan to expand my list of people who I will go sit down with and talk to about their lives.

What better time than now to have those meaningful discussions with people who have made a lasting impression in our lives? As we have those discussions, let's also use those opportunities to say "thank you" for all those individuals have done and continue to do in our lives and the lives of others.

Thank you, Rev. Cooper! Thank you, Dr. Hicks! Thank you, Rev. Watts! Thank you, Rev. Wilson! I am extremely grateful to each of you and thank you for taking the time to share with me valuable information that I will always have and can use on those days when I may become a little discouraged or despondent. Each of you has shown me and so many others what can be done, and you're still doing it!

So I want to thank you once again: Who's on your list?

Hodge is Rock Hill District superintendent.

Humanity Behind Bars

by the Rev. Nichole Middleton

A story of redemption behind bars

When we think of transformation, we often envision a slow, steady process—a gradual unfolding of understanding and grace. But for some, transformation comes through the fire of reckoning, through wrestling with the consequences of past choices and through encountering God in the most unexpected of places.

This is the story of Martin, a man whose journey from anger to redemption reminds us of the boundless reach of grace.

Martin was sentenced to 30 years in prison for a crime of great magnitude—an act of planned violence that, by the grace of God, never came to fruition. Raised in a single-parent home, Martin grew up in the tension of financial strain and a mixed cultural identity. His mother was a woman of deep faith, someone whose devotion to God shaped much of her life. Yet for Martin, the struggles of his youth—his frustration with poverty, his longing for belonging, his unchecked adolescent anger—became fertile ground for resentment rather than faith.

Instead of finding solace in his mother's example, he rebelled. He was drawn into a form of extremist ideology that fueled his rage and gave him a sense of purpose, albeit a destructive one. He believed he had found a calling in violence, and he set out to fulfill it. But through a series of complications—divine intervention, some might say—his plan failed. He was arrested, not for an act committed, but for the intent behind it.

Now, eight years into his sentence, Martin is not the same person he was when he entered prison. He has undergone a transformation—not just of mind, but of spirit. His rage, once untamed and consuming, has been reshaped into something else entirely. He has learned to ask hard questions about faith, identity and justice without fear of condemnation. He has been given the space to wrestle with doubt, to seek truth beyond ideology and to understand the depth of God's mercy.

Howard Thurman, whose theological insights have shaped the spiritual lives of many, speaks of the necessity of an inward journey—a deep, personal encounter with the divine that leads to authentic change. Martin's transformation is a testament to this inward journey. His story is not one of instant redemption, but of slow, deliberate sanctification—the kind John Wesley spoke of when he described grace as not just a moment of salvation, but an ongoing process of becoming more like Christ.

What, then, was Martin's real crime? Was it his anger, his confusion, his lack of guidance or his misinterpretation of faith? These are not excuses but realities we must grapple with if we are to understand the full complexity of human brokenness. For many behind bars, the difference between destruction and redemption lies in who walks with them, who offers them a path forward, and whether their faith community becomes a place of nurture or alienation.

This is the work of the church—to accompany those who seek transformation, to create spaces where the lost can be found and to embody the radical grace that Jesus extends to all. Our baptismal covenant in The United Methodist Church calls us to "resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves." But it also calls us to nurture one another in faith, to uphold the dignity of all God's children and to believe in the possibility of redemption.

John Wesley's famous words remind us: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." This is not a passive calling. It is an imperative. It challenges us to look beyond the labels of "criminal" and "convict" and to see the humanity, the potential and the divine image in those whom society has cast aside.

Martin's story is just one of many. It is a reminder that behind prison walls, there are men and women who are not beyond hope. There are souls in need of discipleship, hearts longing for healing and lives waiting to be transformed.

As the church, our duty is not just to acknowledge their existence but to walk with them, to provide the light of Christ in places of deep darkness and to bear witness to the power of grace that can change even the hardest of hearts.

May we, as the body of Christ, never forget that transformation is possible. And may we never fail to be the hands and feet of Jesus, offering mercy, justice and love to all who seek a new way forward.

Middleton is an elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, endorsed by the United Methodist endorsing agency for prison ministry. She currently 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.

Loving their Laurel neighbors

The Rev. Emil Finley and Clark Craig of Soule Chapel UMC, Cross Hill, stand with a number of pillows their congregation collected for Laurel Memorial Home. The church teamed up with Ladies of the Lake to collect the pillows for the home and delivered them in March.

Photo by Jessica Brodie

Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr.

We met the enemy—it was us!

It has been said over and over that the election would reveal more about who we are than the candidates.

The campaign and history had already indisputably shown us the candidates' type. Of course, if we stuck our heads in the sand, covered our eyes and ears, pinched our nose or were hell-bent on ignoring what we know, it really did not matter. Some of us were hoping and praying that the people of God would reveal themselves in that moment; that truth would prevail and obscure hateful, dangerous lies. However, it seems that truth, fairness and justice took a holiday off or joined the evil parade. It seems like everything decent and godly about America evaporated.

Bad has become good; lies are truths; judges no longer dispense justice but serve as private attorneys for the rich and famous. Those who risked their lives to protect lawmakers are abandoned by the same lawmakers they protected. Those who feel they are so special that they should be respected bring in a friend and jointly disrespect and humiliate him, to please the enemy. They call a room in a building a sacred space, but when lawless comrades break through windows, doors, attack and kill protectors and even deprecate on walls and floors in a sacred building, they are called patriots.

And to make matters worse, these criminals are set free and those who are hired to protect us from such atrocities are hunted like criminals.

Sometimes, it's hard to see what is right before us or know that it will affect us until it does. We may be rich but have relatives and friends who are not. I have been noticing shanties, and their conditions, of late and am surprised at those who are living in them. I'm reminded that, even though we may not know it or are just brainwashed, "We are in the same boat." There are more of the "least of us, than the rest of them."

Some thought this was just about making cotton-picking great again, forgetting that mechanical cotton-pickers are being used. I am hearing and seeing protests because of the loss of jobs, Medicaid, insurance, educational opportunity, freedoms, small business closures, children facing malnutrition, Inequity in medical care and the list goes on. Maybe we have forgotten that the rich get their revenue from those at the bottom, and dictators don't care about anyone except themselves. This is just the beginning, hasn't even been 90 days, and we'll all get a chance to cry before this is over, and it will be over.

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30:5). America, we will rise or fall together. We're not going back! God, help your people to stand in peaceful resistance in the knowledge that you are still in charge, abhor evil and injustice and will avenge your people. Amen.

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

Guest Commentary

by Anna Stevens Bright

Who is Jesus to you?

As Resurrection Sunday, also known as Easter Sunday, approaches, there is a question to ponder. Who is Jesus to you?

Jesus is known to many by a number of metaphorical phrases—the lily of the valley, the bright and morning star, wonderful counselor, the prince of peace, the good shepherd, the light of the world and the Alpha and the Omega, among others.

The question remains: Who is Jesus to you? It depends on your individual relationship with him, or if you have a relationship with him at all. I cannot speak for anyone else, but to me, Jesus is my savior, my all and all. He means everything to me because if he had not died on that "old rugged cross" and had not been resurrected on that third day to save a dying world, I don't know where I would be today. I thank God for Jesus because without him, "Life would be so rugged, like a ship without a sail" as sung by the late, great gospel singer Mahalia Jackson.

Easter Sunday is not all about all the colorful outfits, the brightly matching accessories, baskets adorned with all sorts of goodies and the huge family dinner. It is about the risen savior who came to save a dying world so that we might have a chance to the tree of life. We must tell the world who Jesus is so many will not die in sin. Salvation is free. It doesn't cost us anything to turn our lives over to Jesus. However, all of the hoopla of excessive spending for the family to look presentable that day can cost in more ways than one. Therefore, please don't allow material things to be your savior! Acts 4:12 (ESV) affirms, "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

This anonymously written humorous short story, "Jesus Saves," illustrates a sharp contrast between a life with him and one with the devil. I found this version on https://reflectioncapsules.com. Enjoy!

"Jesus and Satan were having an ongoing argument about who was better at the computer. They had been going at it for days, and God was tired of hearing all of the bickering. Finally God said, 'Cool it. I am going to set up a test that will run two hours, and I will judge who does the better job.'

"So Satan and Jesus sat down at the keyboards and typed away. They 'moused.' They did spreadsheets. They wrote reports. They sent faxes. They sent email. They sent out an email with attachments. They downloaded. They did some genealogy reports. They made cards. They did every known job. But ten minutes before their time was up, lightning suddenly flashed across the sky, thunder rolled, rain poured and, of course, the electricity went off. Satan stared at his blank screen and screamed every cuss word known in the underworld. Jesus just sighed. The electricity finally flickered back on, and each of them restarted their computers. Satan searched frantically, screaming, 'It's all gone! I lost everything when the power went out!'

"Meanwhile, Jesus quietly started printing out all of his files from the past two hours. Satan observed this and became irate. 'Wait! He cheated; how did he do it?'

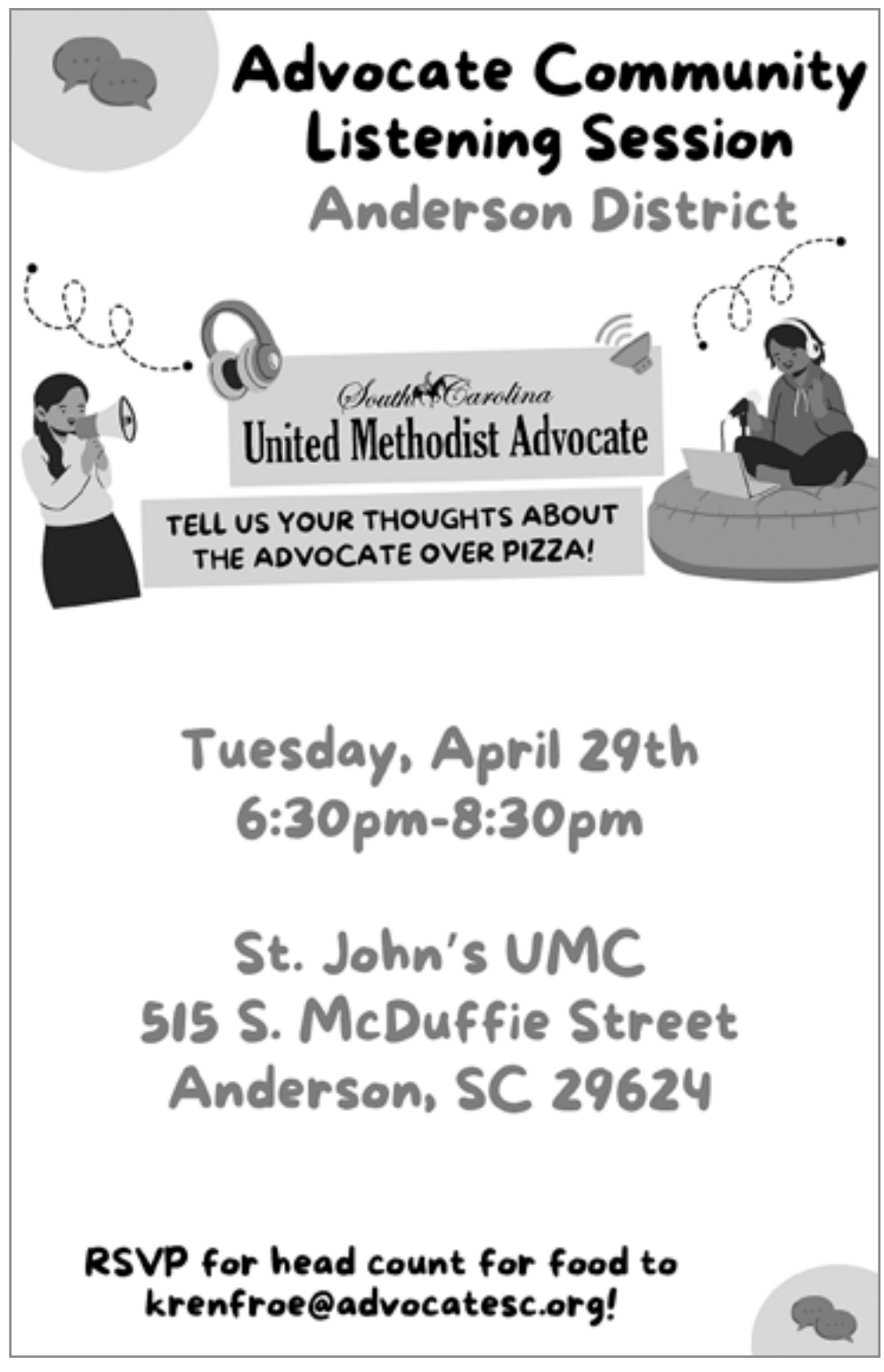
"God shrugged and said, 'Jesus saves.'"

Bright is a member of Isaiah United Methodist Church, Walterboro.

Photo courtesy of Connie DeRamus

More than six decades of love

Mr. and Mrs. James and Joyce Chambers celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary on Feb. 28. To show their appreciation and love, the Unity UMC, Lugoff, church family held a celebration for them Sunday, Feb. 16 (pictured at left). Many friends and family were in attendance for this special day. The couple is blessed with three children, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



First, Lancaster, loves its neighbors through food ministries

By Ken Hudson

Food—you've gotta love it. Food nourishes the body and incorporates the senses: smell, sight, the sound of it cooking and, most of all, taste. Food brings us together at the table to share in the meal and engage in conversation. Food feeds the spirit and the soul. The Scriptures contain numerous accounts of food, from eating manna while wandering the desert to elaborate banquets to fish cooked by the Sea of Galilee.

Food connects, and First is grateful to help.

At First United Methodist Church, Lancaster, much of our outreach is connected to food. We collect food for a local food bank, provide food for a warming shelter at Immanuel Baptist Church, pack "Buddy Bags" for our neighbors who need something to eat and can be picked up at Ray's Flowers, and bake cookies for Kairos prison ministry. Other community activities involve preparing hot dogs for our fall festival, pancakes for Shrove Tuesday and soup sales for ministries.

One of the main programs we support is providing a meal at Bethel Shelters at Bethel UMC, Rock Hill.

The homepage for Bethel Shelters states, "Ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief and nonrecurring. Providing a safe place to sleep, a hot meal to eat and pathways to self-sufficiency for homeless individuals year-round."

Bethel Shelters operates year-round and churches, civic organizations and individuals provide the meals each evening. During the coldest times, 70-90 meals are served nightly.

The United Methodist Men at First UMC sponsor meals, as does the Young at Heart Sunday school class. The outreach council supports these efforts financially, and many church members bake homemade desserts for the meals. Members of all ages serve meals and interact with the men.

Volunteer Sissy Poovey says, "I'm grateful for the opportunity to volunteer at Bethel. When I'm there, I am reminded how much a hot meal truly nourishes the soul. It can be a source of comfort, care, security and strength. Every time I serve at Bethel, I leave with humbleness and thanksgiving."

UMMen President Michael Lindsay says, "Having the opportunity to serve at Bethel Shelters is a powerful reminder of Christ's calling on our lives. At first glance, one may simply see providing a meal at Bethel is an opportunity for service; however, it is much more than that. As volunteers, we are blessed to act as Christ's hands and feet in our world—to put our faith into action."

Photo courtesy of the Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

New ways to love your neighbor

The people of Trinity UMC, West Columbia, have taken Jesus' commandment to love your neighbor to a new level. Their neighbors, residents of The Pines rehabilitation home, have been loved with visits, gifts and music. Members at Trinity collected socks, lotion and other needed items for the residents and then distributed those gifts, bringing with them goodies and a guitar. The first visit to the Pines in December was followed by a visit in February and one in March, which gives the church great hope that a Love Our Neighbors Ministry is growing.

Dementia care workshop set for April 29 in Aiken

Churches and individuals interested in a dementia care ministry are invited to join the South Carolina Cognitive Connection Ministry for a Dementia Care Workshop in April.

The April workshop will be held April 29 from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church, Aiken. It will feature a morning of conversation and learning around dementia, which is a topic that affects all congregations.

To register: https://tinyurl.com/dementiacare042925.

United Women in Faith

by Angela Allen

Come Together, Be Together

The South Carolina Conference United Women in Faith Membership Nurture and Outreach Committee is very excited to hold its Come Together Be Together event via Zoom.

This is a free event that will be held Saturday, May 17, at 10 a.m.

Preparations and plans are well under way for a lively, inspiring time of fellowship and friendship for all. Our selected theme this year is "Imitators of God" (Ephesians 5:1-2), and our guest speaker will be the Rev. Karen Jones from Open Hearts UMC, Greenville.

The Greenville District will host this fun gathering for all. The link will open up at 9:45 a.m.

Jones received her master's in 2009 and was ordained in 2011. Her leadership includes service as a Jurisdictional Conference delegate in 2022 and General Conference delegate in 2024, on the Board of Ordained Ministry, as former chair of the Order of Deacons and as former member of the Spartanburg County Foundation. She is married to Andy, who is also ordained in the UMC and is a chaplain at Bon Secours-St. Francis hospital.

We are delighted to have her on our event in May and look so forward to her uplifting message.

All attendees will choose one of the four workshops for additional learning, fellowship and fun. Workshops will be Healthy Eating/Nutrition Focus; Virtual Tour of Greenville Highlights; Bible Study on "Imitators of God"; and Cyber Crime Prevention/Information.

We look forward to our morning together as we put faith, hope and love into action. See you on May 17.

Online registration is available at https://rb.gy/0qvzvn.

For questions, please me at 864-680-9029 or Angela.Allen@charter.net.

Allen is the Come Together Be Together chairperson and registrar.

Thank you for your wonderful response to the UWF Day of Giving on March 23. What a glorious time to be involved with our legacy that will go on through our next 150 years. Much progress has been made over our first 156 years. Our hope and prayers are to surpass and grow in new ways to keep developing and planning for our future with United Women in Faith. Thank you for your continued support.

If you were unable to be part of the program and have not already given, it is never too late. To learn more, visit https://uwfaith.org/legacy, or call 212-870-3705. You can honor a special person in your life or a deceased loved one, or make a gift to The Legacy Endowment Fund as a lasting tribute.

Our actions have always spoken as loudly as our words: Acts of love. Acts of faith. Acts of generosity. We show up and we get things done. Together we are building our legacy.

—Crystal Barrs, Legacy liaison

Jeannie Lanier
We love you and appreciate your service of 34+ years!
Love, North Charleston United Methodist Church

Leave A Legacy To Change Lives

The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation
P. O. Box 5087, Columbia, SC 29250-5087
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Loaves and Fishes at Brookland UMC

By Lexie Chatham

WEST COLUMBIA—Prominent in the gospels is the story of Jesus feeding thousands who came to hear him preach. Perhaps you remember that as everyone grew hungry, the disciples discovered only five loaves of bread and two fishes that had been brought by a young boy in the crowd. But that was enough for Jesus to feed all those there and still have 12 baskets of food left over. Thus Jesus set the example for us to follow.

Brookland United Methodist Church has taken this message to heart and feeds their community on the second Saturday of every month through Loaves and Fishes.

Loaves and Fishes began 15 years ago to meet the needs of shut ins in their congregation but now has expanded to the entire community. Many fed are children but most attendees are adults. United Women in Faith and church members provide, cook and serve more than 100 meals both to be eaten in their Fellowship Hall or to be taken out. Brookland's assembly line is well-oiled from experience, and the church members interact easily with the familiar crowds that come.

"Hola," greeted James Liles with a huge smile as he handed out trays. Cluster 1 Leader Vikki Hill placed cups with ice by the drinks where a young man who wore a lanyard stood. The lanyard read "I am autistic," and he explained to me that he had ridden over on his bike for the meal.

"We don't begrudge anybody a meal, "

Chatham, social action coordinator for Columbia District United Women in Faith, and a fellow volunteer help one Saturday.

said Gene Key, the husband of Cluster 2 leader Vanessa Key, as he flipped the grilled cheese sandwiches he was cooking to go with the chili.

Wanting to help out, I began wrapping the sandwiches when they came off the grill as quickly as I could. I managed to keep up as the crowd began pouring in, and for that James gave me the nickname "Lightning Hands."

Seconds were encouraged, and when everyone finished eating, the fellowship continued with Gene serving as the master of ceremonies for bingo. Excitement and laughter filled the room as prizes were given to the winners, including a couple of $20 Subway gift cards and prayer shawls. When people left, they could take canned vegetables on the table by the door. For Christmas, fruit baskets were given out.

By the time I left Brookland UMC, I knew I had followed Christ's biding faithfully and had been in the presence of God.

Photo courtesy of Anthony Simpson

Edisto Fork men 'Rise Up'

The men's of Edisto Fork UMC, Orangeburg, attended the MenNMinistry "Rise Up" spiritual retreat Feb. 22 at Journey UMC, Columbia, along with men across the state. Edisto Fork was a major sponsor of the event. Here, the men gather for a smile.

Cognitive Connection

by the Rev. Nick Lyerly

Dementia support group meetings begin in Marion

Marion First United Methodist Church, Marion, began their first Dementia Support Group meeting in October.

The group meets monthly at the church and welcomes anyone in the Marion community who would like to attend.

The meetings allow caregivers to share their experiences and struggles of taking care of a loved one suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

The group was formed out of the need for resources and support to families in the community who have a need to share their experiences with one another.

The South Carolina Cognitive Connection Ministry is an ecumenical initiative spearheaded by The United Methodist Church. For information on upcoming workshops in your area or to find out how you can get involved, go to the Cognitive Connection Ministry Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/61561413972152 or email cognitive@umcsc.org.

Marion First UMC will host a Dementia 201 workshop this fall, which will be available to the community.

Photos courtesy of Amy Wahl

Amy Rushing, dementia care specialist for South Carolina Department of Aging and coordinator for Marion and surrounding counties, listens as participants share their stories.

Native American Ministries

Living Water Ministry: Benefitting Navajo Families

In April 2018, Calvary United Methodist Church, Swansea, started their Living Water Ministry to benefit Navajo families in New Mexico.

The Navajo Nation encompasses land in the three states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. According to the water foundation Dig Deep, 30 percent of the families on the Navajo Nation live without running water. Many drive miles hauling barrels of water for basic needs.

This fact spurred Calvary UMC to raise money to help those on the Navajo Nation with running water.

The traditional methods of donations are members gifting directly to the Living Water Ministry or by giving memorials designated to the ministry. However, there is a new method of raising money: Several church members started a recycling program.

Two women go out into the community picking up old appliances, batteries, wiring, lawnmowers, tools and many other items that are made of steel, copper, aluminum and lead. The women recycle a couple of days a week, taking the junk metal to recyclers in Cayce, St Matthews and Orangeburg. One hundred percent of the money received from recycling goes into the Living Water Ministry. When the goal of $4,500 is reached in the Living Water Ministry fund, the church sends a check to Dig Deep. (Learn more at https://www.navajowaterproject.org.)

Dig Deep is presently installing clean water and solar systems for Native American families on the Navajo Indian Reservation in New Mexico. Currently, Calvary UMC is raising money to help the 21st family get clean hot and cold running water and solar electricity. If the family doesn't already have electricity, then solar panels are installed to generate enough energy to pump the water into the house through a water purifier and also to a hot water heater. Enough energy is generated to install some lights inside the house, too.

When the installations are complete and the water begins flowing into the house, there is laughter and many tears of joy.

Clean indoor running water is a something many people take for granted. After a day of recycling, one of the first things I do is come home and take a shower. I pause, thinking about the many Native families that are waiting for their installation of water and solar systems. Considering how many are without these luxuries causes us to work harder. We have helped many people in our local community get their yards cleaned up by removing the metal lying around their property. Now they call us when they have something new for us to recycle. We have helped hundreds of people in the surrounding communities spiff up their yards. But the ones we help the most are new widows who need to get things cleaned up.

We have met so many wonderful people who feel good about giving us the metal knowing that it is going to help a Navajo family on the reservation get clean water and electricity. After hundreds of trips to recyclers, we have properly recycled 300,000 pounds of metal! What started as a new ministry at Calvary UMC has opened doors throughout the community and beyond.

I became the Native American representative from Calvary. I attend the annual training each February as my church representative. From this effort, I was asked to join the South Carolina United Methodist Conference as a Native American Committee member. I have gotten involved with other Native American outreach programs, too. The Living Water Ministry has not only changed how I handle water at my house, but it has also had a huge effect on one small rural church. We know we can make an impact in the lives of Navajo families on the Reservation by bringing them clean water and electricity, igniting dignity and hope for an easier tomorrow

Be careful if you ever pray "The Prayer of Jabez," because God can and will expand your territory—if you are willing to serve wherever he leads you! In 1 Chronicles 4:10, Jabez prayed to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and expand my territory! Please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all trouble and pain!" (NLT). And God granted him his request.

—By Frances Fogle, member of the South Carolina United Methodist Native American Committee

Working together

Several Cabinet spouses help at the homeless closet at Little River UMC, Little River, in late March, while their spouses worked with Bishop Fairley on appointment-making. Pictured are Donna Lollis, Dawn Fairley, Karen Brown, Karen Patterson and Carla Fleming.

Joshua's Army extends and paves parking lot to enable better service to community

Recently, Berkeley County recognized and celebrated a local United Methodist church ministry, Joshua's Army, as they cut the ribbon on two completed projects.

Joshua's Army is part of Joshua United Methodist Church, Moncks Corner.

With $50,000 in county Community Development Block Grant funding, Joshua's Army was able to extend and pave its parking lot to help food delivery trucks load and unload at the food pantry building and install new roofing on the building.

Joshua's Army partners with Lowcountry Food Bank. Berkeley County's CDBG grant program allows them to partner with dozens of groups like Joshua's Army.

"Together, we are effecting positive change for those who call Berkeley County home," the county said.

Hickory Hill prayer breakfast draws crowd

By Renne W. Brown

SMOAKS—On Feb. 22, Hickory Hill United Methodist Church blessed its community with a Black History Month Prayer Breakfast. The theme was "Our Past Is Not God's Future—PUSH," which stands for "Pray Until Something Happens." The Scripture verse was from Jeremiah 29:11.

Richburg

Dianna Richburg, a native of Denmark, was the guest speaker for the prayer breakfast. A 29-year Lupus survivor, Richburg blessed those attending with the Word of God as well as education about lupus. Richburg said she stands firm on 2 Corinthians and knows we can do all things with Christ (Philippians 4:13). She is a living witness of the prayer breakfast theme.

Richburg knew her past was not the future God had written for her, and by "Praying Until Something Happened," she conquered fear and uncertainty and gained unshakable faith in God.

She shared how she often drew strength from James 1:2-4 to have pure joy and to persevere through trials and tribulations.

"Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything," she taught. "You must let the Lord have his way, encourage yourself daily and PUSH through it all."

Photo by Lisa Gibbs

Handbell choirs gather

Shandon UMC, Columbia, hosted "A Handbell Festival," sponsored by the Fellowship in Music and Worship Arts, Feb. 22. Bell choirs from nine different churches throughout South Carolina participated: Shandon along with St. John Methodist Church, Aiken; First Presbyterian, Greenwood; St. Luke UMC, Lancaster; Tabernacle UMC, Lancaster; Calvary Baptist, Florence; St. Luke Lutheran, Florence; Mount Horeb, Lexington; and Carteret Street UMC, Beaufort. Brian Childers, director of Charlotte Bronze Bell Choir and music associate at Myers Park UMC, Charlotte, was the festival's guest director.

Rock Hill District hosts annual Black Church Celebration

The Rock Hill District of The United Methodist Church held its annual Black Church Celebration, lifting up the theme, "We've Come This Far By Faith: Standing On The Promises Of God."

The celebration was Sunday, February 23, at 2:30 p.m. at Mount Olive UMC, Rock Hill, and hosted by the Rock Hill Central Charge (New Hope, Mount Olive), with the Rev. Athena Dickey-Cathcart as pastor.

The Black Church Celebration celebrates Black people in United Methodism and brings together 10 Black churches: The Clover Parish (Clover Chapel, Green Pond, Mount Harmony, with the Rev. Wade A. Wyatt Sr. as pastor); the Rock Hill South Charge (Bethel and Harmony, with the Rev. Dexter Williams as pastor); the York-St. James Charge (Hopewell, St. James and Wesley, with Dr. Thomas Bowman Sr. as pastor; and the Rock Hill Central Charge.

Dickey-Cathcart presided over the service, which began with praise and worship and then her call to worship.

The sanctuary was packed for the annual event.

Williams led the prayer and Scripture, then Wyatt provided the history and purpose. After a song of preparation, Bowman brought the message. Rock Hill District Superintendent Dr. Anthony Hodge gave remarks, and the service closed with the singing of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," followed by Bowman's benediction and blessing.

Jericho Walk

Friendship UMC, Nesmith, participated in a Jericho Walk March 1. Here, church pastor Dr. Ernest W. Frierson stands with participants.

Shrove Tuesday: A time-honored tradition at Mount Sinai UMC

By Elizabeth Shaw

ANDERSON—As the season of Lent approaches each year, churches around the world mark the occasion with the beloved tradition of the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast. This festive gathering, held the day before Ash Wednesday, brings together congregants and community members for a time of fellowship, delicious food and spiritual reflection. This year, Ash Wednesday was March 5, so most churches held their pancake breakfasts March 4.

Our small church family at Mount Sinai United Methodist Church gathered not on the fourth but on March 9 to celebrate this event. As they say, better late than never.

Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Day, is a centuries-old Christian observance that serves as a final celebration before the solemn Lenten season. The word "shrove" comes from the old English term "shriven," meaning to confess sins and receive absolution. Historically, Christians used this day to prepare for Lent by confessing their sins and consuming rich foods like eggs, milk and butter—ingredients traditionally restricted during the fasting period.

Churches across the country continue this custom by hosting pancake breakfasts, offering a space for individuals and families to come together in faith and community. Volunteers typically prepare stacks of golden pancakes, sizzling bacon and fresh fruit, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere filled with laughter and conversation.

Some churches incorporate fun activities such as pancake races or trivia about the history of Shrove Tuesday.

Beyond the enjoyment of good food, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Breakfast often serves a greater purpose. Many churches use the event as an opportunity to collect donations for local food banks or charities, encouraging attendees to enter the Lenten season with a spirit of generosity and service.

Clergy members may also offer a short devotion or prayer, emphasizing the themes of repentance and renewal that define Lent.

Joining us this year were the families of Lee, Acker, Simpson and Pastor Annie Jackson with her brother, Waymond Jackson.

Helping Hollis

Groups from John Wesley UMC, Greenville, gave Christmas parties for three special education classes at Hollis Elementary during the holidays. The Witness/Evangelism Committee (Emma Thompson, chairperson) and United Methodist Men (Thomas Lambright, president) teamed up for the parties. The staff and children were excited about all the refreshments. Raymond McGee, Thompson and Katie McGee enjoyed meeting the various classes. It was their first event at Hollis, and plans and goals are being developed with the counselors and teachers, along with James Breazeale from John Wesley, to assist in future activities, such as field day, teacher appreciation and the end-of-the-year school party. The UMMen funded the holiday mission activity. The Rev. Daniel Hembree serves as pastor.

Photo courtesy of Katie McGee

A season of fellowship: Three congregations, one shared journey

By the Rev. Scarlett Hester

BLUFFTON—It all started with three pastors and a few cups of coffee. What began as a simple gathering of friends soon blossomed into something much larger—something that would touch the hearts of our church community. As pastors, we recognized that our fellowship was a blessing, and we wanted to extend that blessing to our congregations.

We pastors gathered together, dreamed together, prayed together—and on Ash Wednesday, our three congregations came together to begin the season of Lent in a spirit of unity and worship. More than 200 brothers and sisters in Christ filled the sanctuary at Church of the Palms, where we were led in worship by Rev. Scarlett Hester (Bluffton United Methodist Church), Dr. Christopher Thomson (St. Luke UMC) and Dr. Lee VanRensburg (Church of the Palms UMC). The air was filled with the sound of our combined choir, 42 voices strong, lifting spirits with soul-stirring anthems and solos.

As the ashes were imposed on foreheads, all were reminded of the deep connection between our human frailty and our steadfast faith. The ashes, formed in the shape of a cross, reminded us of both our failures and our hope—the cross being the symbol of our faith in Christ's redemptive love.

Among the attendees was a very special guest: Riley, a service dog. Riley sat reverently in front of her pew, a calming presence throughout the service. Afterward, she was freed from her leash and wandered through the crowd, greeting everyone with tail wags, accepting a cookie or two and offering an extra dose of joy to all who met her. When asked if she enjoyed the service, Riley's vigorous tail-wagging was all we needed.

Bluffton United Methodists gathered for Ash Wednesday at Church of the Palms UMC.

As we concluded the evening, the most common sentiment among us was clear: "Let's do more of this!" Joyfully, we will.

This season of Lent is not just about reflection and repentance; it's about deepening the bonds of community. To that end, we will gather for three Lenten lunches and worship services, rotating among our churches throughout the season and, with God's help, into the future.

'To dust you shall return'

Sharome Henry serves his first Ash Wednesday service as pastor. Henry, the pastor of New Haven UMC, Bishopville, is also the executive assistant to clergy services for the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Remembering the saints

Emmanuel UMC, Anderson, celebrated All Saints Sunday in November with a memorial service of remembrance. Members lit candles in honor of deceased congregants and family, and a service of Holy Communion rounded out the morning. Here, the Rev. Annie Jackson (right) stands with Doris Robinson and Patricia Jackson.

Empowering the community: Canaan UMC hosts CPR training

More than 20 participants learned the fundamentals of CPR.

RIDGEVILLE—On Saturday, Feb. 23, Canaan United Methodist Church hosted a vital cardiopulmonary resuscitation training session, equipping community members with life-saving skills.

Sponsored by Canaan's Health and Wellness Committee, the event welcomed more than 20 participants eager to learn the fundamentals of CPR and automated external defibrillator use.

Under the expert guidance of trainer Donald Wollenbecker from the Mount Pleasant Fire Department, attendees gained hands-on experience in performing CPR on individuals of all ages, from infants to adults. The training emphasized the importance of quick action during emergencies and how proper techniques can make a difference in saving lives.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the event was the diverse group of participants, ranging in age from 14 to older than 70. This broad range highlighted the church's commitment to ensuring individuals of all generations are prepared to respond in a crisis.

Canaan UMC, under the leadership of Dr. James P. Smith, continues to prioritize the well-being of our congregation and community. The Health and Wellness Committee's dedication to organizing this event reflects the church's mission of service and empowerment. Providing access to essential skills like CPR strengthens the church family and the surrounding community, reinforcing the value of preparation and care for one another.

Members said they were grateful to the trainer for sharing his expertise and to all who attended. They hope this training serves as a reminder that all play a role in protecting and preserving life.

LIKE A FAMILY: 'She loves this conference deeply, and it shows'

From Page 1

in her work and in the conference itself.

Mack came to work for the conference part-time in 1978 in the print shop, which has since closed. At the time, her daughter was around 4 or 5 years old and attending Timmerman kindergarten, and Mack said she worked for $2.50 an hour doing handwork.

"She's 51 now," Mack says of her daughter, shaking her head at the passage of time.

In those days, Edward Tullis was bishop, and the conference office was housed in the former Advocate building, located on Lady Street in Columbia. Mack remembers those days as a time of great fun and fellowship while everyone did their part to help the conference operate.

When the *Advocate* sold the building in 1980, the various conference and newspaper offices were temporarily displaced while what is today's conference center, on Colonial Drive next to Columbia College, was being constructed. When it opened, Mack and other print shop employees had space on the ground floor, and in 1982, she shifted from hourly to salary, still remaining on staff part-time.

Back then, the print shop was a big open room, Mack remembers, with no shelving and a dark room where workers prepared all the items for print. Soon they added on space to accommodate the large printing presses, which were hard at work printing the conference journal, as well as various work for all the churches in the conference, from letterhead to business cards to envelopes. They also did printing for everyone in the building, which was expanding by then with new roles and departments, and for the various districts across the state.

Mack

"I enjoyed just helping people and being part of the service. If anybody wanted anything, we would do it."

By now Roy Clark was bishop (1980-1988), and then came Bishops Joseph Bethea (1988-1996) and J. Lawrence McCleskey (1996-2004).

Mack worked alongside other longtime conference employees.

"It was a lot of young moms, and we were all family," Mack remembers.

Many of the conference employees would bring their children to work on occasion, and children and teens would help in the print shop during pre-conference season and Journal time.

They didn't use internet much back then, and Mack describes it as "a different world." The whole building would get together and have devotionals every week and prayer time if anyone was having surgery. There was also a lot of crossover assistance, with one department pitching in to help another department when someone got busy.

"If we had a big print job, people would just stop by," Mack says. "'I only have an hour and a half, but I'll help you.' It was a family."

Over the years, Mack grew in skill and eventually learned formatting and layout. She became the print shop director.

But eventually, times caught up with the print shop. With the increase of digital communication and the decrease of print materials, business lessened.

When the conference journal's budget was cut, Mack said that was the beginning of the end for the print shop. While they earned income on the other projects, the journal was how they broke even, she said, and it wasn't long before the print shop ultimately closed.

Still, although Mack "retired" in 2012, she missed her work with the conference and the opportunity to connect with her fellow conference employees.

When then-treasurer Tony Prestipino and then-Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor invited her to come back to work part time, she agreed readily.

Now, Mack can't imagine not working for the conference. She adores her job, and even though her work as an administrative assistant is different from running the print shop, she loves working for Conference Secretary Mel Arant, who she calls "a true joy to work with."

They share a great working relationship, both attest.

"If I didn't come to work every day, I'd be depressed, crazy, forgetful," Mack says, laughing. "I just enjoy getting away from the house."

Indeed, when COVID-19 hit, staying home was hard for her, reminding her why coming to work and being a part of the annual conference is still so important to her.

"It's a lot different than it used to be, but I still enjoy what I do," Mack said from her desk, smiling. "I love the opportunity to help, and all the work that goes into getting ready for conference. Everything done paper-wise, I do."

"There is not much in our conference in which Pat hasn't shared a part over the years, oftentimes working tirelessly in the background unseen," Arant said about Mack. "She is an invaluable asset in the secretary's office, especially now. As we have had the difficult task of maintaining the scope of work with dwindling personnel and funds, her institutional memory and skill has been a gift. She loves this conference deeply, and it shows in her dedication.

"I will be forever grateful that she has remained working with me in the secretary's office."

AMENDMENTS: Language cannot be changed on the four

From Page 1

Votes are expected to be finished by October.

Then, at its November meeting, the Council of Bishops is expected to tally all votes and certify any ratifications.

What are the amendments?

South Carolina and other annual conferences will vote on four amendments: worldwide regionalization; expanding gender and disability inclusion in church membership; standing against racism and colonialism; and clarifying requirements for clergy-delegate elections.

The language of the amendments cannot be changed. Votes will be simple "yes" or "no" votes on four ballots.

Voting can be by paper or electronic ballot or by a show of hands.

Worldwide regionalization amendment

This package of legislation 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. That is, each region of the church can make decisions that will best support outreach and ministry efforts in their specific setting. 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 contained in the General *Book of Discipline* or alter the UMC's doctrinal standards, theological task, the Ministry of All Christians or the Social Principles.

Inclusiveness in church membership

This amendment adds "gender" and "ability" to the list of characteristics that do not block people from membership in a UMC.

The new 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 church membership whether that person is male or female or has a disability.

Stand against racism and colonialism

This amendment strengthens the denomination's racial justice stance.

The new language in Para. 5, Article V, would state: "The United Methodist Church 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."

Clergy-delegate voting

When it comes to electing delegates for general and jurisdictional conferences, annual conferences do this work, with lay people electing lay delegates and clergy electing clergy delegates.

This amendment clarifies the educational requirements licensed local pastors must have in order to elect clergy.

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.

All constitutional amendments can be read in full at https://www.umcsc.org/ac2025.

Annual Conference draft agenda, other details released

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—Conference leaders have released the draft agenda for this year's Annual Conference, set for June 8-11 at the Greenville Convention Center. Meanwhile, registration and other plans continue.

The draft agenda has the event starting at 2 p.m. that Sunday with packet pickup, followed throughout the afternoon by new lay member orientation sessions (at 3 and 4 p.m.) and the clergy session (at 4:30 p.m.).

The Commissioning, Ordination and Retirement Recognition Service is scheduled for Sunday at 7 p.m., with Bishop Leonard E. Fairley presiding and preaching.

Monday starts with an opening worship service at 9 a.m., then a full day of business, including the first reading of the 2026 budget, concluding with evening praise and prayer at 5 p.m. and evening recess at 6 p.m.

Tuesday starts at 9 a.m. with morning praise and prayer, followed by a day of business to include constitutional amendment voting (see article, Page 1) and a report by the Ministry Advisory Team on the work of the Jeremiah teams.

The memorial service, preached by the Rev. William F. Malambri III, is scheduled for 5 p.m.

Wednesday concludes with a morning praise and prayer and final business, including passage of the 2026 budget and any church closings and charge line changes, as well as a sending forth and fixing of the appointments.

All who plan to attend Annual Conference are urged to register now via the conference website (https://www.umcsc.org/ac2025).

That website also includes:

- reports as they become available;
- registration for the conference Kids Camp, which will be hosted by the new church start Open Hearts UMC in Greenville for children in rising first through sixth grades;
- a list of hotel rooms with discounted group pricing;
- applications for Annual Conference exhibitors; and
- preorders for the conference journal.

This year's Annual Conference theme is "See the Possibilities, Live the Promises," which draws from Jeremiah 29:5-7.

See next month's *Advocate* for more on Annual Conference.

ELDER BASKETS: 'An opportunity to be Jesus to people who need it'

From Page 1

For participant Cathy Nelson, who is part of the Keepers of the Word Grandmother Drum group in the Lowcountry, the UMC Native American Committee and a member of Cottageville Community Methodist Church in Cottageville, it's all about stepping up to alleviate hunger in the name of Jesus.

"We rose to meet the need and try and stand in the gap," Nelson said, adding that working with other Christians, community and tribal leaders has enabled them to do far more to help than anyone could possibly do alone.

Lee Anne Lamar, of the Keepers of the Word Turtle Drum group in Chapin, says the project was a natural extension of what they were already doing, just on a much larger scale.

"We've kept the name 'elder baskets,' but it's much expanded," Lamar said. "It really provides an opportunity to be Jesus to people who need it."

God laid the groundwork

Before COVID, the elder baskets were already in great demand, and the problem of food deserts was worsening in South Carolina, especially in rural and poverty-stricken communities, where residents might not be able to drive and have drastically limited access to affordable, nutritious food.

The Native American Committee had been assembling and distributing elder baskets to older adults in the Catawba tribe, plus the nine state-recognized tribes, as well as other small tribal community groups.

In 2019, the South Carolina Annual Conference issued a call to every charge in the state to assemble and bring one elder basket to the June gathering of Annual Conference, as well as encouraged people to purchase gift cards to help the Conference Committee on Native American Ministries get extra supplies for people in need.

Nelson said the response was massive. "I had to rent the largest U-Haul truck they had in Greenville afterward, and we loaded some 385 baskets and got those out to the people."

As for the gift cards, they tucked those away until needed.

Nelson said they didn't know it then, "But God was making a way."

Stepping up after food supply chain 'shattered'

When the pandemic hit the following March, the already strong need, along with the food deserts, skyrocketed. As Nelson explained, "The food supply chain literally shattered."

Cathy Nelson and Linda Whitfield (right) deliver baskets to Vice Chief Tammy Stevens of the Cheraw Tribe, Sumter.

Thankfully, the extras provided at the 2019 Annual Conference, especially the gift cards, enabled Nelson and other members of the Keepers of the Word drumming and prayer group, as well as members of the NAC, to step up to serve.

And the needs just kept growing—and growing.

Nelson had been doing aquaponic farming, and she began to increase her efforts, giving away what she could. Meanwhile, as other groups in the Lowcountry saw her efforts and her connection with the Native tribes, they began giving her their own leftover produce, meats and baked goods to give away. Simultaneously, Lamar said, the tribes also began linking up with organizations and other farmers. And Nelson and Lamar, still helping with elder baskets, started asking around about deeper needs.

Soon, everyone was connecting, all with one major goal: getting people the food and basic home supplies they needed.

That connection was powerful, Nelson said.

"The Pee Dee nation had this, and somebody else had that, and we all started talking to each other and really working together."

There were so many people connecting that tribal status didn't really matter, she said. They fed Native and non-Native people—whoever was in need. Nelson was offered the opportunity to do a food pickup at her local Food Lion three days a week about a year ago, and eventually, space became available in the Midlands at Mission Lake, the former site of *The State* newspaper—which also happens to have been the site of the signing of the 1721 treaty between the Cherokee and colonial South Carolina.

'Our divine appointment'

Now, Nelson, tribal leaders, Christian organizations and others gather frequently in that central location, giving out the food to the tribes and organizations, who then get it into the hands of the people directly.

Nelson said what was especially beautiful to her was that Keepers of the Word was invited to do drumming and prayer during the distribution—singing Native, sacred, Christ-centered prayer songs—and often they do the drumming while they are serving.

"It is our divine appointment," Nelson said. "It's truly a God thing."

Lamar said she can imagine how difficult it is for people on fixed incomes to get the food and toiletries they need. Not long ago, she could buy basic shampoo at a dollar store for $1 per bottle, but now prices have risen drastically and she often has to shell out 10 times that price. Sometimes, she'll drive long distances just to find items at a deep discount, then purchase those and put them in the elder baskets.

And she doesn't forget that one time, when she happened to include paper towels in a basket she took to someone, and the recipient burst into tears of joy because they hadn't been able to afford paper towels in so long.

"Now we make sure to include paper towels," she said.

Nelson and Lamar said they, Keepers of the Word, the Native American Committee and others involved have no intention of stopping what they've started

"We have big plans," Lamar said.

They just want to keep serving people in need whatever way they can for as long as they can.

Anyone who wants to help their efforts can reach out to Nelson about how to donate or volunteer.

Call 843-217-0962.

DISASTER RESPONSE: The three have much experience

From Page 1

disaster response and recovery ministries so that we can continue to provide the swift, capable and compassionate response that has been an important part of our mission.

"We are grateful to the United Methodist Committee on Relief for the generous grant support that will pay for our recovery efforts this year. We are stronger through the connection."

Long

Smith

Dash's appointment is anticipated at Annual Conference in June. Dash was ordained as a full elder in 2018 after earning her Master of Divinity in 2016 from Gammon Theological Seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center. She also holds a Bachelor of Science in physical education and physical activity management from South Carolina State University and a Master of Science in management and administration of educational programs from Nova Southeastern University. She served churches in the Walterboro and Hartsville districts before being appointed pastor of the Easley Charge in the Anderson District in 2022. She has served on District Committees on Ordained Ministry and Superintendency and as registrar for the Hartsville District Committee on Ordained Ministry. On the conference level, she has served on the Council on Finance and Administration and as a group candidacy mentor.

Dash has experience serving on Early Response Teams and has extensive education and training in leadership development.

Long, a local pastor in the South Carolina Conference, earned a Bachelor of Science in psychology from Columbia College and a Master of Divinity from Hood Theological Seminary. She has served as pastor of Mill Creek for 14 years.

Outside the church, Long has served as emergency planner for Richland County since 2016. In that role, she is responsible for securing shelter for people and pets in the event of a disaster and for training members of Community Emergency Response Teams and residents about how to be better prepared when disaster strikes.

Smith, who has more than three decades of experience in construction and home repair, earned a Bachelor of Science in sociology from Francis Marion University. He has owned and operated home repair and handyman businesses dating back to 2010.

He supervised the South Carolina Conference's disaster recovery efforts in the wake of the historic 2015 flood across the state, and Hurricane Matthew a year later. He also has helped lead rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Rita in Texas and Hurricane Floyd in North Carolina.

Smith also has served as site leader for the Santee Camp of Salkehatchie Summer Service, inspired by his eight summers with Salkehatchie as a youth. He serves as the chair of the Salkehatchie Board of Directors.

Want to volunteer with disaster response ministries? Email sllong@umcsc.org.

2024 South Carolina United Methodist Record of Giving

NOTE: Churches giving 100 percent are in bold.
Churches who increased their giving over 2023 are marked with a +.

Anderson District
43 out of 67 Churches Contributed 100%
69.61% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Ann Hope	10,102.00	—	0.00%	
Arial	3,653.00	—	0.00%	
Bells	—	5,785.00	N/A	
Bethel/Iva	6,450.00	3,022.00	46.85%	
Bethel/Pendleton	**5,463.00**	**5,463.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethesda	63,038.00	—	0.00%	
Calhoun Falls	**6,334.00**	**6,334.00**	**100.00%**	
Central	**5,701.00**	**5,701.00**	**100.00%**	
Chicopee	2,722.00	—	0.00%	
Chiquola	—	2,719.00	N/A	
Clemson	**99,146.00**	**99,146.00**	**100.00%**	
Dickson Memorial	**21,810.00**	**21,810.00**	**100.00%**	
Donalds	**1,766.00**	**1,766.00**	**100.00%**	+
Double Springs	**1,429.00**	**1,429.00**	**100.00%**	
Easley Chapel	**8,873.00**	**8,887.00**	**100.16%**	+
Ebenezer	3,358.00	1,119.34	33.33%	+
Emmanuel	4,862.00	2,682.00	55.16%	
Fairfield	**5,407.00**	**5,407.00**	**100.00%**	
Fairview	**6,440.00**	**6,440.00**	**100.00%**	
First/Easley	54,191.00	12,000.00	22.14%	
Friendship	**5,608.00**	**5,608.00**	**100.00%**	
Gilgal	**4,121.00**	**4,121.50**	**100.01%**	+
Golden Grove	1,648.00	—	0.00%	
Grace/Abbeville	35,880.00	—	0.00%	
Grace/Pickens	**33,817.00**	**33,817.00**	**100.00%**	
Grace/Williamston	**10,013.00**	**10,013.00**	**100.00%**	
Hebron	2,893.00	—	0.00%	
Homeland Park	2,307.00	—	0.00%	
Hopewell	**4,367.00**	**4,367.00**	**100.00%**	
John Wesley/Anderson	**3,431.00**	**3,431.00**	**100.00%**	
John Wesley/Easley	5,320.00	3,000.00	56.39%	+
Latimer Memorial	11,022.00	1,100.00	9.98%	
Lawrence Chapel	**24,342.00**	**24,413.04**	**100.29%**	+
Liberty	9,351.00	6,835.90	73.10%	
Main Street/Abbeville	**32,801.00**	**32,801.91**	**100.00%**	+
Marshall Memorial	**3,622.00**	**3,622.00**	**100.00%**	
Moores Chapel	1,842.00	10.00	0.54%	+
Mount Bethel	6,725.00	3,499.16	52.03%	
Mount Pleasant	**3,547.00**	**3,547.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Sinai	**3,251.00**	**3,251.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion	**17,283.00**	**17,283.00**	**100.00%**	
New Harmony	**3,846.00**	**3,846.00**	**100.00%**	
New Hope	**3,976.00**	**3,976.00**	**100.00%**	
Pelzer UMC	**3,816.00**	**3,816.00**	**100.00%**	
Pendleton	**33,655.00**	**33,655.50**	**100.00%**	+
Porter Chapel	**6,684.00**	**6,684.00**	**100.00%**	+
Robinson Chapel	8,535.00	2,536.00	29.71%	
Rock Springs	**1,502.00**	**1,502.00**	**100.00%**	+
Ruhamah	6,097.00	3,891.80	63.83%	
Salem	—	5,059.00	N/A	
Sandy Springs	**1,876.00**	**1,876.00**	**100.00%**	+
Sharon/Abbeville	**5,854.00**	**5,854.00**	**100.00%**	
Shiloh/Abbeville	**4,303.00**	**4,303.50**	**100.01%**	+
Shiloh/Piedmont	**20,741.00**	**20,741.30**	**100.00%**	+
Smyrna	**8,469.00**	**8,469.50**	**100.01%**	+
St Andrew	—	17,579.00	N/A	
St James/Belton	563.00	—	0.00%	
St John's	92,211.00	12,544.17	13.60%	
St Luke / Walhalla	**28,922.00**	**28,922.04**	**100.00%**	+
St Mark	**97,603.00**	**97,603.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul	**6,747.00**	**6,747.00**	**100.00%**	
Starr	**3,136.00**	**3,136.00**	**100.00%**	
Tabor	**6,338.00**	**6,338.00**	**100.00%**	
Thompson Centennial	**4,145.00**	**4,145.00**	**100.00%**	
Toxaway	**3,595.00**	**3,595.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Anderson	75,638.00	15,127.60	20.00%	+
Trinity/Honea Path	**17,348.00**	**17,348.00**	**100.00%**	+
Union Grove	**15,362.00**	**15,362.00**	**100.00%**	
Westminster	4,277.00	3,207.75	75.00%	
Zion/Anderson	28,385.00	26,016.00	91.65%	
Zion/Easley	**3,185.00**	**3,185.00**	**100.00%**	
Anderson Total	**1,030,745**	**717,497**	**69.61%**	

Charleston District
60 out of 69 Churches Contributed 100%
83.79% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Aldersgate	—	16,859.50	N/A	
Asbury-St James	**24,662.00**	**24,662.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethany/Charleston	**23,131.00**	**23,131.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethany/Summerville	206,607.00	68,869.04	33.33%	
Bethel/Charleston	**96,480.00**	**96,480.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/St Stephen	**11,430.00**	**11,430.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethlehem-St James	**7,191.00**	**7,191.00**	**100.00%**	
Boone Hill	20,013.00	300.00	1.50%	
Centenary/Charleston	**4,931.00**	**4,931.00**	**100.00%**	
Centenary/Moncks Corner	**5,035.00**	**5,035.00**	**100.00%**	
Charleston Korean	—	10,114.50	N/A	
Cokesbury	33,332.00	13,570.00	40.71%	
Cordesville	**2,684.00**	**2,684.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer	**3,576.00**	**3,576.00**	**100.00%**	
Eccles	**2,825.00**	**2,825.00**	**100.00%**	
Edisto Island	**12,890.00**	**12,890.00**	**100.00%**	
Enoch Chapel	**2,431.00**	**2,431.00**	**100.00%**	
Epworth	**16,818.00**	**16,818.00**	**100.00%**	
First/Isle of Palms	**69,336.00**	**69,336.00**	**100.00%**	
Folly Beach	**15,848.00**	**15,848.00**	**100.00%**	
Friendship	—	3,304.00	N/A	
Goose Creek	**18,731.00**	**18,731.00**	**100.00%**	
Grace	69,371.00	34,685.56	50.00%	
Greater St Paul	**12,586.00**	**12,586.08**	**100.00%**	+
Grove Hall	**2,702.00**	**2,702.00**	**100.00%**	
Hibben	**87,795.00**	**87,795.00**	**100.00%**	
Hood's Chapel	**4,526.00**	**4,526.00**	**100.00%**	+
Jehovah	**5,780.00**	**5,780.00**	**100.00%**	
Jerusalem	**7,584.00**	**7,584.00**	**100.00%**	
John Wesley	**121,226.00**	**121,226.00**	**100.00%**	
Joshua	**23,154.00**	**23,154.00**	**100.00%**	
Knightsville	**30,872.00**	**30,872.00**	**100.00%**	
Lebanon	**6,006.00**	**6,006.00**	**100.00%**	
McClellanville	**4,396.00**	**4,396.00**	**100.00%**	
Midland Park	**17,701.00**	**17,701.00**	**100.00%**	
Moncks Corner	44,433.00	21,278.75	47.89%	
Mount Carmel	**10,904.00**	**10,904.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Nebo	**4,868.00**	**4,868.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion	**2,184.00**	**2,184.00**	**100.00%**	
Murray	**7,984.00**	**7,984.00**	**100.00%**	
New Francis Brown	**17,961.00**	**17,961.00**	**100.00%**	+
New Hope/Jamestown	**2,286.00**	**2,286.00**	**100.00%**	
New Hope/St Thomas	**8,550.00**	**8,550.00**	**100.00%**	
New Hope/Summerville	**8,141.00**	**8,141.50**	**100.01%**	+
New Light	**4,667.00**	**4,667.00**	**100.00%**	
New Webster	**8,020.00**	**8,020.00**	**100.00%**	
North Charleston	**36,155.00**	**36,155.00**	**100.00%**	
Ocean Grove	**5,473.00**	**5,473.00**	**100.00%**	+
Old Bethel	**10,006.00**	**10,006.00**	**100.00%**	
Pinopolis	—	10,969.50	N/A	
Point Hope	—	17,459.50	N/A	
Ravenel	**2,472.00**	**2,472.00**	**100.00%**	
Rehoboth	**2,173.00**	**2,173.00**	**100.00%**	
Smyrna	**8,953.00**	**8,953.00**	**100.00%**	
Spring Hill	**3,157.00**	**3,157.00**	**100.00%**	+
St Andrews Parish	**38,608.00**	**38,608.00**	**100.00%**	
St James/Goose Creek	26,611.00	15,411.53	57.91%	
St James/Jamestown	**3,093.00**	**3,093.50**	**100.02%**	+
St Mark	**32,102.00**	**32,102.04**	**100.00%**	+
St Stephen	**2,829.00**	**2,829.00**	**100.00%**	+
Stallsville	**22,375.00**	**22,375.00**	**100.00%**	
Steward Chapel	**12,228.00**	**12,228.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity	25,779.00	6,647.00	25.78%	
Washington	**7,773.00**	**7,773.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley Memorial	16,180.00	—	0.00%	
Wesley/Charleston	**16,847.00**	**16,847.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley/Johns Island	**24,329.00**	**24,329.08**	**100.00%**	+
Wesley/Ladson	**20,036.00**	**20,036.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley/Pinopolis	**19,568.00**	**19,568.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley/Summerville	**7,089.00**	**7,089.90**	**100.01%**	+
Wesley/Yonges Island	17,763.00	3,000.00	16.89%	
Wren's Chapel	**728.00**	**728.00**	**100.00%**	
Zion/Cross	**5,744.00**	**5,744.00**	**100.00%**	
Zion/St Thomas	**6,391.00**	**6,391.05**	**100.00%**	+
Charleston Total	**1,466,110**	**1,228,492**	**83.79%**	

Columbia District
43 out of 56 Churches Contributed 100%
111.01% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Asbury Memorial	**36,872.00**	**36,872.00**	**100.00%**	+
Ashland	**66,066.00**	**66,066.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Columbia	33,208.00	2,000.00	6.02%	+
Bethel/Winnsboro	**7,766.00**	**7,766.00**	**100.00%**	
Beulah/Blythewood	**6,877.00**	**6,877.00**	**100.00%**	
Beulah/Gilbert	**36,989.00**	**36,989.70**	**100.00%**	+
Bluff Road	13,007.00	2,400.00	18.45%	+
Boiling Springs	20,382.00	16,985.00	83.33%	
Brookland	14,589.00	1,000.00	6.85%	+
Cayce	**41,810.00**	**41,810.04**	**100.00%**	+
Chapin	—	115,135.50	N/A	
Columbia Korean	—	5,082.00	N/A	
Ebenezer	**1,906.00**	**1,906.00**	**100.00%**	
Epworth Memorial	**379.00**	**379.00**	**100.00%**	
Fair Lawn	**22,079.00**	**22,079.00**	**100.00%**	
Faith	**12,762.00**	**12,762.00**	**100.00%**	
First/Winnsboro	**17,938.00**	**17,938.00**	**100.00%**	
Francis Burns	**60,309.00**	**60,309.00**	**100.00%**	
Gilbert	**16,035.00**	**16,035.00**	**100.00%**	+
Gordon Memorial	**10,297.00**	**10,297.00**	**100.00%**	
Grace	**33,856.00**	**33,856.20**	**100.00%**	+
Greenbrier	5,277.00	3,518.00	66.67%	
Greene Street	9,232.00	—	0.00%	
Heyward Street	**14,866.00**	**14,866.32**	**100.00%**	+
I. Dequincey Newman	**14,724.00**	**14,724.00**	**100.00%**	
Journey	**85,762.00**	**85,762.00**	**100.00%**	
Lebanon	—	10,119.50	N/A	
Lexington	**70,408.00**	**70,408.00**	**100.00%**	
Main Street	25,846.00	14,058.01	54.39%	
McLeod	**2,950.00**	**2,950.00**	**100.00%**	
Mill Creek	**6,699.00**	**6,699.00**	**100.00%**	
Monticello	5,189.00	—	0.00%	
Mount Hebron	**104,107.00**	**104,107.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Horeb	—	249,069.00	N/A	
Mount Pleasant	**4,350.00**	**4,350.00**	**100.00%**	+
Northeast	34,621.00	7,000.00	20.22%	
Oak Grove	3,877.00	—	0.00%	
Platt Springs	**24,463.00**	**24,538.00**	**100.31%**	+
Pond Branch	—	13,470.00	N/A	
Red Bank	28,837.00	26,434.35	91.67%	
Rehoboth/Columbia	**19,636.00**	**19,636.00**	**100.00%**	+
Rehoboth/Gilbert	—	4,982.50	N/A	
Salem/Elgin	**5,273.00**	**5,273.50**	**100.01%**	+
Salem/Irmo	**57,345.00**	**57,345.00**	**100.00%**	
Shady Grove	27,785.00	—	0.00%	
Shandon	**323,080.00**	**323,080.01**	**100.00%**	+
Shiloh	**18,329.00**	**18,329.00**	**100.00%**	+
Shiloh/West Columbia	**3,675.00**	**3,675.00**	**100.00%**	
Smyrna	**3,098.00**	**3,098.00**	**100.00%**	
St John	**3,023.00**	**3,023.00**	**100.00%**	
St Mark	**11,180.00**	**11,180.00**	**100.00%**	
Suber Marshall	**6,705.00**	**6,705.00**	**100.00%**	+
Trenholm Road	**155,175.00**	**155,175.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Blythewood	**83,268.00**	**83,268.12**	**100.00%**	+
Trinity/West Columbia	**23,042.00**	**23,042.00**	**100.00%**	
Union	**176,827.00**	**176,827.00**	**100.00%**	
Virginia Wingard	**50,383.00**	**50,383.00**	**100.00%**	+
Washington Street	**87,165.00**	**87,165.00**	**100.00%**	+
Wesley	**29,501.00**	**29,501.00**	**100.00%**	
Whaley Street	**7,302.00**	**7,302.00**	**100.00%**	
Windsor	30,443.00	3,367.01	11.06%	+
Zion	**2,624.00**	**2,624.00**	**100.00%**	
Columbia Total	**2,019,194**	**2,241,599**	**111.01%**	

Florence District
50 out of 67 Churches Contributed 100%
88.77% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Andrews Chapel	**2,379.00**	**2,379.00**	**100.00%**	
Asbury/Kingstree East	**6,608.00**	**6,608.28**	**100.00%**	+
Asbury/Shiloh	**11,377.00**	**11,377.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Kingstree	**13,813.00**	**13,813.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethesda/Kingstree	**16,532.00**	**16,532.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethlehem/Jordan	**5,878.00**	**5,878.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethlehem/Pamplico	**11,513.00**	**11,513.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethsaida	**5,009.00**	**5,009.00**	**100.00%**	
Browns Chapel	**1,813.00**	**1,813.00**	**100.00%**	
Cades	—	1,619.00	N/A	
Cameron	—	2,557.00	N/A	
Cedar Swamp	—	1,790.00	N/A	
Central	276,291.00	253,266.86	91.67%	+
Cumberland	**24,401.00**	**24,401.00**	**100.00%**	
Dawsey	**5,420.00**	**5,420.00**	**100.00%**	+
Earle	—	1,635.00	N/A	
Ebenezer	—	6,076.50	N/A	
Elijah	**9,758.00**	**9,758.00**	**100.00%**	+
Elim	**2,814.00**	**2,814.00**	**100.00%**	+
Faith	**6,752.00**	**6,752.00**	**100.00%**	
First/Hemingway	—	6,978.00	N/A	
Friendship/Florence	**6,958.00**	**6,958.20**	**100.00%**	+
Friendship/Kingstree	**16,198.00**	**16,198.00**	**100.00%**	
Good Hope	—	2,642.50	N/A	
Hebron	**8,059.00**	**8,059.50**	**100.01%**	+
Highland Park	87,369.00	33,439.73	38.27%	
Jeremiah	**7,347.00**	**7,347.00**	**100.00%**	
Jerusalem	**5,202.00**	**5,202.00**	**100.00%**	
Johnsonville	**8,312.00**	**8,312.00**	**100.00%**	
Jordan	**4,594.00**	**4,594.00**	**100.00%**	
Kennedyville	**3,495.00**	**3,495.00**	**100.00%**	
Kingstree	34,007.00	1,500.00	4.41%	
Lake City	**35,691.00**	**35,691.00**	**100.00%**	
Lake Point	2,656.00	1,000.00	37.65%	+
Lane	—	1,480.00	N/A	
Liberty Chapel	—	6,230.00	N/A	
Long Branch	4,105.00	3,204.00	78.05%	
Lynchburg	2,566.00	—	0.00%	
Manning	49,771.00	41,475.90	83.33%	
Millwood	—	1,486.00	N/A	
Mount Beulah	**9,012.00**	**9,012.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Seal	**4,089.00**	**4,089.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Vernon	—	4,896.00	N/A	
Mount Zion/Florence	**12,728.00**	**12,728.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion/Kingstree	**20,032.00**	**20,032.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion/Timmonsville	**6,886.00**	**6,886.00**	**100.00%**	+
Nazareth	6,489.00	3,000.00	46.23%	+
New Haven	**6,456.00**	**6,456.00**	**100.00%**	
New Zion	—	5,330.00	N/A	
Ninevah	**3,151.00**	**3,151.00**	**100.00%**	
Old Johnsonville	—	2,713.00	N/A	
Pamplico	5,284.00	1,200.00	22.71%	+
Paxville	**3,613.00**	**3,613.00**	**100.00%**	
Pergamos	**2,679.00**	**2,679.00**	**100.00%**	
Pine Grove/Timmonsville	—	3,654.50	N/A	
Pine Grove/Turbeville	—	5,058.00	N/A	
Pinewood	3,119.00	—	0.00%	
Pisgah	—	12,091.00	N/A	
Prospect	—	2,619.00	N/A	
Quinby	8,746.00	3,773.00	43.14%	
Salem/Florence	**16,602.00**	**16,602.18**	**100.00%**	+
Salem/Timmonsville	—	3,201.50	N/A	
Scranton	**8,958.00**	**8,958.00**	**100.00%**	
Shiloh/Turbeville	—	2,333.00	N/A	
St John/Lake City	**11,061.00**	**11,061.08**	**100.00%**	+
St John/Scranton	2,997.00	—	0.00%	
St John/Shiloh	**3,917.00**	**3,917.00**	**100.00%**	
St Luke/Kingstree	—	4,128.50	N/A	
St Luke/Lake City	**4,294.00**	**4,294.00**	**100.00%**	+
St Luke/Lynchburg	3,031.00	—	0.00%	
St Luke/Timmonsville	**3,671.00**	**3,671.00**	**100.00%**	
St Mary	**5,593.00**	**5,593.00**	**100.00%**	
St Michael	**8,877.00**	**8,877.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/Coward	—	1,550.50	N/A	
St Paul/Elliott	**7,237.00**	**7,237.00**	**100.00%**	

St Paul/Florence	50,573.00	—	0.00%	
St Paul/Kingstree	**23,496.00**	**23,496.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/Morrisville	**4,143.00**	**4,143.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/Wisacky	6,003.00	2,150.00	35.82%	
Summerton	13,194.00	10,994.80	83.33%	+
Suttons	—	1,890.00	N/A	
Tabernacle	—	5,512.00	N/A	
Trinity/Lynchburg	3,209.00	—	0.00%	
Trinity/New Zion	—	3,026.00	N/A	
Trio	—	1,375.00	N/A	
Union/Hemingway	**9,450.00**	**9,450.00**	**100.00%**	
Union/Manning	**5,291.00**	**5,291.00**	**100.00%**	
Vox Memorial	**2,535.00**	**2,535.00**	**100.00%**	+
Warren Chapel	**2,885.00**	**2,885.04**	**100.00%**	+
Wesley Chapel/Lake City	**21,952.00**	**21,952.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley/Florence	**9,757.00**	**9,757.00**	**100.00%**	
Wilson Chapel	**4,616.00**	**4,616.00**	**100.00%**	
Florence Total	**1,002,314**	**889,782**	**88.77%**	

Greenville District
30 out of 54 Churches Contributed 100%
92.18% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Advent	208,363.00	125,363.60	60.17%	
Aldersgate	80,778.00	27,075.96	33.52%	
Allen View	**5,673.00**	**5,673.00**	**100.00%**	
Antioch	5,278.00	1,200.00	22.74%	
Augusta Road	25,107.00	1,030.00	4.10%	+
Berea Friendship	31,433.00	5,500.00	17.50%	
Bethel/Greer	**5,908.00**	**5,908.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Simpsonville	**8,452.00**	**8,452.00**	**100.00%**	+
Bethlehem	**3,548.00**	**3,548.00**	**100.00%**	
Bramlett	**14,955.00**	**14,955.50**	**100.00%**	+
Buncombe Street	—	182,703.00	N/A	
Christ	5,035.00	2,709.94	53.82%	+
Covenant	—	106,948.50	N/A	
Dacusville	9,805.00	7,503.00	76.52%	+
Dials	—	3,311.50	N/A	
Disciples	**31,611.00**	**31,611.08**	**100.00%**	+
Ebenezer	**9,853.00**	**9,853.00**	**100.00%**	
Emma Gray Memorial	12,032.00	—	0.00%	
Faith	**3,929.00**	**3,929.00**	**100.00%**	
Fews Chapel	**6,331.00**	**6,331.00**	**100.00%**	
Francis Asbury	12,456.00	540.00	4.34%	
Grace/Greer	14,880.00	6,510.00	43.75%	+
Gray Court	2,674.00	500.00	18.70%	+
Green Pond	**17,026.00**	**17,026.00**	**100.00%**	
Hopewell	**22,250.00**	**22,250.00**	**100.00%**	
Jackson Grove	5,322.00	2,661.00	50.00%	
John Wesley	**21,560.00**	**21,560.00**	**100.00%**	
Laurel Creek	**8,042.00**	**8,042.04**	**100.00%**	+
Laurens Road	9,615.00	—	0.00%	
Lebanon	**3,389.00**	**3,389.00**	**100.00%**	
Lee Road	**40,075.00**	**40,076.92**	**100.00%**	+
Liberty Hill	**9,459.00**	**9,459.00**	**100.00%**	
Mauldin	—	73,009.00	N/A	
McBee Chapel	2,106.00	—	0.00%	
Memorial	65,228.00	300.00	0.46%	+
Minus Chapel	**1,596.00**	**1,596.00**	**100.00%**	
Monaghan	**6,924.00**	**6,924.00**	**100.00%**	+
Mountain View	—	7,437.00	N/A	
New Saint Luke	5,453.00	2,453.00	44.98%	
Northside	**19,699.00**	**19,699.50**	**100.00%**	
Oak Hill	**8,028.00**	**8,028.00**	**100.00%**	
Owings	**1,408.00**	**1,408.00**	**100.00%**	+
Piedmont	15,719.00	1,712.00	10.89%	+
Pisgah/Fork Shoals	**5,413.00**	**5,413.00**	**100.00%**	
Salem	13,488.00	—	0.00%	
Sharon/Greer	—	16,628.00	N/A	
Shiloh	—	1,614.00	N/A	
Simpsonville	89,872.00	—	0.00%	
Slater	**4,434.00**	**4,434.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Greenville	**3,888.00**	**3,888.00**	**100.00%**	+
St Mark/Greenville	11,602.00	5,366.63	46.26%	
St Mark/Taylors	**41,495.00**	**41,495.00**	**100.00%**	
St Matthew/Greenville	**75,316.00**	**75,316.00**	**100.00%**	
St Matthew/Taylors	11,915.00	10,000.00	83.93%	+
St Paul/Greenville	**22,989.00**	**22,989.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/Greer	**2,472.00**	**2,472.00**	**100.00%**	
Travelers Rest	**50,010.00**	**50,010.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Fountain Inn	55,589.00	23,162.05	41.67%	
Victor	8,452.00	—	0.00%	
Wesley Chapel	**9,059.00**	**9,059.00**	**100.00%**	
Wood's Chapel	8,435.00	—	0.00%	
Zoar	—	3,493.00	N/A	
Greenville Total	**1,175,429**	**1,083,526**	**92.18%**	

Greenwood District
53 out of 74 Churches Contributed 100%
87.14% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Aldersgate	**12,586.00**	**12,586.00**	**100.00%**	
Belvedere	8,576.00	—	0.00%	
Bethany	**10,643.00**	**10,643.32**	**100.00%**	+
Bethlehem/Saluda	**5,977.00**	**5,977.00**	**100.00%**	
Broad Street	37,380.00	27,018.01	72.28%	
Butler	—	3,581.00	N/A	
Cambridge	**10,788.00**	**10,788.00**	**100.00%**	
Capers Chapel/Langley	1,398.00	1,223.00	87.48%	+
Capers Chapel/Pomaria	**3,619.00**	**3,619.00**	**100.00%**	
Central/Laurens	**3,572.00**	**3,572.04**	**100.00%**	+
Central/Newberry	**58,441.00**	**58,441.00**	**100.00%**	
Crossroads (fka Branch Hill)	1,908.00	—	0.00%	
Ebenezer/Greenwood	**2,594.00**	**2,594.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer/Newberry	**4,420.00**	**4,420.00**	**100.00%**	
Edgefield	**19,140.00**	**19,140.00**	**100.00%**	
Emory	**7,355.00**	**7,355.34**	**100.00%**	+
Epting Memorial	**9,422.00**	**9,422.00**	**100.00%**	
Epworth	3,729.00	1,957.00	52.48%	
First/Laurens	31,079.00	18,648.00	60.00%	+
Grace	121,443.00	82,108.00	67.61%	+
Harmony/Johnston	**17,099.00**	**17,099.50**	**100.00%**	+
Harmony/Ware Shoals	**3,225.00**	**3,225.00**	**100.00%**	
Harris	**6,120.00**	**6,120.00**	**100.00%**	
Hodges	—	6,086.00	N/A	
Hopewell	**2,108.00**	**2,108.00**	**100.00%**	
Johnston	**13,841.00**	**13,841.50**	**100.00%**	+
Kinards	4,776.00	2,250.00	47.11%	
Kings Chapel	**2,029.00**	**2,029.00**	**100.00%**	
Langley	13,837.00	2,023.14	14.62%	
Lebanon	**2,860.00**	**2,860.00**	**100.00%**	
Leesville	**38,564.00**	**38,564.00**	**100.00%**	
Lewis Memorial	**8,808.00**	**8,808.00**	**100.00%**	
Lowell Street	**9,025.00**	**9,025.00**	**100.00%**	+
Lupo Memorial	6,764.00	6,201.00	91.68%	
Main Street/Greenwood	82,068.00	61,551.09	75.00%	
Martha Chapel	**1,634.00**	**1,634.00**	**100.00%**	+
Mathews	8,914.00	—	0.00%	
Mays	5,281.00	1,877.00	35.54%	
McCormick	—	12,907.00	N/A	
McKendree	**4,602.00**	**4,602.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Bethel	**7,520.00**	**7,520.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Carmel/Greenwood	**2,690.00**	**2,690.00**	**100.00%**	+
Mount Lebanon	**11,810.00**	**11,810.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Pleasant	**11,268.00**	**11,268.00**	**100.00%**	
Nazareth	**12,070.00**	**12,070.00**	**100.00%**	
New Chapel	**3,820.00**	**3,820.00**	**100.00%**	
New Hope	**7,974.00**	**7,974.00**	**100.00%**	
O'Neal Street	**4,017.00**	**4,017.00**	**100.00%**	
Panola	**5,252.00**	**5,252.00**	**100.00%**	
Pentecost	**4,777.00**	**4,777.00**	**100.00%**	
Rehoboth	10,727.00	8,810.00	82.13%	
Republican	**7,871.00**	**7,871.00**	**100.00%**	
Ridge Spring	2,088.00	—	0.00%	
Sharon/Kinards	**1,939.00**	**1,939.00**	**100.00%**	
Shiloh	—	2,439.50	N/A	
Soule Chapel	**7,152.00**	**7,152.97**	**100.01%**	+
Spann	**2,053.00**	**2,053.00**	**100.00%**	
Springdale	3,148.00	1,900.00	60.36%	+
St James	15,353.00	11,504.75	74.93%	
St John/Graniteville	**18,590.00**	**18,590.32**	**100.00%**	+
St John's/Batesburg	**16,137.00**	**16,137.50**	**100.00%**	+
St Mark	**100,694.00**	**100,694.16**	**100.00%**	+
St Paul/Ninety Six	21,459.00	3,588.00	16.72%	
St Paul/Plum Branch	**2,544.00**	**2,544.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/Saluda	**32,452.00**	**32,452.00**	**100.00%**	
Tranquil	22,221.00	16,665.75	75.00%	
Trenton	**5,081.00**	**5,081.50**	**100.01%**	+
Trinity/Greenwood	**5,715.00**	**5,715.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Laurens	5,066.00	—	0.00%	
Trinity/Newberry	**15,059.00**	**15,059.00**	**100.00%**	
Troy	**7,724.00**	**7,724.00**	**100.00%**	
Vaucluse	**3,948.00**	**3,948.00**	**100.00%**	
Ware Shoals	**3,118.00**	**3,118.00**	**100.00%**	
Warrenville	**4,006.00**	**4,006.00**	**100.00%**	
Waterloo	7,615.00	7,036.90	92.41%	
Wightman	**45,859.00**	**45,859.50**	**100.00%**	+
Zion	**24,527.00**	**24,527.00**	**100.00%**	
Zoar	**4,328.00**	**4,328.00**	**100.00%**	
Greenwood Total	**1,053,297**	**917,847**	**87.14%**	

Hartsville District
70 out of 90 Churches Contributed 100%
82.15% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Aldersgate	48,385.00	8,000.00	16.53%	
Antioch	**10,009.00**	**10,009.00**	**100.00%**	
Ashland	1,456.00	—	0.00%	
Bethel/Bethune	**4,408.00**	**4,408.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Cheraw	**4,778.00**	**4,778.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Oswego	—	13,232.00	N/A	
Bethel/Ruby	**1,209.00**	**1,209.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/W Darlington	3,320.00	2,535.00	76.36%	
Bethlehem/Bishopville	19,176.00	9,885.00	51.55%	
Bethlehem/Hartsville	**8,833.00**	**8,833.71**	**100.01%**	+
Beulah	—	1,500.50	N/A	
Camden First	**22,146.00**	**22,146.00**	**100.00%**	
Centenary	**7,970.00**	**7,970.01**	**100.00%**	+
Clark	**5,385.00**	**5,385.00**	**100.00%**	
Concord	—	1,543.00	N/A	
Dalzell	—	5,731.50	N/A	
Ebenezer/Lamar	**3,272.00**	**3,272.00**	**100.00%**	+
Ebenezer/Ruby	**3,470.00**	**3,470.00**	**100.00%**	+
Elim	**5,845.00**	**5,845.50**	**100.01%**	+
Emmanuel/E Camden	**7,468.00**	**7,468.00**	**100.00%**	
Emmanuel/Sumter	**12,702.00**	**12,702.00**	**100.00%**	
Epworth	**6,914.00**	**6,914.00**	**100.00%**	
First/Cheraw	26,225.00	6,586.75	25.12%	+
Fork Creek	6,430.00	3,215.00	50.00%	
Friendship	3,212.00	—	0.00%	
Good Hope Wesley Chapel	**17,348.00**	**17,348.00**	**100.00%**	+
Hebron/Bishopville	8,251.00	—	0.00%	
Hebron/McBee Charge	1,589.00	—	0.00%	
Hopewell	4,984.00	—	0.00%	
Indian Branch	**6,260.00**	**6,260.00**	**100.00%**	
Jefferson	**7,582.00**	**7,582.00**	**100.00%**	
John Wesley	**6,863.00**	**6,863.00**	**100.00%**	
Kellybell	**4,170.00**	**4,170.00**	**100.00%**	
Kingsville	**4,855.00**	**4,855.00**	**100.00%**	
Lamar	**16,013.00**	**16,013.00**	**100.00%**	
Lewis Chapel	—	7,315.00	N/A	
Lyttleton Street	125,593.00	83,729.20	66.67%	
McBee	**2,767.00**	**2,767.00**	**100.00%**	
McLeod Chapel	—	1,553.00	N/A	
Mechanicsville	16,923.00	—	0.00%	
Mount Beulah	**4,351.00**	**4,351.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Croghan	**1,260.00**	**1,260.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Elon	**2,526.00**	**2,526.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Joshua	**1,521.00**	**1,521.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Moriah	**4,053.00**	**4,053.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Olivet	**4,771.00**	**4,771.50**	**100.01%**	+
Mount Prospect	**2,360.00**	**2,360.00**	**100.00%**	+
Mount Zion/Bishopville	**7,427.00**	**7,427.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion/Cheraw	**3,100.00**	**3,100.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion/Sumter	**11,477.00**	**11,477.00**	**100.00%**	
New Haven	**6,091.00**	**6,091.00**	**100.00%**	
New Hope	2,583.00	—	0.00%	
New Market	9,705.00	4,852.50	50.00%	
New Providence	**8,091.00**	**8,091.44**	**100.01%**	+
Newman Swamp	**3,547.00**	**3,547.00**	**100.00%**	+
Pageland	**5,503.00**	**5,503.00**	**100.00%**	
Pleasant Grove	**5,234.00**	**5,234.00**	**100.00%**	
Prospect	**6,302.00**	**6,302.00**	**100.00%**	
Rock Spring	**1,268.00**	**1,268.00**	**100.00%**	
Salem/Pageland	8,812.00	—	0.00%	
Sandy Bluff	**3,656.00**	**3,656.00**	**100.00%**	
Sandy Grove/Bethune	**2,319.00**	**2,319.50**	**100.02%**	+
Sandy Grove/Jefferson	**3,689.00**	**3,689.00**	**100.00%**	
Sandy Grove/Lamar	**7,791.00**	**7,791.00**	**100.00%**	+
Shepherd	**4,972.00**	**4,972.00**	**100.00%**	
Shiloh/ Lugoff	**2,485.00**	**2,485.00**	**100.00%**	
Shiloh/Chesterfield	**17,491.00**	**17,491.50**	**100.00%**	+
Shiloh/Darlington	**12,041.00**	**12,041.00**	**100.00%**	
Springhill	**8,541.00**	**8,541.00**	**100.00%**	+
St James/Darlington	**11,374.00**	**11,374.00**	**100.00%**	+
St James/Sumter	15,140.00	12,000.00	79.26%	
St John/Darlington	**7,367.00**	**7,367.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Rembert	—	2,445.50	N/A	
St John/Sumter	—	4,906.50	N/A	
St John's/Lugoff	37,636.00	20,511.92	54.50%	
St Luke	**78,535.00**	**78,535.86**	**100.00%**	+
St Mark/Sumter (Salterstown)	**18,578.00**	**18,578.00**	**100.00%**	
St Mark/Oswego	**2,285.00**	**2,285.00**	**100.00%**	+
St Mark's/Sumter (Broad Street)	—	7,420.50	N/A	
St Matthew/Bishopvile	—	4,321.50	N/A	
St Matthews/E Camden	**10,832.00**	**10,832.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/Camden	**17,092.00**	**17,092.00**	**100.00%**	+
St Paul/Chesterfield	**17,476.00**	**17,476.00**	**100.00%**	
St Peter	712.00	—	0.00%	
Tabernacle	**4,909.00**	**4,909.50**	**100.01%**	+
Trinity/Darlington	**28,671.00**	**28,671.84**	**100.00%**	+
Trinity/Sumter	90,400.00	38,830.73	42.95%	
Union	**11,642.00**	**11,642.00**	**100.00%**	
Unity	**10,472.00**	**10,472.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley Chapel/Darlington	**8,566.00**	**8,566.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley Chapel/Lydia	**14,246.00**	**14,246.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley Chp/Chesterfld	**2,551.00**	**2,551.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley Chp/Jefferson	**3,288.00**	**3,288.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley Memorial	3,416.00	2,850.00	83.43%	
Wesley/Cheraw	**5,660.00**	**5,660.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley/Hartsville	**44,048.00**	**44,048.00**	**100.00%**	
Zion/Lamar Circuit	**2,459.00**	**2,459.00**	**100.00%**	
Zion/Pageland	**8,062.00**	**8,062.00**	**100.00%**	
Zoar/Chesterfield	**12,536.00**	**12,536.00**	**100.00%**	
Zoar/Pageland	**3,131.00**	**3,131.00**	**100.00%**	
Hartsville Total	**1,069,862**	**878,884**	**82.15%**	

Marion District
46 out of 66 Churches Contributed 100%
94.91% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Aaron Temple	**4,477.00**	**4,477.00**	**100.00%**	
Antioch/Bennettsville	—	2,378.50	N/A	
Antioch/Conway	**3,972.00**	**3,972.00**	**100.00%**	
Asbury	**2,376.00**	**2,376.00**	**100.00%**	
Aynor	—	8,115.00	N/A	
Belin Memorial	291,791.00	267,475.51	91.67%	
Berea	—	2,703.00	N/A	
Bethel/Bennettsville	**3,630.00**	**3,630.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Georgetown	—	2,103.50	N/A	
Bethel/Marion	3,657.00	—	0.00%	
Beulah/Dillon Parish	1,276.00	—	0.00%	
Beulah/Mullins Charge	**2,113.00**	**2,113.00**	**100.00%**	
Bowling Green	**3,423.00**	**3,423.00**	**100.00%**	
Boykin	—	1,512.50	N/A	
Brown Swamp	—	7,545.00	N/A	
Camp Swamp	7,056.00	—	0.00%	
Centenary/Conway	**8,816.00**	**8,820.12**	**100.05%**	+
Centenary/Marion	**2,604.00**	**2,604.00**	**100.00%**	
Center	—	1,364.00	N/A	
Central/Marion	**3,202.00**	**3,202.00**	**100.00%**	
Christ/Bennettsville	—	8,776.50	N/A	
Duncan Memorial	69,221.00	52,494.50	75.84%	
Ebenezer/Bennettsville Cr	**5,055.00**	**5,055.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer/Loris Charge	**3,623.00**	**3,623.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer/Marlboro Charge	5,499.00	500.00	9.09%	
Ebenezer/Tatum	**4,689.00**	**4,689.50**	**100.01%**	+
First/Bennettsville	—	12,160.50	N/A	
First/Conway	67,680.00	11,279.96	16.67%	+
First/Loris	—	7,107.50	N/A	
First/Marion	**32,968.00**	**32,968.00**	**100.00%**	+
First/Myrtle Beach	**198,680.00**	**198,680.32**	**100.00%**	+

Hebron/Tatum Charge	2,393.00	—	0.00%	
Herbert Memorial	**24,871.00**	**24,871.00**	**100.00%**	
Hopewell/Mullins	**1,785.00**	**1,785.96**	**100.05%**	+
Joseph B Bethea	**5,272.00**	**5,272.00**	**100.00%**	
Lake View	6,284.00	—	0.00%	
Latta	**19,318.00**	**19,318.46**	**100.00%**	+
Level Green	**4,294.00**	**4,294.00**	**100.00%**	
Little River	**70,656.00**	**70,656.00**	**100.00%**	
Macedonia	**31,548.00**	**31,548.00**	**100.00%**	
Main Street/Dillon	—	19,366.00	N/A	
Main Street/McColl	—	5,634.00	N/A	
Manning Chapel	2,391.00	—	0.00%	
McCoy Chapel	**3,890.00**	**3,890.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Andrew	**3,092.00**	**3,092.00**	**100.00%**	
New El Bethel	**3,620.00**	**3,620.00**	**100.00%**	
New Holly	**2,428.00**	**2,428.00**	**100.00%**	
New Hope	**1,794.00**	**1,794.00**	**100.00%**	
Nichols	**4,058.00**	**4,058.00**	**100.00%**	+
Oak Grove/Georgetown	1,568.00	—	0.00%	
Oak Grove/Wallace	—	1,423.00	N/A	
Oakland	2,845.00	—	0.00%	
Old Clio	**1,476.00**	**1,476.00**	**100.00%**	+
Parnassus	4,307.00	3,178.00	73.79%	+
Pine Grove	—	2,130.50	N/A	
Pisgah	—	7,578.50	N/A	
Pleasant Grove	**1,550.00**	**1,550.00**	**100.00%**	+
Pleasant Hill/Mullins	**2,643.00**	**2,643.50**	**100.02%**	+
Pleasant Hill/Wallace	—	1,194.00	N/A	
Poplar	**2,093.00**	**2,093.50**	**100.02%**	+
Rehoboth	—	4,233.00	N/A	
Salem	8,291.00	—	0.00%	
Sampit	1,655.00	—	0.00%	
Shiloh/Bennettsvile P	**3,095.00**	**3,095.00**	**100.00%**	
Shiloh/Bennettsville	**3,689.00**	**3,689.50**	**100.01%**	+
Shiloh/Marion	**11,294.00**	**11,294.45**	**100.00%**	+
Shiloh/Mullins Charge	2,054.00	1,027.00	50.00%	
Smyrna/Bennettsvile C	—	1,896.50	N/A	
Smyrna/Bennettsvile P	**2,996.00**	**2,996.00**	**100.00%**	
Socastee	**54,492.00**	**54,492.00**	**100.00%**	
Springville	**1,432.00**	**1,432.00**	**100.00%**	
St Luke	1,824.00	152.75	8.37%	
St Michael	2,095.00	—	0.00%	
St Paul's Waccamaw	**42,371.00**	**42,371.38**	**100.00%**	+
St Phillip	**6,035.00**	**6,035.00**	**100.00%**	
St Stephen	6,173.00	500.00	8.10%	
Surfside	**84,013.00**	**84,013.00**	**100.00%**	
The Brook	**12,656.00**	**12,656.00**	**100.00%**	
Tranquil	—	1,856.50	N/A	
Trinity/Bennettsville	**11,013.00**	**11,013.00**	**100.00%**	+
Trinity/Andrews	—	13,785.00	N/A	
Trinity/Clio	—	5,379.00	N/A	
Trinity/Conway	68,731.00	25,000.00	36.37%	+
Trinity/N Myrtle Bch	**63,176.00**	**63,176.00**	**100.00%**	
Union/Conway	**18,344.00**	**18,344.00**	**100.00%**	+
Union/Lake View	**1,073.00**	**1,073.00**	**100.00%**	+
Wampee	**4,271.00**	**4,271.00**	**100.00%**	
Wayne	—	6,665.00	N/A	
Zoan	—	1,968.50	N/A	
Marion Total	**1,340,757**	**1,272,458**	**94.91%**	

Orangeburg District
76 out of 86 Churches Contributed 100%
92.36% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Andrew Chapel	**7,502.00**	**7,502.00**	**100.00%**	
Barnwell	**13,702.00**	**13,702.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel at Peachtree Rock	**9,374.00**	**9,374.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel Park	16,268.00	—	0.00%	
Bethel/Bamberg	**5,007.00**	**5,007.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Jackson	**10,905.00**	**10,905.50**	**100.00%**	+
Bethel/Rowesville	**2,165.00**	**2,165.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethlehem	**4,676.00**	**4,676.00**	**100.00%**	
Beulah/ Sandy Run	**23,067.00**	**23,067.09**	**100.00%**	+
Blackville	**1,590.00**	**1,590.00**	**100.00%**	
Branchville	9,023.00	7,669.00	84.99%	
Calvary/Swansea	**7,270.00**	**7,270.00**	**100.00%**	
Canaan/Cope	**5,303.00**	**5,303.00**	**100.00%**	
Cattle Creek	—	885.00	N/A	
Cedar Grove	**3,954.00**	**3,954.00**	**100.00%**	
Claflin	2,707.00	—	0.00%	
Clinton	**9,182.00**	**9,182.00**	**100.00%**	
East Bethel	**2,170.00**	**2,170.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer/Bowman	**7,412.00**	**7,412.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer/Orange Cir	—	2,871.00	N/A	
Edisto Fork	**16,255.00**	**16,255.00**	**100.00%**	
Elloree	**9,208.00**	**9,208.00**	**100.00%**	
Eutawville	**5,047.00**	**5,047.00**	**100.00%**	
Forest Chapel	**3,124.00**	**3,124.00**	**100.00%**	
Franklin	**12,114.00**	**12,114.00**	**100.00%**	
Gerizim	**1,873.00**	**1,873.00**	**100.00%**	
Holly Hill	**23,408.00**	**23,408.00**	**100.00%**	
Jericho	**7,009.00**	**7,009.50**	**100.01%**	+
Jerusalem	**8,840.00**	**8,840.00**	**100.00%**	
Kearse	694.00	—	0.00%	
Lebanon	**11,803.00**	**11,803.00**	**100.00%**	
Limestone	—	2,042.00	N/A	
Livingston	**7,344.00**	**7,344.00**	**100.00%**	
Main Street/Bamberg	**4,070.00**	**4,070.00**	**100.00%**	
Mayes Chapel	**2,603.00**	**2,603.00**	**100.00%**	
Mizpah	**1,566.00**	**1,566.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Carmel	**8,686.00**	**8,686.20**	**100.00%**	+
Mount Nebo	**3,363.00**	**3,363.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion/Bamberg Cir	**5,027.00**	**5,027.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Zion/Sandy Run	**5,505.00**	**5,505.00**	**100.00%**	
Neeses	**2,710.00**	**2,710.00**	**100.00%**	
New Covenant	**16,916.00**	**16,916.00**	**100.00%**	+
New Hope	**3,558.00**	**3,558.00**	**100.00%**	
New Light	**20,285.00**	**20,285.00**	**100.00%**	
North	**9,675.00**	**9,675.00**	**100.00%**	
North Orangeburg	**26,627.00**	**26,627.00**	**100.00%**	
Norway New Beginning	**5,258.00**	**5,258.00**	**100.00%**	
Oak Grove	**1,574.00**	**1,574.00**	**100.00%**	
Orange Grove	**9,500.00**	**9,500.00**	**100.00%**	
Pelion	5,404.00	—	0.00%	
Pine Hill	**6,163.00**	**6,163.00**	**100.00%**	
Pineville	**5,361.00**	**5,361.00**	**100.00%**	
Pleasant Hill	**5,668.00**	**5,668.00**	**100.00%**	
Prospect	**3,105.00**	**3,105.00**	**100.00%**	
Providence/Providence	**19,270.00**	**19,270.00**	**100.00%**	
Salem	**864.00**	**864.00**	**100.00%**	
Salley	**1,868.00**	**1,868.00**	**100.00%**	
Shady Grove	**5,447.00**	**5,447.00**	**100.00%**	
Sharon/Pelion	**6,786.00**	**6,786.00**	**100.00%**	
Silas	**6,121.00**	**6,121.00**	**100.00%**	
Siloam	**806.00**	**806.00**	**100.00%**	
Springfield	**3,870.00**	**3,870.00**	**100.00%**	
St Andrews	**37,202.00**	**37,202.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Aiken	**240,070.00**	**240,070.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Norway	**9,818.00**	**9,818.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Orangeburg	**4,383.00**	**4,383.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Orangeburg Cr	**3,531.00**	**3,531.00**	**100.00%**	
St Mark	**19,315.00**	**19,315.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/New Ellenton	15,372.00	7,686.00	50.00%	
St Paul/Orangeburg	**28,284.00**	**28,284.00**	**100.00%**	
St Paul/St Matthews	14,345.00	12,000.00	83.65%	
St Stephen/Bowman	**6,639.00**	**6,639.00**	**100.00%**	
St Stephen/Orangeburg	**20,775.00**	**20,775.00**	**100.00%**	
Swansea	8,665.00	—	0.00%	
Target	**5,107.00**	**5,107.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Aiken	37,524.00	28,143.02	75.00%	
Trinity/Bamberg	28,459.00	—	0.00%	
Trinity/North	**1,892.00**	**1,892.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Orangeburg	**23,475.00**	**23,475.00**	**100.00%**	
Union	**5,855.00**	**5,855.00**	**100.00%**	
Wagener	**6,910.00**	**6,910.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley	**5,371.00**	**5,371.25**	**100.00%**	+
Wesley Chapel/Calhoun	**6,699.00**	**6,699.50**	**100.01%**	+
Wesley Chapel/Jackson	**6,921.00**	**6,921.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley Grove	**5,424.00**	**5,424.00**	**100.00%**	
West Bethel	**3,970.00**	**3,970.00**	**100.00%**	
White House	**5,400.00**	**5,400.00**	**100.00%**	
Wightman	**7,079.00**	**7,079.26**	**100.00%**	+
Williston	**5,552.00**	**5,552.00**	**100.00%**	
Orangeburg Total	**1,009,689**	**932,526**	**92.36%**	

Rock Hill District
46 out of 61 Churches Contributed 100%
73.48% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Adnah	**20,466.00**	**20,466.00**	**100.00%**	+
Aldersgate	**27,670.00**	**27,670.08**	**100.00%**	+
Antioch	**13,458.00**	**13,458.00**	**100.00%**	
Armenia	—	2,726.00	N/A	
Belair	**15,154.00**	**15,154.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Chester	**19,979.00**	**19,979.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Lancaster	—	1,287.00	N/A	
Bethel/Rock Hill	**16,314.00**	**16,314.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Rock Hill South	**5,946.00**	**5,946.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethesda	4,372.00	2,200.00	50.32%	
Camp Creek	11,489.00	2,872.00	25.00%	
Canaan	**3,867.00**	**3,867.00**	**100.00%**	+
Capers Chapel	—	3,527.50	N/A	
Catawba	—	2,421.00	N/A	
Church of Good Shepherd	**10,527.00**	**10,527.00**	**100.00%**	
Clover Chapel	**5,055.00**	**5,055.00**	**100.00%**	
Cornerstone	15,939.00	6,641.27	41.67%	
Damascus	**2,788.00**	**2,788.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer	**2,617.00**	**2,617.00**	**100.00%**	
El Bethel	**7,883.00**	**7,883.00**	**100.00%**	
Epworth	**7,535.00**	**7,535.03**	**100.00%**	+
First/Clover	**56,944.00**	**56,944.00**	**100.00%**	
First/Lancaster	**37,489.00**	**37,489.00**	**100.00%**	
Fort Lawn	**2,311.00**	**2,311.00**	**100.00%**	
Friendship	**15,700.00**	**15,700.00**	**100.00%**	
Good Samaritan	19,614.00	710.72	3.62%	
Grace	**14,884.00**	**14,884.00**	**100.00%**	
Grace Community	—	16,339.00	N/A	
Green Pond	**6,369.00**	**6,369.00**	**100.00%**	
Hanging Rock	**4,691.00**	**4,691.00**	**100.00%**	
Harmony	4,926.00	4,105.10	83.34%	
Heath Chapel	1,912.00	500.00	26.15%	+
Heath Memorial	**5,860.00**	**5,860.00**	**100.00%**	
Hopewell/Lancaster	22,795.00	9,498.00	41.67%	
Hopewell/York	**3,719.00**	**3,719.00**	**100.00%**	
India Hook	30,184.00	15,093.00	50.00%	
Kings Mountain Chapel	**10,238.00**	**10,238.40**	**100.00%**	+
Mount Dearborn	7,330.00	—	0.00%	
Mount Harmony	**5,109.00**	**5,109.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Holly	**40,952.00**	**40,952.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Olive	**4,154.00**	**4,154.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Prospect	**2,825.00**	**2,825.00**	**100.00%**	
Mount Vernon	—	6,950.50	N/A	
New Hope/Chester	—	2,371.50	N/A	
New Hope/Rock Hill	**3,095.00**	**3,095.00**	**100.00%**	
New Zion	**4,546.00**	**4,546.00**	**100.00%**	
Osceola	**10,310.00**	**10,310.00**	**100.00%**	
Philadelphia/Fort Mill	58,794.00	10,798.96	18.37%	
Philadelphia/York	**9,397.00**	**9,397.00**	**100.00%**	
Pleasant Grove	**2,867.00**	**2,867.00**	**100.00%**	
Pleasant Hill	**52,277.00**	**52,277.00**	**100.00%**	
Richburg	**2,161.00**	**2,161.00**	**100.00%**	+
Salem	**4,440.00**	**4,440.00**	**100.00%**	
Shady Grove	**2,123.00**	**2,123.00**	**100.00%**	
Sharon/Sharon	**4,707.00**	**4,707.00**	**100.00%**	
St James	**11,252.00**	**11,252.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Fort Mill	**59,983.00**	**59,983.00**	**100.00%**	
St John/Rock Hill	147,763.00	25,000.00	16.92%	
St Luke	27,811.00	12,626.90	45.40%	
St Paul	**9,685.00**	**9,685.00**	**100.00%**	
Tabernacle	**9,685.00**	**9,685.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity	**6,943.00**	**6,943.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/York	**34,346.00**	**34,346.00**	**100.00%**	
Van Wyck	**1,364.00**	**1,364.00**	**100.00%**	
Wesley	6,502.00	6,189.37	95.19%	
Wesley Memorial	**5,592.00**	**5,592.00**	**100.00%**	
Woodland	52,255.00	26,127.50	50.00%	
Zion	21,797.00	—	0.00%	
Rock Hill Total	**1,038,760**	**763,263**	**73.48%**	

Spartanburg District
47 out of 59 Churches Contributed 100%
92.71% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Aldersgate	12,158.00	7,294.80	60.00%	
Allen Chapel	**2,748.00**	**2,748.00**	**100.00%**	
Arcadia	**4,525.00**	**4,525.00**	**100.00%**	
Asbury/Gaffney	**1,736.00**	**1,736.00**	**100.00%**	
Beaumont	**4,538.00**	**4,538.00**	**100.00%**	
Ben Avon	**7,818.00**	**7,818.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Spartanburg	121,229.00	60,614.53	50.00%	
Bethel/Union	**8,953.00**	**8,953.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethlehem	—	3,793.00	N/A	
Bogansville	**10,525.00**	**10,525.00**	**100.00%**	
Buffalo	—	6,261.50	N/A	
Buford Street	**30,459.00**	**30,459.00**	**100.00%**	+
Campobello	—	2,143.50	N/A	
Cannon's Campground	**42,895.00**	**42,895.00**	**100.00%**	
Carlisle	—	1,436.00	N/A	
Central	**69,734.00**	**69,734.00**	**100.00%**	
Cherokee Springs	**7,937.00**	**7,937.00**	**100.00%**	
Chesnee	**5,157.00**	**5,157.00**	**100.00%**	
Church of the Covenant	**37,947.00**	**37,947.00**	**100.00%**	+
Cross Anchor Yarborough	**3,058.00**	**3,058.00**	**100.00%**	
Duncan	**13,794.00**	**13,794.00**	**100.00%**	
Duncan Acres	**11,331.00**	**11,331.00**	**100.00%**	
Dunton	11,246.00	6,200.00	55.13%	
El Bethel	**4,292.00**	**4,292.00**	**100.00%**	+
Enoree	**3,900.00**	**3,900.00**	**100.00%**	
Fairmont	**2,073.00**	**2,073.00**	**100.00%**	
Fingerville	**1,598.00**	**1,598.00**	**100.00%**	
Florence Chapel	**2,618.00**	**2,618.00**	**100.00%**	
Fosters Chapel	—	4,258.00	N/A	
Friends In Christ	11,262.00	6,181.00	54.88%	
Golightly	**4,393.00**	**4,393.00**	**100.00%**	
Grace	**31,079.00**	**31,079.04**	**100.00%**	+
Gramling	**35,848.00**	**35,848.00**	**100.00%**	
Gravely Memorial	8,622.00	3,600.00	41.75%	
Hebron	**2,790.00**	**2,790.00**	**100.00%**	
Immanuel	**8,921.00**	**8,921.00**	**100.00%**	
Inman	**18,390.00**	**18,390.00**	**100.00%**	
Jacksons Grove	**12,023.00**	**12,023.00**	**100.00%**	
Jonesville	**5,372.00**	**5,372.00**	**100.00%**	
Landrum	**24,310.00**	**24,310.00**	**100.00%**	
Liberty/Campobello	—	2,655.00	N/A	
Liberty/Spartanburg	7,199.00	3,800.00	52.79%	
Limestone Street	**9,668.00**	**9,668.00**	**100.00%**	
Lockhart	—	—	N/A	
Lyman	—	27,880.50	N/A	
Mesopotamia	**6,133.00**	**6,133.50**	**100.01%**	+
Montgomery Memorial	14,064.00	12,306.35	87.50%	
New Beginnings	**48,434.00**	**48,434.00**	**100.00%**	
New Hope	**7,469.00**	**7,469.00**	**100.00%**	
Pacolet	**5,775.00**	**5,775.00**	**100.00%**	
Patterson Chapel	**4,984.00**	**4,984.02**	**100.00%**	+
Reidville Road	—	17,617.00	N/A	
Roebuck	—	4,257.00	N/A	
Salem	6,039.00	3,660.00	60.61%	+
Sardis/Blacksburg	**4,502.00**	**4,502.00**	**100.00%**	
Sardis/Union	—	4,669.50	N/A	
Silver Hill Memorial	39,971.00	21,250.00	53.16%	
Skylyn	**4,491.00**	**4,491.00**	**100.00%**	
St Andrews	2,513.00	2,254.00	89.69%	
St James	**46,471.00**	**46,471.08**	**100.00%**	+
St John	**6,493.00**	**6,493.00**	**100.00%**	
St Luke	**5,590.00**	**5,590.00**	**100.00%**	+
St Mark	8,053.00	4,129.00	51.27%	+
St Paul	63,457.00	15,864.00	25.00%	
Tabernacle	**3,248.00**	**3,248.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Enoree	**4,674.00**	**4,674.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Gaffney	**5,036.00**	**5,036.00**	**100.00%**	
Trinity/Spartanburg	**68,759.00**	**68,799.00**	**100.06%**	+
Unity	—	—	N/A	
Walnut Grove	—	9,278.00	N/A	
Wesley Chapel	—	3,948.00	N/A	
White Stone	**3,674.00**	**3,674.00**	**100.00%**	
Whitmire	**3,572.00**	**3,572.00**	**100.00%**	
Spartanburg Total	**965,548**	**895,126**	**92.71%**	

Walterboro District
75 out of 87 Churches Contributed 100%
100.04% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid
Adnah	**4,528.00**	**4,528.00**	**100.00%**

Bellinger Chapel	**3,475.00**	**3,475.00**	**100.00%**	+	**Indian Field**	**19,933.00**	**19,933.50**	**100.00%**	+	**St Daniel**	**3,633.00**	**3,633.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Green Pond	**1,121.00**	**1,121.00**	**100.00%**		Isaiah	4,412.00	—	0.00%		**St George**	**29,736.00**	**29,736.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Harleyville	**5,267.00**	**5,267.25**	**100.00%**	+	**Jericho**	**8,202.00**	**8,202.00**	**100.00%**		St James	551.00	—	0.00%	
Bethel/Ruffin	**12,010.00**	**12,010.00**	**100.00%**		**Little Swamp**	**3,914.00**	**3,914.00**	**100.00%**		**St John/Dorchester**	**6,552.00**	**6,552.00**	**100.00%**	+
Bethel/Smoaks	**7,928.00**	**7,928.00**	**100.00%**		**Lodge**	**1,740.00**	**1,740.00**	**100.00%**		**St Johns/Ruffin**	**3,354.00**	**3,354.00**	**100.00%**	
Bethel/Walterboro	**48,133.00**	**48,133.00**	**100.00%**		**Macedonia**	**6,020.00**	**6,020.00**	**100.00%**	+	**St Luke/Ehrhardt**	**3,538.00**	**3,538.00**	**100.00%**	
Bluffton	**59,055.00**	**59,055.00**	**100.00%**		**Morris Chapel**	**3,389.00**	**3,389.00**	**100.00%**		St Luke/Okatie	12,943.00	11,648.70	90.00%	
Brunson	**3,844.00**	**3,844.00**	**100.00%**	+	Mount Carmel/Estill	2,427.00	—	0.00%		**St Mark**	**6,950.00**	**6,950.00**	**100.00%**	
Buckhead	**6,295.00**	**6,295.00**	**100.00%**		Mount Carmel/Walterboro	2,876.00	1,228.00	42.70%	+	**St Paul/ Ridgeville**	**5,230.00**	**5,230.00**	**100.00%**	
Canaan	**16,995.00**	**16,995.12**	**100.00%**	+	**Mount Nebo**	**3,529.00**	**3,529.00**	**100.00%**		St Paul/Ridgeland	—	9,073.00	N/A	
Carteret Street	**65,793.00**	**65,793.00**	**100.00%**		**Mount Pleasant**	**778.00**	**778.00**	**100.00%**		**St Stephen**	**1,310.00**	**1,310.00**	**100.00%**	+
Church of the Palms	**57,416.00**	**57,416.00**	**100.00%**		Mount Tabor	—	1,787.50	N/A		Swallow Savannah	4,972.00	2,250.00	45.25%	
Cottageville	—	2,925.00	N/A		**New Grace**	**9,509.00**	**9,509.04**	**100.00%**	+	**Sykes Savannah**	**2,508.00**	**2,508.00**	**100.00%**	
Cumberland	**4,259.00**	**4,260.00**	**100.02%**	+	**New Hope/Allendale**	**3,087.00**	**3,087.00**	**100.00%**		**Tabor**	**3,010.00**	**3,010.00**	**100.00%**	
Cypress	—	3,093.50	N/A		**New Hope/Ridgeville**	**4,804.00**	**4,804.00**	**100.00%**		Tillman	—	2,107.00	N/A	
Duncan Chapel	**3,870.00**	**3,870.47**	**100.01%**	+	**New Life**	**16,671.00**	**16,671.00**	**100.00%**		**Tobys Bluff**	**2,376.00**	**2,376.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer/Ehrhardt	**3,297.00**	**3,297.00**	**100.00%**		**Oak Grove/Ridgeville**	**5,403.00**	**5,403.00**	**100.00%**		**Trinity/Greenpond**	**714.00**	**714.00**	**100.00%**	
Ebenezer/Ritter	**3,804.00**	**3,804.00**	**100.00%**		**Peniel**	**1,464.00**	**1,464.00**	**100.00%**	+	Trinity/Ridgeville	—	3,900.00	N/A	
Ebenezer/Yemassee	**2,983.00**	**2,983.00**	**100.00%**		**Port Royal**	**15,059.00**	**15,059.00**	**100.00%**		Trinity/Smoaks	741.00	—	0.00%	
Estill	2,661.00	685.00	25.74%	+	**Providence**	**1,369.00**	**1,369.50**	**100.04%**	+	**Trinity/St George**	**3,781.00**	**3,781.00**	**100.00%**	
First/Harleyville	**15,009.00**	**15,009.81**	**100.01%**	+	**Red Bank**	**2,925.00**	**2,925.00**	**100.00%**		**Union**	**3,480.00**	**3,480.00**	**100.00%**	
Fisher Chapel	**6,455.00**	**6,455.00**	**100.00%**		**Red Root**	**4,528.00**	**4,528.00**	**100.00%**		**Varnville**	**4,184.00**	**4,184.00**	**100.00%**	
Friendship	**4,687.00**	**4,687.00**	**100.00%**		**Rehoboth**	**7,848.00**	**7,848.00**	**100.00%**		**Wesley Chapel**	**2,018.00**	**2,018.00**	**100.00%**	
Furman	1,902.00	—	0.00%		**Rizers Chapel**	**3,341.00**	**3,341.00**	**100.00%**		Wesley Grove	3,725.00	2,298.00	61.69%	+
Gillette	**1,016.00**	**1,016.00**	**100.00%**		Salem/Dorchester	5,061.00	2,571.00	50.80%		**Wesley/Beaufort**	**11,890.00**	**11,890.00**	**100.00%**	
Green Pond	**2,071.00**	**2,071.00**	**100.00%**		**Salem/Hendersonville**	**4,749.00**	**4,749.50**	**100.01%**	+	**Williams**	**3,773.00**	**3,773.00**	**100.00%**	
Grover	**8,307.00**	**8,307.50**	**100.01%**	+	**Sand Hill**	**14,159.00**	**14,159.00**	**100.00%**		**Zion/Dorchester**	**5,282.00**	**5,282.00**	**100.00%**	
Hampton	15,476.00	14,538.78	93.94%		**Sandy Dam**	**2,021.00**	**2,021.00**	**100.00%**	+	**Zion/Ehrhardt**	**253.00**	**253.00**	**100.00%**	
Hardeeville	**6,073.00**	**6,073.00**	**100.00%**		**Shady Grove**	**12,468.00**	**12,468.00**	**100.00%**		**Walterboro Total**	**813,663**	**814,026**	**100.04%**	
Heaven Gate	**927.00**	**927.00**	**100.00%**		**Simpson**	**3,980.00**	**3,980.00**	**100.00%**						
Hickory Hill	**2,865.00**	**2,865.00**	**100.00%**		**Springtown**	**8,936.00**	**8,936.00**	**100.00%**		**Conference Total**	**13,985,368**	**12,635,028**	**90.34%**	
Holy Trinity	**2,857.00**	**2,857.00**	**100.00%**	+	**St Andrew By-the-Sea**	**122,178.00**	**122,178.00**	**100.00%**						

CHURCHES PAYING 100% OF ALL APPORTIONED FUNDS
SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE - 2021 through 2023

	2022			2023			2024		
	Number of Churches			Number of Churches			Number of Churches		
DISTRICT	Paying 100%	Total Churches	Percent	Paying 100%	Total Churches	Percent	Paying 100%	Total Churches	Percent
Anderson	55	71	77%	50	71	70%	43	67	64%
Charleston	63	75	84%	63	74	85%	60	69	87%
Columbia	55	63	87%	46	62	74%	43	56	77%
Florence	78	93	84%	76	93	82%	50	67	75%
Greenville	38	62	61%	36	62	58%	30	54	56%
Greenwood	63	78	81%	65	78	83%	53	74	72%
Hartsville	82	100	82%	82	100	82%	70	90	78%
Marion	59	89	66%	65	89	73%	46	66	70%
Orangeburg	86	90	96%	87	89	98%	76	86	88%
Rock Hill	61	69	88%	56	68	82%	46	61	75%
Spartanburg	59	74	80%	59	73	81%	47	59	80%
Walterboro	74	94	79%	75	94	80%	75	87	86%
TOTALS	**773**	**958**	**81%**	**760**	**953**	**80%**	**639**	**836**	**76%**

2024 Budget
Receipts on Apportioned Funds

Conference apportionments	**2024 Budgeted**	**2024 Paid**	**% Paid**
Conference Benevolences	2,083,451.00	1,857,456.00	89.15
Retiree Health	200,000.00	231,002.00	115.50
District Superintendent's Salary	1,292,241.00	1,167,315.00	90.33
Equitable Compensation	365,000.00	349,435.00	95.74
District Administration	746,822.00	680,113.00	91.07
Conference Administration	1,435,814.00	1,304,918.00	90.88
Congregational Development	855,000.00	770,432.00	90.11
Campus Ministry	600,000.00	546,420.00	91.07
Senior College Scholarship Fund	850,000.00	754,964.00	88.82
Spartanburg Methodist College	488,000.00	446,259.00	91.45
Methodist Homes Residents' Assistance	375,000.00	331,065.00	88.28
Camps & Retreat Ministries	284,000.00	254,900.00	89.75
District Parsonage/Office	785,000.00	684,104.00	87.15
Subtotal on Conference apportionments	**10,360,328.00**	**9,378,384.00**	**90.52**
General & Jurisdictional apportionments			
World Service	1,849,746.00	1,648,604.00	89.13
Episcopal Fund	547,785.00	497,372.00	90.80
General Conference Administration	219,643.00	195,932.00	89.20
Ministerial Education	624,759.00	565,513.00	90.52
Interdenominational Cooperation	48,861.00	44,447.00	90.97
Black College Fund	249,211.00	226,989.00	91.08
Africa University Fund	55,772.00	51,641.00	92.59
Jurisdictional Mission & Ministry	29,328.00	26,145.00	89.15
Subtotal on General & Jurisdictional	**3,625,105.00**	**3,256,642.00**	**89.84**
APPORTIONMENT TOTAL	**13,985,433.00**	**12,635,026.00**	**90.34**

2024 Budget
Receipts on Funds by District

District	**Total Apportioned**	**Total Paid**	**Percent Paid**	**Special Giving**
Anderson	1,030,745	717,497	69.61%	52,586
Charleston	1,466,110	1,228,492	89.79%	99,756
Columbia	2,019,194	2,241,599	111.01%	90,594
Florence	1,002,314	889,782	88.77%	7,244
Greenville	1,175,429	1,083,526	92.18%	18,412
Greenwood	1,053,297	917,847	87.14%	65,819
Hartsville	1,069,862	878,884	82.15%	28,490
Marion	1,340,757	1,272,458	94.91%	54,689
Orangeburg	1,009,689	932,526	92.36%	35,204
Rock Hill	1,038,760	763,263	73.48%	45,232
Spartanburg	965,548	895,126	92.71%	38,102
Walterboro	813,663	814,026	100.04%	87,284
Totals	**13,985,368**	**12,635,026**	**90.34%**	**623,412**

How Apportionments are Calculated

The Conference formula is designed to set apportionments using a method comparing relative financial strength to calculate each church's fair share of the total Conference budget. It uses the same criteria for every church.

$$\frac{\text{LOCAL CHURCH AVERAGE NET FUNDS}}{\text{CONFERENCE AVERAGE NET FUNDS}} = \frac{\text{LOCAL CHURCH APPORTIONMENT}}{\text{CONFERENCE BUDGET}}$$

Local Church Average Net Funds is a two-year average of the total of: pastor compensation; associate pastor compensation; housing allowances and amounts paid for the pastor(s) for housing; pastor and associate(s) accountable reimbursements; pastor and associate(s) other cash allowances; salary and benefits for Deacons, Diaconal Ministers, other church staff; local church programming expenses; and local church operating expenses. These are reported in Table II of the year end Local Church Report to the Annual Conference in lines lines 41-47. **Conference Average Net Funds** is the total of the average net funds figures for all churches in the Conference, excluding new church starts and mission churches.

Building Bridges for Ministry set for Rock Hill May 3

Ministries and church leaders across the Rock Hill District will gather next month for "Building Bridges for Ministry," a Districtwide Ministry Fair and Workshop Event.

Hosted by the Rock Hill District Committee on Connectional Ministries, the event is set for Saturday, May 3, from 9-11:30 a.m. at Woodland UMC, Rock Hill.

The morning will feature three sessions as attendees engage in meaningful conversation as they connect and collaborate with other ministry leaders across the district.

District and conference ministries are invited to set up a table in the ministry fair to share their work. The idea is for all participants to be able to share ideas, establish friendships and explore ways to join together to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Session 1 is Building Bridges with Other Churches, exploring ways to be better stewards of God's resources while engaging in cooperative ministries with other churches. Session 2 is Building Bridges into Your Community, with attendees learning new ways to engage with communities as they seek to share the good news with everyone. Session 3 is Building Bridges with the World, embracing technology and unlocking its potential to connect ministries with the world.

To sign up or reserve a table, visit https://tinyurl.com/4kxs57be.

Three 'Spring Salkehatchie' weeks set for this month

Three weeklong Spring Salkehatchie mission opportunities are being held this month planned around the spring breaks of high schools across South Carolina.

Spring Salkehatchie events will be held in Simpsonville (March 30-April 5), Iva (April 13-18) and Bennettsville (April 21-25).

Youth ages 14 and older will team up with adults to work on homes in that community for people in desperate need of home repairs. The cost is $200 and requires registration.

To register: https://www.salkehatchie.org. For questions, email salkehatchie@umcsc.org.

Wesley Foundations

by the Rev. John Sterling Poole

College of Charleston Sophomore Desire' Johnson (right) learns to samba in Universal Studios.

God's work in Universal Studios Florida

On March 8-9, a group of Charleston Wesley Foundation students from Charleston Southern University, College of Charleston, The Citadel and Trident Technical College took a trip to Universal Studios in Florida, and Christ moved in the theme parks.

Riding rollercoasters, taking photos with movie characters and walking through Diagon Alley doesn't seem like the place where sanctification begins. But the students had fun, and in that fun, Christ sanctified us.

College is really difficult and stressful, and these students deserved an opportunity to relax and celebrate Spring Break. Is there something inherently holy about the Velocicoaster or the Transformers 4D Ride? No, but what was holy was in the community.

We stood in lines together between rides, and the students talked about everything. They talked about their favorite rollercoasters, which classes were particularly difficult, what their favorite candy bar was and more of the same for the first few lines we waited in. However, as we spent more time together and got through the surface-level topics, we began to talk about how it is with our souls. Students talked about what they were doing for Lent, how they struggled to give up nicotine, how they were concerned for a classmate, how they felt like God was calling them to be better, how they wrestled with the shame of sin, how they wished they could talk about faith with their family, how they felt like they shouldn't start reading the Bible because they would only end up not following through, how they wrestled with their relationships, how they wrestled with themselves and how they wrestled with God.

Waiting together was holy, and yes, we were surrounded by the glamor and gaud of Universal. It was a profound experience for me and a reminder God is with us always.

What was most holy was our dinner together back at the Airbnb. Our feet ached, some were sunburnt, we wanted sleep and we dreaded the drive back to Charleston. However, we made time to talk about how God is with us in the fun, how God wants us to have fun and how God is glad that we made time to be together in the waiting. I doubt it was what John Wesley imagined when he vouched for holy conferencing; however, it was holy, nonetheless.

At the dinner table, we celebrated the Lord's Supper. We each served someone; we each were served. Some of the students had never served it before. It was not the smoothest or most elegant celebration. We all laughed at each other's clumsiness in handling the elements, in our stuttering of what to say, in our holy conferencing. It was beautiful; it was good.

God worked in our hearts during this trip. I am grateful we serve a God who is in the fun, in the waiting and in college students on Spring Break.

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

Camps & Retreat Ministries

Play-based, phone-free faith formation

It is no wonder children today have been deemed the anxious generation.

In 2024, John Haidt published his book "The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness," which talks about how the mental health crisis has grown in our younger generations. He cites two big reasons:

1. The decline of play-based childhoods that began in the 1980s; and
2. The rise of phone-based childhoods that started in the early 2010s.

Asbury Hills is the solution to this problem. We offer a safe environment where children can experience play-based, phone-free fun. As Steve Haskins, board chair of the American Camp Association, outlines in an article on "Why Kids Need Summer Camp?" summer offers the perfect solution to the problem by being tech-free, offering novel activities that are fun and challenging and providing mentorship from counselors and deep connection with campers. It allows them space to try new things while making and deepening friendships in the outdoors. On top of having fun, challenging them and fostering friendships, we are committed to promoting faith formation at Asbury Hills.

Over the years, we have seen how powerful play-based, phone-free faith formation is at Asbury Hills. At the end of each summer, campers fill out a survey on their camp experience, and in 2025, 97 percent tried something new, 99 percent now feel confident in themselves, 98 percent will use what they learned at home, 98 percent learned something new about their faith and 98 percent felt closer in their relationship with God. Wow! That is the power of one week of summer camp at Asbury Hills.

In an age where so many things are vying for our children's attention, increasing anxiety and decreasing social and emotional skills, Asbury Hills is a safe place where your children can grow in their faith, social skills, and confidence.

For more about summer camp at Asbury Hills, call 864-836-3711 or visit https://asburyhills.org.

—Kate Nobles

Epworth Children's Home

Renewal and a fresh start

With spring's arrival each year, we are all reminded of the idea of rebirth and renewal as we watch flowers long dormant during the winter suddenly begin to come back to life. We watch them as they gently unfold in the warmer air and begin to display their vibrant colors to dot our landscapes. The whole idea of a new life beginning, another season to blossom, is something we all appreciate.

I like to think that much of our work at Epworth is about helping children and families find a new beginning. This metaphor of coming back to life after winter is a fitting metaphor for many of those Epworth provides with support and assistance. Most children who come to us have been abused, neglected or suffered from some aspect of a dysfunctional family. Many of the families we help have also had a difficult time meeting the various challenges that have come their way. They all need a chance to find a new "springtime," a new dawn in their lives.

When these children and families come to Epworth we provide services, programs and various other support initiatives that help them begin to blossom. Like the returning flowers of spring, we help children and families have an opportunity to renew their lives.

It is our job, as our mission states, "to serve children, youth and families through caring, safe, Christian communities, where hurts are healed, hope is nurtured and faith in God, self and others is developed." As we follow our mission, all along the way, we help charter the course for children and families as they recover from past traumas and challenges and make their way toward a safe, healthy and secure future.

We are living in challenging times and many of South Carolina's children, youth and families are facing formidable problems. Our state ranks 40 percent nationally in child wellbeing, where we've been in the bottom quartile of the nation for more than a dozen years, according to SC Kids Count. Additional statistics from this report tell us that 19 percent of South Carolina's children live in poverty, 28 percent have parents who lack secure employment and 37 percent of our children live in homes with only one parent.

Through its programs and services, Epworth is expanding its reach throughout South Carolina to provide more support and assistance to children and families. Epworth has regional offices now in several counties in the Upstate, the Pee Dee, the Midlands and the Lowcountry. These offices are staffed with Epworth personnel who connect with children and families who need our help. Although our primary base of operations remains in Columbia, many of our services and programmatic efforts are offered statewide.

The support of churches across the state is making a huge contribution to Epworth's work—through financial support, the gift of volunteer action and helping Epworth connect with children and families who need our support in small towns and cities all over South Carolina. I cannot thank these churches and their congregations enough for all the work they help us accomplish. You are indeed helping Epworth to do God's work.

Epworth's work continues to expand. The times in which we live very often affect children whose families are unable to care for them safely and in a healthy environment. The need for foster families is great, and Epworth's foster family program is growing rapidly every year. Currently in South Carolina, there are 3,258 children in foster homes, with many still waiting to be placed.

In addition to Epworth's regular foster family program, we place children who need what is called therapeutic foster care. These are children who have experienced real trauma and abuse in their birth families, and as a result have suffered both mental and emotional damage. The loving homes these foster parents provide for children affected by past trauma brings about amazing changes in the lives of these children. Like the flowers we see blooming right now, they begin to blossom as individuals at home, at school and in interaction with others.

As I have mentioned before in the *Advocate*, Epworth has recently added a new program under the umbrella of foster care to our many programs. Kinship care is the practice of placing children with relatives or close family friends when they can no longer safely remain in their homes. This approach significantly reduces the trauma that children experience, provides them with stability and gives them the opportunity to live with relatives who are already a part of their lives. In many cases, they can even remain in their same schools, which allows them to progress in their academic work without interruption.

Currently in South Carolina, 28 percent of children in foster care (886 children) are in kinship care. Kinship caregivers live all over our state and their numbers are growing significantly. At Epworth, our program has assisted 222 kinship families in 2024. As the program continues to expand, we look forward to providing support, assistance, training and tangible assistance with equipment and supplies to kinship caregivers who take the responsibility of bringing a relative's child into their homes.

In addition to foster and kinship care, Epworth's special programs for parents extend to mothers in its Family Care Center. These are mothers who have had past substance use problems and have had their children removed from their homes by the South Carolina Department of Social Services. Last year in South Carolina, 451,000 people suffered from substance-related problems according to the South Carolina Department of Public Health, many of them women. There is a growing need to offer extended kinds of help to those whose lives have been upended by their substance use and Epworth's Family Care Center offers this kind of help. After they complete rehabilitation programs, mothers in the program come to live at Epworth for a six-month program in which they learn parenting skills, job skills, life skills and are reunited with their children who live with them at Epworth and benefit from Epworth's programs.

These mothers have a chance to learn to be good parents under the supervision and guidance of Epworth staff. We have had great success, and again to extend the metaphor of new beginnings in the springtime, the mothers who graduate from the Family Care Center program have a chance to bring new life to their children and families.

Other services and initiatives at Epworth address additional areas of assistance. The Center for Independent Living provides housing, job related programs and life skills education to older youth who have graduated from high school but are virtually homeless with no jobs, family support or educational plans past high school. Through our initiatives, many of these young people go on to job training, higher education, and eventually employment that helps them become responsible members of their communities. They receive a new start.

Our counseling center assists both children and their families; our Barnes Learning Center helps with tutoring and educational support to the children who live on our campus; and there are other programs that support and bolster the children and families with whom we work at Epworth.

As we continue to follow the words of our mission statement, we at Epworth think much about new beginnings, fresh starts in life and the beauty of renewal. Perhaps Isaiah expresses this idea best in Isaiah 43:18-19: "When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing new things. Now it springs up."

—Beth Williams, Epworth president/CEO


Many church and community members attended.


A banquet kicked off festivities on Friday evening.


The morning message lifted up the church heritage.

St. Paul marks 157th anniversary with banquet, service

CAMDEN—St. Paul United Methodist Church celebrated 157 years of proclaiming the gospel in the Knights Hill community Feb. 21 and 23.

The theme for the grand celebration was "Honoring Our Past; Igniting the Future."

The kickoff for the weekend event began with a banquet at the American Legion Post 17, Camden, on Friday at 6 p.m. The banquet featured talent, good food, unforgettable fellowship and a play depicting the church's history from 1868 to 2025. More than 200 church and community members attended the Facebook Live event.

On Sunday, Feb. 23, St. Paul continued the anniversary celebration during its 10 a.m. worship service. The attendees not only received an inspiring morning message, but they were also creatively reminded of the church's rich history and heritage.

Additionally, seven new honorees (persons who reached the milestone of age 70) were inducted into the St. Paul United Methodist Church Seventy's Society. Everyone was treated to anniversary cupcakes and swag bags immediately after service.

Members give God the glory for blessing St. Paul to have witnessed such a weekend. They remain "the church in the heart of the community, with the community at heart."

From the Archives

by Dr. Phillip Stone

Bishop Warren Candler

Bishop Warren A. Candler has a name that is familiar to many Methodists. His ties to South Carolina in particular aren't especially strong, but his work affected Methodists in the state much more than his limited presence might indicate.

Warren Akin Candler was born in 1857 in Villa Rica, Georgia. He enrolled in Emory College in Oxford, Georgia, as a sophomore in 1873 and graduated in 1875. At the ripe old age of 17 he received his license to preach. He was a supply pastor in the fall of 1875, and at the end of the year, he joined the North Georgia Conference. In early 1881, at the age of 23, he became the presiding elder of the Dahlonega District and ended up making his trips around the district on horseback. The next year he served in Sparta, Georgia, and from 1883-1886 served St. John's Church in Augusta. From that church, he was named assistant editor of the Nashville Christian Advocate, and in 1888, at age 31, he became president of Emory College.

He served as president of Emory College for 10 years, learning more about the field of higher education. His work at the Advocate and at Emory showed his administrative ability, and in 1898 the General Conference elected Candler to the episcopacy.

In those days, bishops weren't assigned to annual conferences for extended periods. He became especially interested in mission work, and in 1906, he was sent to oversee the church's work in East Asia. He was also the fraternal messenger to the British Methodist Conference in 1908. He noted that many times he had traveled to meet conferences in Cuba and Mexico as well. He presided over the South Carolina Conference a few times in the early 1900s and over the Upper South Carolina Conference in 1916 and 1917. From 1930 through 1933 he presided over both the South Carolina and Upper South Carolina conferences. He was known for his wit and for writing extensively.

Bishop Candler is probably best remembered for his work in higher education. He was a Vanderbilt trustee in the 1910s and opposed the direction that Chancellor James Kirkland (a Wofford alumnus) and many Vanderbilt trustees were taking the university. Vanderbilt was founded as the great central Methodist university in the South, but disputes over the election of trustees and church control of the university eventually went to the state courts in Tennessee. At the same time, Andrew Carnegie offered a $1 million gift for a medical school requiring Vanderbilt's church control. Candler distrusted Carnegie's motives, fearing he was trying to secularize higher education. This led to an unhappy separation between Vanderbilt and the Methodists. The church resolved to create two new universities, one in the southeast and another in the southwest.

Southern Methodist University was thus founded in Dallas, and Bishop Candler and his brother Asa worked to build a new university in Atlanta around Emory College and Wesley Memorial Church and hospital. The Candlers won out over Birmingham—not the last time that Atlanta bested Birmingham in a rivalry. Asa Candler, the founder of the Coca-Cola company, pledged $1,000,000 and land for the university. Bishop Candler, in addition to his episcopal duties, became the chancellor of Emory. He moved quickly to establish law and medical schools, but Candler found all the work exhausting and sometimes frustrating.

One task he was unable to accomplish was creating a school of education, which was to be named in memory of Wofford's former president James Carlisle, to rival the great schools of education at Harvard and Columbia. Of course, the school of theology that bears the bishop's name has provided leadership for the church for a century.

Bishop Candler was opposed to reunification of the southern and northern churches and helped to block a reunification plan in the 1920s. Up until 1934, there was no mandatory retirement for bishops, and Candler was well into his 70s. In 1934, retirement at age 72 became mandatory for bishops, and so Candler retired that year. While he did not support reunification in 1939, he did not leave the church over it like one of his episcopal colleagues.

He continued to preach and teach and support Emory until his death in 1941.

Stone is archivist for the South Carolina Conference and Wofford College. Read his blog at blogs.wofford.edu/from_the_archives.

Historical Society

by the Rev. Joseph D. Kovas

We are our ancestors' wildest dreams

"Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?" (Romans 8:24).

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2a).

I recently took a trip to tour Middleton Place Plantation in Charleston. Middleton Place was the home of Arthur Middleton, who was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; it was also the home of enslaved African Americans. During my time at Middleton Place Plantation, I took time to sit in the church on the plantation where priests would come and preach to the enslaved people on Sundays. I took a moment to stand in the pulpit that was in the church and tried to imagine standing in the shoes of the preachers who declared the good news of Jesus Christ to people in bondage. Though there were laws that prevented priests from mentioning anything related to liberty and even Bibles that cut out portions of any mention of liberation, a word of eternal hope was still spoken that reverberated not only in the walls of that hollow church but also in the souls of people who yearned for a better life.

After my visit, I came across the South Carolina United Methodist Conference History published in 1985. In this publication, there is a story of one of Arthur Middleton's children going to England, where he was trained at Oxford University. Middleton took with him his servant Thomas who also received an education.

Thomas was born in Africa and sold into slavery to the Middleton family. Thomas' education included learning Greek and Hebrew. When he returned to Charleston, he passed his education to his two sons—James B. and Abram Middleton. Both brothers would serve after the Civil War as Methodist preachers. Abram was a carpenter and mechanic who belonged to Old Bethel Methodist Church in Charleston. He served as a class leader for his church and went on to receive his license to preach from the conference. Abram was once described as "outgoing, and popular, gentle and humorous." He was instrumental in helping to start several churches in Barnwell, Aiken, Colleton, Hampton, Dorchester and Orangeburg counties.

Abram's brother James was very different. He was a "scholar, stern and formal." He served as the secretary of the Methodist Conference for 33 years and served in the itinerancy as a pastor until 1916.

James and Abram accomplished so much in their lifetimes and more than what their father, Thomas, could have imagined for them. Their stories remind me of the phrase, "We are our ancestors' wildest dreams." Perhaps there was a prophetic word of hope spoken to Thomas in the plantation church building that lifted his spirits and gave him hope that one day his children and their descendants would have a better life where their human dignity would be honored and to be able to live out their vocations as beloved sons and daughters of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because we are our ancestors' wildest dreams and because we have a mighty cloud of witnesses, let us go forth to declare to others a word of eternal hope found in Jesus Christ.

Kovas serves as the pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church in New Ellenton and as the vice president of the South Carolina United Methodist Historical Society.

‘Adrienne’s Angels’ dance group becomes creative new way to get youth involved in Ruffin Parish

By Clara Hodges McFadden

It seems in our society today the church is in dire need of the young children and teenagers who once graced the pews in service on Sunday. Young folks seem to be a dying breed now, and we’re trying hard to get them to attend church, have them participate in services and use their given talents.

In the Ruffin Parish, Pastor Adrienne Stokes pondered over how she could get younger saints to be more involved. She spoke with the young girls in the church, and the idea of a Praise Dance team came about. Soon, the “Adrienne’s Angels Dance Troupe” was born.

Members of the Adrienne’s Angels Dance Troupe practice, look out for each other and make sure everything is done perfectly and in order when they perform. These young ladies are thrilled and excited about their performances each time.

Member Mackenzie Washington is 11 years old and in the fifth grade at Richard Carroll Elementary School in Bamberg. She enjoys playing softball and is a member of the BE Dancers and the Mary Jane Dance team.

Member DeViya Sease is also 11 and in fifth grade at Richard Carroll Elementary. She enjoys playing softball, drawing and painting, and she is currently learning Spanish.

Member Kaidyn Banks, a perky 9-year-old, is in the third grade at Richard Carroll Elementary and participates in 10U Softball, the Mary Jane School of Dance team and the Good News Club, and she enjoys playing the drums.

Member Kyndel Jenkins, age 9, is in the third grade at Forest Hill Elementary School in Walterboro. Kyndel enjoys gardening, taking care of her pets, doing hair and makeup, drawing and painting.

And finally, little Miss Taylor Hagler is an 8-year-old in the third grade at Willie J. Jefferies School of Excellence, Orangeburg. Taylor has a plethora of things that she is interested in, including arts, drawing, painting and crafts, playing outside, going for bike rides and exploring nature. Another hobby she enjoys is collecting rocks and shells. She is also a member of the Fusion Dance Team and loves watching movies and television.

All of these ladies are dedicated to the craft of dance. Instructing the young ladies are Pastor Stokes, Bridgett Brown and Lakeshia Jerideau Jenkins.

All their time and effort put forth in the dance routines have paid off well. We look forward to the young ladies performing for us in the Ruffin Parish and beyond for years to come.

McFadden is a member of the Ruffin Parish.

Obituaries

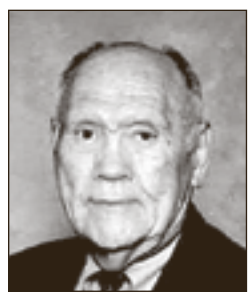
Mary Jewell Bennett

MILLEDGEVILLE, Ga.—Mary Jewell Bennett, widow of the Rev. Marvin E. Bennett, died Feb. 2, 2025.

Funeral services were held Feb. 8 at Griffin Memorial Chapel, Slater’s Funeral Home, with burial in Oak Grove Baptist Church.

Mrs. Bennett is survived by her two sons.

Rev. Thomas Nesmer Brittain



Brittain

MYRTLE BEACH—The Rev. Thomas Nesmer Brittain, a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died March 6, 2025.

Prior to his retirement in 1990, Rev. Brittain served the Swansea, Orangeburg-St. Andrews, Triune, Gaffney-Buford Street, Conway-First, Spartanburg-Trinity, Trinity and Myrtle Beach First charges. He was the Charleston District superintendent from 1985-1989 when he became the vice president of Epworth Children’s Home. As a retired pastor, he served First UMC, Conway.

Funeral services were held March 12 at First Methodist Church.

Memorials may be made to the Camp Endowment Fund, First Methodist Church, 901 N. Kings Hwy., Myrtle Beach, SC 29577; or to the Thomas N. Brittain Scholarship at Wofford College, 429 N. College St., Spartanburg, SC 29301.

Rev. Brittain is survived by his son and daughter.

Jimmy Dale Byrd

FOREST HILL, Md.—Jimmy Dale Byrd, father of the Rev. Michael Byrd, died Feb. 18, 2025. Rev. Byrd is the associate pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church, Conway.

Funeral services were held Feb. 24 at Evans Life Celebration Home with burial in Gardens of Faith Cemetery.

Mr. Byrd is survived by his wife, Mary Byrd, five daughters and three sons.

Ithene Hood Forte

SUMMERVILLE—Itene “Tena” Hood Forte, grandmother of the Rev. Mallory Forte Nickerson, died Feb. 18, 2025. Rev. Nickerson is the pastor of the Circuit of the Rock Hill District United Methodist Church, Rock Hill.

Funeral services were held Feb. 21 at Russell Funeral Chapel with burial in Hood’s Chapel UMC Cemetery, Macedonia.

Memorials may be made to Hood’s Chapel UMC, 2445 Hwy. 17A N., Bonneau, SC 29431.

Mrs. Forte is survived by her daughter and son.

Rev. Jerry Mills Hill

Hill

PONTE VEDRA, Fla.—The Rev. Jerry Mills Hill, a retired local pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Feb. 11, 2025.

Prior to his retirement in 2017, Rev. Hill served St. John-Travelers Rest, Minister of Social Ministries and Mission Outreach-Buncombe Street and Dunean charges.

Funeral services were held March 1 at Avondale UMC, Jacksonville.

Rev. Hill is survived by his wife, Melanie C. Hill, and three children.

Celestia Ann Joyner

COLUMBIA—Celestia Ann Joyner, mother of the Rev. Becky Shirley, died March 1, 2025. Rev. Shirley is the pastor of Washington Street United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held March 8 at Washington Street UMC.

Memorials may be made to Trenholm Road UMC, 3401 Trenholm Road, Columbia, SC 29204; to Washington Street UMC, 1401 Washington St., Columbia, SC 29201; or to The Alzheimer’s Association, https://www.alz.org.

Mrs. Joyner is survived by her two daughters.

James Thomas Lewis Jr.

IRMO—James Thomas Lewis Jr., father of the Rev. Kathy James, died Feb. 22, 2025. Rev. James is the director of Family Ministries, Washington Street United Methodist Church. Her husband, the Rev. Joseph James, is the pastor of Trinity UMC, Sumter.

Funeral services were held Feb. 25 at Union UMC with burial in Bush River Memorial Gardens.

Memorials may be made to Union UMC, 7582 Woodrow St., Irmo, SC 29063.

Mr. Lewis is survived by his wife, Carol Ann Pyles Lewis, son and two daughters.

Mary Katherine Millwood

FORT PAYNE, Ala.—Mary Katherine Millwood, widow of the Rev. Pete Julian Millwood, died Feb. 23, 2025.

Graveside services were held Feb. 27 at Hillcrest Memorial Park, Pickens.

Memorials may be made to Grace United Methodist Church, 309 E. Cedar Rock St., Pickens, SC 29671.

Mrs. Millwood is survived by her two sons and daughter.

Thelma Selma Prescott

HARTSVILLE—Thelma Selma Prescott, sister of the Rev. Blondell Miller, died Feb. 19, 2025. Rev. Miller is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Feb. 25 at the Harold L. & Dorothy J. Yong Memorial Chapel with burial in New Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery, Bishopville.

Mrs. Prescott is survived by her two daughter, three sons and stepdaughter.

Nancy B. Snowden

KINGSTREE—Nancy B. Snowden, sister of the Rev. Rufus Snowden, died Jan. 31, 2025. Rev. Snowden and his wife, Rev. Mary Snowden, are retired members of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Feb. 15 at Dimery and Rogers Chapel.

Miss Snowden is survived by her two brothers.

Rev. Thomas Byars Wilkes Jr.

Wilkes Jr.

GREENVILLE—The Rev. Thomas Byars Wilkes Jr., a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Feb. 26, 2025.

Prior to his retirement in 1999, Rev. Wilkes served the Fort Lawn, Cherokee Place Associate, Isle of Palms, Cowpens, Aldersgate-India Hook, Highland Park, Leesville, Liberty, Landrum, Zion and Wesley Chapel-Lydia charges.

Funeral services were held March 3 at Central UMC, Spartanburg, with burial in Greenlawn Memorial Gardens, Spartanburg.

Memorials may be made to Central UMC, 233 N. Church St., Spartanburg, SC 29306.

Rev. Wilkes is survived by his wife, the Rev. Molly Wilkes, two daughters and son.

Global Briefs

Men's organization launches new website

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—United Methodist Men has transitioned to a new and refreshed website following its rebrand in late 2023. The website hosts information and resources for United Methodist Men and Scouting Ministries. It also offers information on the group's new United Men's Ministry app.

Africa Central Conference elects four bishops

JOHANNESBURG—The Africa Central Conference has elected four new bishops to lead the Burundi-Rwanda, East Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique episcopal areas. The Rev. Emmanuel Sinzohagera, dean of superintendents and speaker of the Senate in Burundi, was the first elected on March 15, followed by the Rev. Moisés Bernardo Jungo, a pastor in Angola; the Rev. Gift Kudakwashe Machinga, a pastor in Zimbabwe; and the Rev. João Filimone Sambo, administrative assistant and episcopal secretary to Mozambique Bishop Joaquina F. Nhanala.

Lake Junaluska hosts Peace Conference

LAKE JUNALUSKA, N.C.—Lake Junaluska, the United Methodist retreat center, plans to host the Southeastern Jurisdiction Peace Conference on April 4-6. Through three days of worship, interactive plenaries, workshops, film screenings and informal conversation, the event aims to share strategies for people of faith to build bridges of peace.

Women's group plans assembly, calls for justice

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—United Women in Faith kicked off plans for Assembly 2026 in Indianapolis and heard a rousing call to act now for racial justice. "I believe that United Women in Faith can make a difference because we've been making a difference for 241 years," said deaconess and activist Garlinda Burton.

Bishop begins new model for superintendents

DES MOINES, Wash.—This time of year sees U.S. bishops making multiple announcements of new superintendents who will lead individual districts and help the bishop in appointment making. Greater Northwest Area Bishop Cedrick Bridgeforth announced that instead of a full-time superintendent, he is appointing a three-person team to the SeaTac District. Two of the new superintendents will continue to also serve their church appointments. Bridgeforth hopes the change will help meet the need for leadership "closer to the ground."

Ukraine church still needs support

LAKELAND, Fla.—Regardless of the political situation in the U.S., Florida Conference United Methodists should continue to support the Ukraine people in their war against Russia, said the Rev. Mike Zdorow, senior pastor of The Gathering Place in Palm Beach Gardens. "I'm trying to get the churches, clergy and laity of the Florida Conference to engage in meaningful ways and be in ministry with the people in Ukraine, particularly The United Methodist Church in Ukraine," he said. Florida Conference leadership has formed a team to study ways to help.

Youth convocation set for Ireland

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—A once-a-quadrennium event for young United Methodists is set for July 7-11 of next year in Dublin. The 2026 Global Young People's Convocation is designed for members of The United Methodist Church ages 12 to 35 who are interested in learning more about the United Methodist connection and how to advocate and lead in decision-making.

Violence, vandalism strike church in Congo

BUKAVU, Congo—Fighting in eastern Congo has affected United Methodist families and ministries, including an attack at United Methodist Irambo Health Center. The church hospital was ransacked by armed men. Religious leaders, including United Methodist Bishop Gabriel Yemba Unda, are calling for peace and reconciliation and strongly condemning the violence.

Defending immigration justice on the front lines

WASHINGTON—United Methodists across the United States are actively engaged in efforts to protect and care for immigrants in the face of harsher U.S. immigration policies enacted by President Donald Trump and his new administration. The denomination's Council of Bishops and agencies including the United Methodist Board of Church and Society and Commission on Religion and Race are speaking out and providing education, while annual conferences and local churches are offering support from the front lines.

Bishop decries anti-trans law

DES MOINES, Iowa—Legislation passed by Iowa lawmakers removing civil rights protections from transgender people in the state opens the door to discrimination and harm, writes Bishop Kennetha J. Bigham-Tsai in a pastoral letter. "A tiny minority that is already disproportionately bullied has been made even more vulnerable. This is not the way of Christ," she said.

How a Georgia church redefines community

THOMASVILLE, Ga.—Grace United Methodist Church wasn't supposed to exist. The congregation was born from the painful process of disaffiliation, a moment that could have ended in heartbreak but instead became a chance for rebirth. The church has seen its focus shift from preserving structures to strengthening communities.

Church gears up for new bishops and new map

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Four United Methodist central conferences are scheduled in the coming months. By the time they conclude, United Methodists expect to have eight additional new bishops and one more central conference.

Board meeting centers on justice, equity

BALTIMORE—Issues including diversity, equity and inclusion; tribalism and ethnic conflict; immigration and migration; white Christian nationalism and disability justice were discussed Feb. 28 to March 2 during the board meeting of the United Methodist Commission on Religion and Race. The board also explored ways to engage and empower younger generations in the church's racial justice and equity efforts.

—Courtesy of United Methodist News Service

GCORR to offer grant funds promoting equity, intercultural competency, justice

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The General Commission on Religion and Race is offering grant funds through the 2025-2026 CORR Action Fund.

The funding opportunity supports initiatives that promote equity, intercultural competency and justice within the church and broader communities.

For United Methodist Church and Methodist Church of Puerto Rico entities within the United States, GCORR seeks proposals that address the realities of immigration. Eligible projects should directly impact immigrant communities; build alliances with organizations serving immigrants; and engage congregational or organizational leadership in GCORR's Immigration Vital Conversations curriculum.

Eligible applicants include local congregations, church clusters, districts, campus ministries (e.g., Wesley Foundations) and UMC-affiliated colleges and universities. Grants of up to $10,000 are available for projects lasting up to 12 months, beginning Aug. 1, 2025, and concluding by July 31, 2026. The application deadline is May 15.

Interested applicants are encouraged to review the detailed guidelines and application requirements at https://www.gcorr.org/caf. Completed applications, along with all required documents, should be submitted via email to grants@gcorr.org.

Resource Center

by Betty Stalnaker

Bible study resources

New Bible study resources are available from the Resource Center.

Guidelines for Leading your Congregation 2025-2028

(B1313CH=) Author: Cokesbury.

The essential resource for United Methodist church leaders. Discover the comprehensive set of 26 booklets covering every aspect of ministry, from leadership and nurturing to outreach and witness. These booklets are based on decisions made during the 2024 General Conference of the United Methodist Church and are designed to support both new and experienced lay leaders, providing essential information and practical tips to effectively implement ministry. Each booklet features a clear job description for leaders, ensuring everyone is on the same page. Plus, they are packed with straightforward "how-to" details that are vital for success. Age: YAS.

Hidden: Finding Delight in your Life with Christ

(DVD2982CL=) Author: Allen, Allison. 6 sessions, 19-22 min/study guide/2023.

What would your life feel like if the pressure valve to be known and seen was finally released? What if there's a different way of living altogether—one that leads to a unique beauty and bounty, one where we're firmly planted in kingdom values? Unveiling seven hidden characters in Scripture, Hidden Bible study mines their lives for the unique lessons of the concealed life, understanding that we are often concealed so that his glory might be revealed. This study excavates multiple concealed characters in God's grand narrative, including the Sons of Korah, Baruch, Ichabod, Huldah, the Daughters of Shallum, Jerushua and Jael. CC. Age: YAS.

Parables: Putting Jesus' Stories in their Place

(DVD2984B=) Author: Scott, Josh. 6 sessions, 8-11 min/leader's guide/bk/2025.

When Jesus taught in parables, he was doing more than telling simple morality tales. His stories were grounded in the world in which he lived and his vision of the Kingdom of God. This book explores six parables that give us a window into Jesus's message and movement, and, once they are heard in their own context, ask what they might mean for us today. CC. Age: YAS.

Perfectly Flawed: God Transforms our Weaknesses into Strengths

(DVD2983WM=) Author: Toney, Lisa. 6 sessions, 19-22 min/leader's guide/bk/2025.

We are all flawed, but God can turn those weaknesses into strengths. Join Lisa Toney and dive into the transformative journey of Peter, the apostle whose fiery passion and undeniable imperfections make him one of the Bible's most loved and relatable people. This study follows Peter through his time with Jesus, from the beginning of Jesus' ministry to the Resurrection, and through Pentecost, when Peter begins to live into his call. Along the way, discover the raw honesty of a man who veered from staunch devotion to moments of doubt, mirroring our own human struggles. In this study, we see that there is an unparalleled power Jesus gives that can only be found in our weakness. We discover the strength of Jesus that is available to each of us. Learn to persevere in your faith, live confidently, and boldly step into God's purpose for you. See how Peter's story is an invitation to embrace imperfection, find strength in the relentless grace of God and discover how each one of us is perfectly flawed but still deeply loved by God. CC. Age: YAS

The South Carolina Conference Resource Center is your connection to DVDs and seasonal musicals. We are here to serve your church family. To reserve resources, call 888-678-6272 or 803-735-8798 or visit https://www.umcsc.org/resourcecenter.

March 2025
Women's History Month

March 25—Advocate Community Listening Session (Greenwood), St. Mark UMC River Street Campus, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

March 27—"Lift Every Voice" Columbia District Revival, Francis Burns UMC, Columbia, 6 p.m.

March 29—LSM School (Greenville District), Aldersgate UMC, Greenville, 9 a.m.-1:45 p.m. Register: https://www.umcsc.org/gvdistlsmregistration/

March 30—LSM School (Spartanburg District), Beaumont UMC, Spartanburg, 2-5:30 p.m., $40. Register: https://tinyurl.com/4bs2cf7j

March 30—LSM School (Marion District), Socastee UMC, Myrtle Beach, 2:30-8 p.m. Register: bit.ly/MarionDistLSM

March 30-April 5—Spring Salkehatchie, Simpsonville, $200/person. Register: https://www.salkehatchie.org.

March 31—Lenten community worship service with the Rev. Anne Bridgers, Carteret Street UMC, Beaufort, Noon.

April 2025
UWF Columbia Bethlehem Community Center Special Emphasis Month

April 2—"The End of an Age" Lenten study series, Joseph B. Bethea UMC, Myrtle Beach, 7 p.m.

April 3—Gathering of Clergy Orders, Journey UMC, Columbia, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

April 4-5—Wellness in Action Festival, Columbia College, Columbia.

April 4-6—"Journey to Joy: Women of the Cross" Women's Weekend, Lake Junaluska, N.C. More information: lakejunaluska.com/joy or call 800-222-4930.

April 5—Wellness in Action 5K, Columbia College, 8:30-10 a.m.

Photo by Kelly Gottheiner

Getting ready

Members at Manning United Methodist Church, Manning, held an Operation Christmas Child activity day where they counted marbles, made bead kits and did other projects in preparation for Operation Christmas Child.

April 5—Online Team Leader "Refresher" Training, UMVIM, 11 a.m. Register: https://tinyurl.com/umvim-refresher

April 5—"Discover Your Resources," Cornerstone UMC, Rock Hill, 9-11:30 a.m.

April 6—LSM School (Greenwood District), St. Paul UMC, Saluda, 2-7 p.m., $35. Register: https://www.umcsc.org/greenwood/greenwood-district-lay-servant-ministries/

April 6—"Getting Healthy, Strong and Vital Again" MenNMinistry SC Bishop's Leadership Event, Ashland UMC, Columbia, 4 p.m. Register: https://www.umcsc.org/mennministryreg.

April 6—Open House, Asbury Hills, Cleveland, 1-5 p.m.

April 7—Lenten community worship service with the Rev. Terry Pfeiffer, Carteret Street UMC, Beaufort, Noon.

April 9—"The End of an Age" Lenten study series, Joseph B. Bethea UMC, Myrtle Beach, 7 p.m.

April 11—SMC Enrollment Day for prospective students, https://smcsc.edu/enrollmentdays

April 12—Passover

April 12—UWF Spiritual Growth Event, Zoom, 10 a.m.

April 12—SMC Enrollment Day for prospective students, https://smcsc.edu/enrollmentdays

April 13—Passion/Palm Sunday

April 13—Native American Awareness Sunday

April 13—LSM School (Greenwood District), St. Paul UMC, Saluda, 2-7 p.m., $35. Register: https://www.umcsc.org/greenwood/greenwood-district-lay-servant-ministries/

April 13-18—Spring Salkehatchie, Iva, $200/person. Register: https://www.salkehatchie.org

April 16—"The End of an Age" Lenten study series, Joseph B. Bethea UMC, Myrtle Beach, 7 p.m.

April 17—Maundy Thursday

April 18—Good Friday (United Methodist Conference Center closed)

April 20—Easter Sunday

April 21-25—Spring Salkehatchie, Bennettsville, $200/person. Register: https://www.salkehatchie.org

April 22—Earth Day

April 25—World Malaria Day

April 25-27—LSM School (Anderson District), First UMC, Easley, 6-9 p.m. (Fri.), 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. (Sat.), 3-7 p.m. (Sun.), $45. Register: https://tinyurl.com/anderson-lsm2025

April 26—UWF Book Study, Noon

April 26—Carteret Street UMC Great Day of Service, Beaufort.

April 29—Dementia Care Workshop, Trinity UMC, Aiken, 9:30 a.m.-Noon. Register: https://tinyurl.com/dementiacare042925

April 29—Advocate Community Listening Session (Anderson), St. John's UMC, Anderson, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

May 2025
Asian Pacific Heritage Month
Christian Home Month

May 1—National Day of Prayer

May 3—"Building Bridges in Ministry" district ministry fair and workshop, Woodland UMC, Rock Hill.

Lent in the Lowcountry at Carteret Street: 'Can you spare just one hour?'

BEAUFORT— During Lent, Carteret Street United Methodist Church is hosting a community worship service every Monday at noon. The 30-minute services include a message from speakers.

Dick Clarke, Lay Speaker of Carteret Street, spoke March 10. Dr. Rebecca Bruff, retired pastor, spoke March 17. Brad Smith, Lay Speaker of Carteret Street, spoke March 24. The Rev. Anne Bridgers, pastor of Port Royal UMC, will speak March 31, and the Rev. Terry Pfeiffer, associate pastor of Carteret Street, will speak April 7. Following each worship service, lunch is served, featuring homemade soups.

To publicize the services, the congregation's Evangelism Committee designed and published a colorful bookmark with information about service times, speakers and Lent. Bookmarks were provided to the congregation and committee members distributed 500 bookmarks to local businesses in Beaufort's historic downtown.

Lent is a 40-day journey of repentance, fasting and self-reflection to prepare for Holy Week and Easter.

Repentance and fasting are not meant to be a "token actions," rather, we repent to create a change within ourselves, said the Rev. Bryson Williams, senior pastor of Carteret Street. This "inner change," spoken of in Galatians 2:20, leads us to a change within for "Christ to live within us," he said.

"Lent is often referred to as a time for giving something up as a means of fasting. Additionally, Lent is also an opportunity to be challenged, mindful and open to "taking something up and fulfilling important commitments for the common good of our community," Williams said.

He added, "God's grace speaks through furthering social justice, extinguishing racism, feeding the hungry and sharing God's love, compassion and grace to those who spiritually hunger."

Classified Advertisements

Church Furnishings

Open Jobs

Lyttleton Street UMC (LSUMC) in Camden, SC, is searching for passionate and faithful leaders to join our team. We are currently hiring for the following positions:

- **Children's Director** – A creative and energetic leader to disciple the next generation.
- **Youth Director** – Someone with a heart for walking alongside students in faith and life.
- **Organist/Accompanist** – A gifted musician to help lead our congregation in worship.

If you or someone you know is interested, please visit https://lsumc.net/about-us/employment

From Lent to Easter

by the Rev. Michael Henderson

April 6
Making Peace
Lesson Scripture: Matthew 5:9; John 18:1-11
Background Scripture: Same
Key Verse: "Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God's children" (Matthew 5:9).

It's odd how many of the words in the English language can mean different things. Comedians have made entire routines based on them. Amelia Bedelia books, by Manning author Peggy Parish, have delighted children around the world with the stories of the "world's worst housekeeper." She heard the words differently from what they were meant to be. When she was asked to "dust the house," she would sprinkle dust around the house, much like a cook would dust a cake with powdered sugar.

Today's key verse has two words that are often mixed up. They are "happy" (or blessed) and "make peace" (or peacemaker). Let's look at each one for a moment.

When you think of happy, what comes to mind? For most of us, it's smiles, laughter, ease. Maybe parties, celebrations, fancy meals. The word in the Sermon on the Mount that is translated "happy," though, has little to do with that. Even the word most often remembered, blessed ("Blessed are the peacemakers ....") does not mean what we usually think. It indicates an interior attitude, that of knowing you are in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing.

The second, peacemaker, is often confused. The Greco-Roman world of the first century described peace as the absence of war or conflict. Peace could be forced upon people by taking away their power, their weapons, their will and their freedom. But peace for the Jewish culture of Jesus and his first followers was not the absence of conflict but the presence of wholeness. A hungry person may not be fighting, but they were not at peace. Peacemaker is an active word—doing something to promote wholeness for yourself and others.

Peacemaking brings about blessedness, that internal knowledge that you are in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. What would that look like for you?

April 13 (Palm/Passion Sunday)
From Majesty to Mocking
Lesson Scripture: Matthew 5:10; 27:27-31
Background: Matthew 5:10; 21:1-11; 26–27
Key Verse: "Happy are people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs" (Matthew 5:10).

Today is Palm/Passion Sunday. In former times, Palm Sunday was the day we remembered and celebrated Jesus' triumphal entry in Jerusalem, waving palm branches, singing songs of praise and shouting hallelujah.

Then we would gather each evening to hear the story of how that week really went.

We would see Jesus upsetting the religious authorities at the temple, turning over the money tables and chasing out the sacrificial animals. We would see him desperately trying to teach his followers what he knew they needed to know most before he was taken away. We would experience his last supper with them and have it in our own special way at our churches. We would hear of his mock trial before the Roman government, his beatings from the soldiers, his humiliation in front of the crowds, his painful crucifixion and his tearful death. We would move over the days of Holy Week from the joy of Palm Sunday to the pain of his death, before returning to the joy of Easter resurrection.

But we are too busy with other things now to take four evenings and one day to remember that week. We attempt to put it all in one service. Let's remember one thing from all of this. Jesus is living out this week what he taught in his Sermon on the Mount. Remember from last week that "blessed" means knowing that you are at the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing. Jesus was living out the painful truth that the way of life he was demonstrating reflected back to that sermon. That followers of the way of God would find themselves misunderstood, rejected, persecuted and maybe even tortured and killed. But they would know they were exactly where they were supposed to be.

And they would know that this was not the end of the story.

April 20 (Easter/Resurrection Sunday)
From Sorrow to Surprise
Lesson Scripture: Matthew 5:11-12; John 20:1-18
Background: Matthew 5:11-12; John 20
Key Verse: "Mary Magdalene left and announced to the disciples, 'I've seen the Lord.' Then she told them what he said to her" (John 20:18).

Today is a day filled with joy and celebrations! You may have woken up to young children squealing with joy over the Easter baskets left for them, and you may be trying not to eat too much candy after 40 days of giving up something for Lent. There may be new clothes for today, a large meal with family and friends prepared and seeing people at worship you may not have seen because some of you worship at different times. But all in all, it's a celebration.

Years ago, after a particularly joyful Easter service, I heard some folks after church talking. One said, "This was the best Easter ever!" The other, a quick-witted person known for their comebacks, said, "Oh, I don't know. I bet that first one was pretty good, too."

Because most of us have heard the story all our lives and have celebrated it for years and decades, it can be hard to remember that the first one was more surprising than expected. Mary expected the tomb to be closed. Mary expected the place to be sorrowful. Mary expected to find her hopes, her dreams, her love wrapped up in funeral shrouds in the damp cave. But what she found was surprise. She found the Lord in the garden, looking pretty much like the gardener.

In describing this, Evelyn Underhill wrote, "She thought he was the gardener. Just so, we often supposing to find him in the 'religious,' seem to find only emptiness; yet he meets us in the paths of common life. But if Mary hadn't gone to the tomb, she would have missed the meeting entirely" ("The Ways of the Spirit," p. 183).

Ask God to open your eyes today. You may be surprised where you meet Jesus.

April 27
Share Watering
Lesson Scripture: John 4:4-14
Background: John 4
Key Verse: "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks from the water that I will give will never be thirsty again. The water that I give will become in those who drink it a spring of water that bubbles up into eternal life" (John 4:13-14).

After the joy of last Sunday, we are quickly move into how we can share the good news with those who may not have heard. Several quick lessons here.

First, Jesus went to the place where the people would be. He did not wait for them to come to him. Over the past few years I have heard many church members tell me, "Pastor, why don't people come to church anymore? We've got great news to tell them!"

Maybe the point is that we should go to them. Where's the local watering hole? The gym? The pub? The pickleball court? It's time to go to where the people are, not to wait for them to come to us.

Second, Jesus asked the woman for some help. He did not start out telling her what he needed. He asked her for water. In doing so, he broke many social barriers. And he was not put off by her somewhat hostile response, nor did he strike back. He stayed in communication with her. He stayed in relationship.

A friend of mine is a very talented musician. He can play piano, organ, keyboard and guitar with the best of them. He plays for many church and community activities. He was playing with a gospel group, but when they found that he also played with a country-rock band, they told him he could not be a part of their group. He hung around with the "wrong" kind of people. He sounded sort of like Jesus to me.

And third, Jesus shared what he had to offer—true life. Water from the Spirit. We are not asked to share what we do not have, but what we do: our life in Christ and our life with each other.

Hope to see you on trivia night at the local pub. We've got some things to share.

Henderson pastors Browns Chapel United Methodist Church and Vox Memorial UMC, both in Johnsonville. He is also vice chair of the Advocate *Board of Trustees.*

Children's Sermon

by the Rev. Meghan Lindsey Sweeney Cook

Palm Sunday

Author's note: The following are sermon ideas developed as a resource to help churches reach young ones in their congregations. Everyone is free to use these and to modify as needed.

Date: Palm Sunday, April 13
Scripture: Mark 1:1-11 or Luke 19:29-44

Time Frame: Three minutes (The average attention span of a child is about one year per minute 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: Palm branches for the children and one for yourself. Note that strips of green construction paper are a great substitute for palms if you cannot find any. Know your context; today's children's sermon is interactive and could be loud, in an exuberant way. If you are worried, invite a few adults ahead of time to join you to corral the chaos, so to speak.

Children's Sermon:

Say: Today is Palm Sunday, a fun day in our church because we get to wave palms! We also are allowed to shout … (gleeful smile, like you're inviting the kids to some good trouble)

Say: Do you know what word we get to shout? (Pause.) Hosanna! That's right. Hosanna is an exciting word, and it's fun to say. Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna! See, it's fun. You try!

(Let them shout a few times.)

Ask: Do you know what it means? Hosanna comes from the Greek word hosanna, which serves as a translation for the Hebrew phrase meaning "save now, we pray." We say it in church as enthusiastic praise, especially today on Palm Sunday. It is "save us" and a celebration that Jesus does save us—hosanna! Hosanna is what the people cried out as Jesus came into Jerusalem. They waved their palm branches and shouted "Hosanna!" They were welcoming the Messiah, our savior!

Now that we know what to do, and we know what we are saying, and we know what Hosanna means, I think we need a little Hosanna parade.

Let's pretend to be in Jerusalem all those years ago. Come! Follow me! Let's shout Hosanna and wave our palms up and down the aisle.

(Take the kids down and back, maybe again, depending on the kids. After the parade, ask the kids to gather up. You may want to have them make a huddle and put their palms in or hold their palms up way high as their prayer poses. Then lead them in the prayer.)

Prayer: Dear God (pause for echo), we love you (echo). Hosanna! You came to save! (Echo.)

Thank you, God! (Echo.) Amen (echo).

Cook, the pastor of Grace United Methodist Church on Harbison in Columbia, is also the author of two children's books from the Advocate Press: "Herbert the Hippo" and "Herbert the Hippo In the Moment." Find them on Amazon or at https://advocatesc.org/books.

RISE UP!: Golf, cigars and wisdom from three bishops

From Page 1

conferences; James Swanson, General Commission on United Methodist Men general secretary; Steven Scheid, GCUMMen scouting coordinator; and the Rev. Sterling Eaton, GCUMMen director of men's ministry.

The day prior, men also had the opportunity to participate in a golf tournament at The Spur at Northwoods Golf Course and a "Cigars and Scriptures" fellowship event Friday evening at the church. A weekend Scout Jamboree ran concurrently with the men's retreat as a way to involve youth and younger men, with many of the sessions overlapping.

Kenny Bingham, South Carolina UMMen president, said the event was "a great success," especially with three bishops on the lineup.

"It was a God-centered and Spirit-filled day," Bingham said.

Herman Lightsey, president of National Association of Conference Presidents for UMMen and a member of Ashland UMC, Columbia, agreed. He noted South Carolina men seem ready to embrace new ways they can be the church God needs.

"I think men are ready to put the past behind us and march forward," Lightsey said.

Photos by Jessica Brodie

Men of all ages attended the retreat and learned from each other.

Bingham

Holston

Ashford

Swanson

'An opportunity to be godly men'

The "Rise Up!" theme was taken from Psalm 37:23-25, which shares how the Lord strengthens the steps of those who walk with him, encouraging men to keep on pushing even when they stumble.

The morning started with songs from the men of St Mark UMC, North, then greetings from Dr. George Ashford, Journey's senior pastor. Ashford lifted up the successful Cigars and Scriptures event held the evening before, which drew more than 60 men to the gathering and saw two men recommit their lives to Christ.

"We are responsible for each other; we are more together. And when we come together with all our gifts and graces, God blesses that body," Ashford said to applause.

Fairley also issued a welcome to the men, stating that what he saw at Cigars and Scriptures "is what heaven is going to look like."

Holston preached the opening session, urging men to do all they can to be all-in when it comes to church leadership and participation. After all, he said, the next generation is watching.

Photo by Jerry Newlon Jr.

Cigars and Scriptures was well attended.

"The church is stronger when its men are active and present because our young men and boys follow what they see," Holston said to a chorus of amens. "If they can't see us, they can't know us to follow us."

Scheid and Eaton lead a game.

"We have an opportunity to be godly men in a place where godly men are needed," Holston said. "Our young men are suffering, and we're sitting behind closed doors. If we're going to rise up, we can't rise up thinking we're the only people on the block."

Holston closed by calling the men to embrace three values: courage, commitment and compassion.

Listening and leadership

Next, the scouts headed to a session with Scheid and Eaton while Swanson shared a word with the men what it means to listen to what God has to say. Swanson shared how there is a big difference between hearing someone and genuinely listening to them.

"Listening costs you nothing but time, and it's part of what we're called to do," he said, noting that Satan tries to keep us from hearing what God wants us to hear.

Prayer can help increase our ability to listen and hear in a godly manner.

Then Fairley taught about building teams that can inspire change. He shared how our best example of what it means to model true transformational leadership is in Jesus Christ himself. After all, Jesus took 12 flawed men and created a team that changed the world.

"How did he call his team together? He walked and said 'Follow me,' and grown men dropped everything followed him," he said.

Jesus led by example, and that's what we must do, too. Jesus also began on the margins, which is also where we must begin.

He urged the men to let the evidence of Jesus in their lives—the passion and fire that Jesus ignites—shine so brightly people can't help but notice.

Winning souls to Jesus

After lunch, men and scouts gathered for an intergenerational game led by Scheid and Eaton. Young men sat at tables with older men, and together each table tried to define the meaning behind popular generational slang: "Far out," "groovy" and "bees knees," for the older generations, stacked up against younger slang such as "no cap," "glow up," "sus" and "vibe check." After, Scheid explained the deeper point of the game, which was that only in the blending of relationships, older men and younger men, can we truly understand what the whole body needs.

"We can't win without each other," Scheid said. "We're incomplete when we're all gray or all young."

The day wrapped with communion.

Fairley closed by reminding the men that the point of the day was all for Jesus.

"It's about winning souls to Jesus, not about saving an institution," Fairley said.