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Safe Space connects people in Hartsville Cooperative Parish. Page 2.

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Possibilities and promises

Full overview of what happened at Annual Conference 2026



Clockwise from top left, Mickaela Sanford speaks on a resolution; people of all ages pack meals for Rise Against Hunger; Bishop Leonard Fairley leads business; Jim Salley lifts an amen during opening worship; a girl from the Silver Hill Memorial UMC Liturgical Dancers performs during the conference's first-ever intergenerational service.

By Jessica Brodie

Annual Conference 2026 kicked off Sunday, June 7, at the Greenville Convention Center. And by the time the event ended June 10, the body had passed a \$9.8 million budget for 2027, ordained or commissioned 16 clergy, approved a resolution protecting and supporting voting rights, honored 26 retirees, remembered 60 clergy and spouses who died over the past year, licensed 12 new local pastors, held the conference's first-ever intergenerational worship service and packed 125,000 meals together for the relief organization Rise Against Hunger.

Sunday kickoff

Annual Conference kicked off Sunday afternoon as registered lay and clergy members picked up packets and mingled with friends new and old. Laity headed to orientation sessions in the late afternoon, while clergy gathered for a closed session at 4:30.

At 7 p.m., the body came together in a service celebrating both new and retiring clergy. South Carolina Resident Bishop Leonard Fairley presided and Bishop Paul L. Leeland preached a service honoring 26 retirees as well as 16 people ordained, commissioned or otherwise had their clergy orders

Bulletin insert helps churches share AC2026 news

The *Advocate* has developed a doubled-sided bulletin insert for churches to share with their congregations to report on what happened at Annual Conference 2026. Just go to <https://go.advocatesc.org/ac2026-bulletininsert>.

It is part of the many ways the *Advocate* is helping to equip and resource local churches for better understanding about the denomination and its happenings.

Simply download the pdf, make double-sided copies, then insert into your Sunday bulletins.

recognized or transferred—four elders, five provisional elders, three provisional deacons, three recognitions and one transfer. (See story Page x.)

The service also included the symbolic Passing of the Mantle, signifying the transfer of responsibilities and dedication of the older generation to the younger.

Fairley preaches opening worship

Bishop Fairley brought a powerful opening sermon during morning worship that called South Carolina United Methodists to move beyond natural and mental sight toward “holy sight,” a heart-centered vision given by the Holy Spirit that sees God’s possibilities, hope and promised future rather than dwelling on past limitations or fear of change.

In a sermon titled “Seeing the Possibilities,” Fairley drew from the story of Jesus’s healing of the blind man from Mark 8:22-25. He said Jesus has the ability to open our eyes so we can experience spiritual sight.

“How we see things can make all the difference in the world, because perception yields behavior yields destiny,” Fairley said.

He shared that there are three ways of seeing—sight of the natural eye, such as what we can see all around us; mental sight, when we understand complex concepts in our mind’s eye; and holy sight, the kind of sight that comes when truth enters our heart.

“Through the eyes of the heart, the Holy Spirit gives us power to see different ... to see possibilities where

See “AC2026 Overview,” Page 11



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We welcome letters to the editor and commentary from guest writers who are members of or connected to United Methodist churches in South Carolina. Letters should not exceed 450 words, and commentary should not exceed 800 words. All submissions are subject to editing as needed to meet standards of grammar and style. We will not publish anonymous letters, letters praising or criticizing businesses by name, endorsements of or letters from political candidates, fundraising language or personal attacks. All submissions will be verified; include your name, phone number and church name with city and hometown. Email oped@advocatesc.org.

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The *Advocate* prints death notices of clergy and their immediate families and laypersons who have served on conference boards and agencies or who work for the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

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Photographs can be submitted to the newspaper for publication. High-resolution digital color images are preferred. Photographs should be in focus and should have proper exposure. People in photographs should be identified with names and ages, and a contact person with a phone number should be included. Email news@advocatesc.org.

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The *Advocate* encourages readers to submit items of interest to South Carolina United Methodists. There is no charge for running items involving activities or announcements. Items should be submitted as far as possible in advance of the event’s date or the date of requested publication. They appear in the newspaper on a space-available basis. Email news@advocatesc.org.

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Advocate launches app on App Store, Google Play

Now, South Carolina United Methodists can get news, events, fun stories, updates and—if you have a subscription—even read the entire latest edition on your phone or tablet.

Days before Annual Conference, the *Advocate* launched a new app. Just go to the App Store or Google Play, download the app, and login. (Search “SC United Methodist Advocate.”)

App users can use their login from the website, or if they don’t have one, create a free account.

“It’s our way of making connecting South Carolina United Methodists that much easier,” said *Advocate* Editor Jessica Brodie. “I’ve already been hearing comments about how much people are loving the app.”



The app launched June 5.

Advocate again awards three college scholarships to United Methodist students

The *South Carolina United Methodist Advocate* has once more awarded three \$1,000 college scholarships to United Methodist students for the coming academic year.

Normally, the *Advocate* awards one college scholarship every year to a South Carolina United Methodist student who is planning to enroll or is already enrolled at one of the four United Methodist colleges in South Carolina: Claflin University, Columbia College, Spartanburg Methodist College or Wofford College.

However, this year a donor stepped up to award two additional scholarships so all three of this year’s applicants got a scholarship.

- The recipients are as follows:
- Logan Miller, an elementary education major at Claflin University, whose home church is Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, Lake City.
 - Zoey Miller, a biology/human performance major at Claflin University, whose home church is Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, Lake City.
 - Joanna Wylie, a psychology major at Spartanburg Methodist College, whose home church is Travelers Rest UMC, Travelers Rest.

The application process for the Advocate 2027 scholarship has begun, with a deadline of March 1, 2027.

To apply or for more information, visit https://www.advocatesc.org/about/scholarship_program.



Above, sisters Zoey (left) and Logan Miller stand with their pastor, the Rev. Louis Ashley (far right), and *Advocate* Board Chair Mike Henderson (second from left). They were also awarded scholarships given by Wayne Jones, a graduate of Claflin, in memory of his grandfather, Harris Jones, who attended Claflin in the 1920s. At right, *Advocate* board member Diane Wilson shares a smile with Joanna Wylie after presenting her scholarship.



Safe space: A Wesleyan tradition reimagined for today

By Lyndon B. Alexander II

In a time when many individuals feel disconnected from traditional expressions of church, new opportunities for authentic community are emerging across the connection. One such initiative is Safe Space, a contemporary evening gathering at the Hartsville Cooperative Parish designed to create room for honest conversation, spiritual reflection and meaningful connection—particularly for those who may feel “unchurched” or uncertain about where they belong.

At its core, Safe Space is not a departure from Methodist tradition but rather a return to one of its most formative practices: the Wesleyan class meeting.

In early Methodism, class meetings were small gatherings where people came together weekly to answer a simple yet profound question: “How is it with your soul?” These meetings were marked by accountability, vulnerability and a shared commitment to spiritual growth. They were not primarily lecture-based or performance-driven, but relational—spaces where individuals could speak honestly about their lives, struggles and faith journeys.

Safe Space carries this same spirit into the present day.

Meeting in a relaxed, conversational setting, Safe Space invites participants to engage Scripture alongside real-life expe-



Safe Space is more than a service. It is a community.

riences. Rather than emphasizing formality or structure, the gathering prioritizes authenticity. Participants are encouraged to come as they are, to share openly if they feel comfortable and to listen deeply to others. Grounded in biblical reflection—such as the story of Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4:1–26)—these conversations explore themes of identity, grace, truth and belonging.

What distinguishes Safe Space is its intentional focus on creating an environment of trust. In a culture where many have experienced judgment, exclusion or silence within faith communities, Safe Space seeks to embody a different witness—one rooted in the radical hospitality

of Christ. It is a place where truth is spoken with compassion, where questions are welcomed and where individuals can encounter God without pretense.

This reimagining of the class meeting is particularly significant for reaching those beyond the walls of the church. By removing barriers and emphasizing relationship over ritual, Safe Space offers an accessible entry point into Christian community. It recognizes that for many, faith begins not with certainty, but with conversation.

In many ways, Safe Space reflects John Wesley’s own vision for the Methodist movement: a people gathered in small groups, watching over one another in love and growing together in grace. While the format may look different, the heart remains the same.

As The United Methodist Church continues to navigate a changing cultural and ecclesial landscape, initiatives like Safe Space remind us that innovation and tradition need not be at odds. Instead, they can work hand-in-hand—breathing new life into enduring practices and opening new pathways for discipleship.

Safe Space is more than a service. It is a community. And perhaps, in this reimagined class meeting, we are witnessing not something entirely new—but something deeply, faithfully Methodist.

Alexander is associate pastor for the Hartsville Cooperative Parish.

Childers pens drama bringing to life 1956 General Conference debate leading to full ordination of women

This year is the 70th anniversary of women’s ordination in the Methodist Church. In 1956, the General Conference of the Methodist Church granted women full clergy rights in a historic recognition of the Spirit’s call to women to preach, teach, lead and serve.

In honor of this important anniversary, South Carolina elder Dr. Clayton Childers has written a drama taken from the 1956 debate at General Conference that opened the door to full clergy rights for women.

After serving churches in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, Childers spent almost 20 years with the denomination’s General Board of Church and Society in Washington, D.C., and has now returned to pastor in a local church in Virginia.

His drama, “Debating Full Clergy Rights for Women,” presents an abbreviated rendering of the 1956 Methodist General Conference debate on Full Clergy Rights for Women taken from 1956 General Conference Minutes.

In his summary, he noted, “It is important to remember that General Conference in 1956, though half clergy and half laity, was made up almost entirely of men. In this debate, men do almost all the talking. A number of the comments light-heartedly and even cruelly make fun of women and their capacities for leadership. Many of these comments are quite shocking to 21st century ears.”

He added that although there are three women voices recorded in the debate, two of the three are married and are referred to in the minutes by their husband’s name.

After much debate, eventually the conference comes to realize a majority of delegates are ready to take a stand in support of full clergy rights for women without exceptions or compromise.

This is when Zach T. Johnson, of the Kentucky Conference and president of Asbury College, proposes women’s inclusion from the floor.

A voice vote was taken, but the chair ruled that the amendment was defeated. Adlai C. Holler, a South Carolina delegate, then rose to petition for a hand count. It passed 389-297.

The entire drama is available at <https://go.advocatesc.org/women-ordination-drama>.

5 Things to Know.

About Mount Carmel UMC, Charleston

The *Advocate* has started a new feature that showcases a different United Methodist church in every district throughout South Carolina with their answers to five questions. This month, get to know Mount Carmel United Methodist Church, Charleston.

1. What makes your congregation unique compared to other churches in your district?

Our church is in one of the most gentrified areas of the city. The culture has shifted dramatically from single-family homes to massive apartment buildings. Many of the people who could not afford to move are now living in one of the homeless shelters or on the street. We have lots of hungry people who walk past our doors every day. The area is also a “food desert.” The closest grocery store is almost four miles away. The area is ripe for mission and outreach ministries.

2. How has your church changed over the past 10-20 years, and what’s driven that change?

The church has become more mission focused. Until about six years ago, the congregation had never been introduced to ministries outside the walls. I was appointed in 2020 and had a great deal of experience working under pastors who understood and propagated outreach ministries. The change in culture opened the door for the need to be more apparent.

3. How does your congregation serve people who may never set foot inside your building?

We are blessed to have partnered with another church in an ecumenical setting to serve our community. Every second Saturday, we meet on an open field away from either church and provide food, clothing, toiletries and onsite prayers, and witnesses. We also bring in professionals from social services companies to help answer questions about homelessness and other services to folks who never attend either church. We average about 100 homeless and underserved at this event monthly.

4. What’s one dream or goal your church has for the next five years?

We need space. We have no room to hold classes for breakout sessions. We have no storage space. Most of our supplies and equipment are in plain view. We are petitioning the city to compromise on the zoning rule that prohibits outside storage sheds. One vision we are entertaining is to extend the current building to allow for more space. We have no funds for this initiative at present.

5. If you could tell the rest of South Carolina one thing about your corner of the state, what would it be?

We have experienced the power of serving God ecumenically. Along with this, together, we are fulfilling the call of Jesus to make disciples outside the walls of the church, together. Also, we have discovered that together the church can make a difference for the one or for the many.

—Submitted by the Rev. Nathan Smalls

Need-to-Know Roundup.

Six key takeaways from this month’s Advocate

- Annual Conference 2026 was held June 7-10 with much business and worship conducted (Page 1 and throughout edition)
- The *Advocate* now has an app (Page 2)
- Ministerial appointments release (Pages 14-17)
- Applications are now open for Cohort 3 of Connecting initiative (Page 19)
- Rock Hill retreat helps clergy heal (Page 24)
- Safe Space connects members of Hartsville Cooperative Parish (Page 2)

A learning church

Trinity UMC lives out new vision

By the Rev. Matthew Alexander

AIKEN—Flowing from their January gathering for Visioning Retreat: Part One, Trinity United Methodist Church has been living into six phrases as they seek to be a church who embraces adaptive innovation, includes all people, grows in faith, values every voice, serves courageously and develops leaders.

In the last 90 days, they have been pursuing three experiments: developing a curriculum and list of resources for developing Trinity leaders; hosting a missions fair with booths representing missional organizations/ministries; and launching a 90-day sign campaign: “All are welcome/no exceptions.”

During their discussions in January, they imagined how they might embrace each of these convictions. While exploring how they might better live into the inclusion of all people, their conversation homed in on two groups that have been historically excluded by the church: immigrants and LGBTQ+ people.

As Trinity UMC’s people reflected on how to better embrace these groups, they determined they needed to learn more so they could better live into Wesley’s first general rule: Do no harm. This meant Visioning Retreat: Part Two would be focused on learning.

On the morning of April 18, they had a Q&A and participated in an immigration simulation with the Rev. Patrick Taylor, UMCSC pastor and regional mobilizer for the National Immigration Forum. In the afternoon, Trinity UMC heard from a panel of LGBTQ+ clergy/candidates serving in the South Carolina Conference: the Rev. Mallory Forte, the Rev. Laurel Fraser, the Rev. Hillary Taylor and the Rev. Natalie Taylor. The panel shared from their personal stories and experiences as well as from their professional experience in ministry. This time was filled with rich and beautiful conversation. Finally, the day ended with a presentation about Reconciling Ministries Network from Trinity’s Chair of Church and Society, the Rev. Jackie Hyche.

There were two actionable next steps presented during the retreat. As Trinity seeks to more faithfully include all people, they considered using English Advance to offer English language training as well as entering a discernment process for joining the Reconciling Ministries Network.

These discussions were continued at the next Equipping Board (Trinity’s Unified Governing Board) which met on May 11.

Advocate.

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Editorial
by Jessica Brodie

Family in name
and in deed

During the pandemic, I craved a way for my family to connect during the endless hours of time at home and the temptation to stay glued to our own separate devices—me with work, the kids playing on TikTok, all of us doing our own private things.

So we started Family Paint Time. None of us are artists—well, except for my stepdaughter, who’s pretty amazing. The rest of us are not terribly gifted when it comes to acrylic paint, but that didn’t matter. We spread an old trash bag across the breakfast table, got some canvases and started creating side-by-side. When we ran out of canvases, we found some wood planks and rocks and other things. I even painted a few on glass from some of the old picture frames I wasn’t using anymore. Not only was it a fun diversion that didn’t involve our screens, but it knit our family together in unexpected ways.

At Annual Conference during our Rise Against Hunger packing, looking around at the sea of United Methodists of all races and ages and shapes and sizes coming together to pack meals, it struck me anew: This knit our family together in unexpected ways.

People were singing and laughing as they did something together. Something fun! Together everyone made the work less daunting. It only took two hours to pack 125,000 meals.

We need to do something like this at every Annual Conference from now on.

Locally, too—our churches need to do something like this in our own communities from now on.

We need to come together in a tangible, hands-on mission effort at least once a year from now on, locally, district-wide and conference-wide.

The Rev. Bryan Pigford, who organized the effort, said a few months ago that after the hard season our church has been through, we need something like this mission effort to remind us of our connection. I could not agree more.

We are family, my friends, and not just in name. We are family in name and in deed. And just like my Family Paint Time during the pandemic, sometimes we need to do things together to remind ourselves of that.

Beyond Annual Conference, I urge every single church in this conference to consider what you can do in your congregation together in one room, as one body, to help your local community. Maybe that’s packing meals together. Maybe that’s a prayer night. Maybe that’s tutoring or knitting prayer shawls or writing cards to people incarcerated.

Whatever it is, I’d love to hear about it. Share it with me and with the *Advocate*: jbrodie@umcsc.org.

And God bless you as you come together in the name of our risen savior.

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
—Galatians 3:28 (NIV)



Bishop’s Column
by Bishop Leonard Fairley

What do you see? Who do you see?

“Once more Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly.”—Mark 8:25

We have truly been to the mountaintop! From spirit-filled worship experiences to passionate stories of how God is at work across our state, the 2026 South Carolina Annual Conference session shared so many glimpses of God’s glory.

And now, we go back home to our churches and communities, invigorated with the Holy Spirit with eyes open to see the possibilities. Some of us will continue the good work already begun, while others face new beginnings in new places.

Now I don’t mind confessing that there have been, and there are still, times when I need Jesus to heal my eyes in order that I might see clearly. Oftentimes, like the man in the Gospel passage, Jesus has had to touch our eyes multiple times, especially when they have been clouded by our expectations instead of God’s expectations.

Jesus has to heal our eyes when anxiety, fear, doubt and uncertainty have blinded our eyes to where we couldn’t see clearly or just didn’t want to see what God was up to. When we have refused to see the possibilities. When we couldn’t or refused to see all the people.

There have been times in my ministry and calling when I questioned whether or not the bishop and cabinet had lost their minds. What in the world were they seeing to make a decision to send me to this appointment? I went anyway, trying to be open to the possibilities. And God always had more in those places than I could have imagined.

What God was helping me to see, and what I pray he will help you to see, was that every place, every church, is filled with amazing possibilities. We just need to open our eyes and see them. What God was

helping me to see—and what I pray he helps you to see—is that every community we are called to serve is filled with ordinary people doing extraordinary things. What God will help us to see is that wherever we are appointed to serve, he has already sown the seeds of possibilities.

God has prepared gifted people of every color, every ethnicity and gender in the community you are being called to serve. God has already prepared people young and old who are already serving the Lord.

I pray that God will help you see that there are already people walking as children of the light. I hope you let go of the negativity that might be keeping you from seeing the possibilities. I hope you see the positive people God will put in your way. Let go of the negative people and see the ones who are not always the loudest, the ones who are not the squeaky wheels always looking to get the grease.

I pray that what God helps us to see is that we miss his glory by becoming distracted by so many other things that don’t matter Just as Bruce Lee taught us in “Enter the Dragon,” we shouldn’t concentrate on the finger but rather what it is pointing to. We don’t want to miss the glory!

We just have to turn our eyes upon Jesus. “O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see?” There is a light in the darkness of the impossible, and they call his name Jesus.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of this earth will glow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.”

As far as our Annual Conference is concerned and where we go from here, I am asking each of us to turn our eyes upon Jesus, and let’s pray that God would touch our eyes so that we might see the possibilities all around us. Amen.

Corrections.

In the listing of retiring ministers (June *Advocate*), it should have noted the Rev. Tom Wall left a campus ministry appointment in 2024 and went to the local church before retiring this year, 2026.

In the June *Advocate*, “What Do You See?”, we mistakenly listed the wrong amount for the annual conference budget, only listing the budgeted amount for the Conference Administration Fund. We should have stated that the 2027 budget request will be \$9.8 million, a 5.5 decrease from last year.

We apologize for these errors and, as always, strive to set the record straight.

Precious Pet of the Month.

Precious Pet of the Month: Luna “Bella”

Even in our grief, seeing the sadness in my grandbabies’ eyes after losing my mom—and then our dog Drako to parvo disease—was especially hard. Their pain touched my heart deeply.

In those moments, I leaned on my faith, holding on to God’s promise: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

My older grandchildren showed quiet strength, but Mya, 19, and little Keniya, 7, wore their sadness openly, which was heartbreaking. Their mother stayed strong for everyone, even while grieving deeply herself.



Luna “Bella”

Wanting to bring a little light back, we welcomed a rescue dog, Luna “Bella,” who had been in a shelter cage with an uncertain fate. She quickly bonded with the girls.

And it was worth it. Seeing their smiles return reminded me that even in grief, healing can begin. We still miss those we’ve lost, but we’re moving forward—one day at a time—holding on to love, leaning on faith and finding moments of joy.

—Submitted by Angela Williams, member St. Stephen UMC, Orangeburg

Share a photo and brief story about your pet and what they mean to you at news@advocatesc.org.



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Commentary
by Bryce M. Williams

Open letter to leaders

Editor’s note: This letter is in response to a South Carolina jury on June 1 finding convenience store owner Rick Chow not guilty of murder in the 2023 fatal shooting of 14-year-old Cyrus Carmack-Belton. The verdict was reached after a trial in Richland County.

This is an open letter to public officials, elected leaders, law enforcement officials and community leaders of South Carolina. Good afternoon.

I would say it is a good afternoon, but for many people across our communities, it is not.

I write this letter not as a politician, lawyer, activist or public official. I write this letter as a 15-year-old South Carolinian. I write this letter as a young person who has spent years listening to elected officials, law enforcement leaders, community advocates, pastors and public servants tell us that our lives matter, that our futures matter and that our safety matters.

Today, I am struggling to believe those words.

For years, many of us have heard powerful speeches about youth violence. We have watched press conferences after shootings. We have heard leaders express outrage, sadness and frustration whenever another young person loses their life. We have heard promises that enough is enough. We have heard calls for accountability. We have heard demands for action.

Yet today, many young people are asking a simple question: Where is that same energy now? Where is the outrage? Where is the urgency? Where is the visible commitment to justice that we are constantly told exists?

Too often, young people become statistics before they become priorities. Too often, communities are asked to remain patient while families carry grief that will last a lifetime. Too often, public officials speak

passionately about protecting children, only for many of us to feel forgotten when difficult conversations arise.

As a teenager, I am angry. I am angry because I am tired of seeing young lives lost. I am angry because I am tired of watching families bury their children. I am angry because I am tired of hearing that young people are the future while many of us do not feel protected in the present. I am angry because every time another child dies, another family is forever changed. And I am angry because I know that our leaders are capable of more.

This anger does not come from hatred. It comes from disappointment.

Disappointment because many of us have listened to your promises. Disappointment because many of us have believed your words. Disappointment because we expect leadership to be consistent, regardless of politics, pressure, public opinion or circumstance.

Leadership cannot be selective. Justice cannot be selective. Accountability cannot be selective.

If we are going to tell young people that every life matters, then every life must matter equally.

If we are going to tell communities that justice is blind, then justice must be applied fairly and consistently. If we are going to tell grieving families that their loved ones mattered, then our actions must reflect those words.

Another question that continues to weigh heavily on my mind is this: Why did it appear that so much effort was put into protecting the store and the property after the verdict, while an entire community was grieving the loss of a child?

I understand the need to maintain order. I understand the responsibility of law enforcement to prevent violence and keep the peace.

But from the perspective of many young people watching, it appeared that officers were standing guard over a business while a family continued to mourn the loss of a 14-year-old child. Whether that was the intention or not, that is how it felt to many of us.

Why does property appear to receive immediate and visible protection while grieving families are told to wait, trust the process and move forward? Why

does the protection of buildings seem so visible while the protection of young lives often feels uncertain?

These are difficult questions, but they are questions that many people are asking.

No building is worth more than a child. No business is worth more than a child. No piece of property is worth more than a child.

Young people across South Carolina are watching. We are listening. We are paying attention.

We notice when leaders speak. We also notice when leaders remain silent. We notice when outrage is loud. We also notice when outrage is absent. We notice when justice is demanded. We also notice when communities feel ignored.

The responsibility of leadership is not simply to govern. It is to lead during moments of pain, uncertainty and heartbreak. It is to stand before the public and answer difficult questions. It is to demonstrate that every life has value and that every family deserves dignity.

I am only 15 years old. But I know enough to understand that leadership is not measured by what is said when it is comfortable. Leadership is measured by what is said when it is uncomfortable.

It is measured by consistency. It is measured by courage. And it is measured by whether those entrusted with power are willing to stand with the people they serve, especially when emotions are high and answers are difficult.

To every elected official, law enforcement leader, government official and community leader reading this: Please remember that behind every headline is a family. Behind every statistic is a name. Behind every tragedy is a community that must continue living with the pain long after the cameras leave.

Young people deserve safety. Families deserve answers. Communities deserve transparency. And every life deserves dignity, value and justice.

Respectfully,

Bryce M. Williams, a concerned
South Carolina youth, age 15

Williams’s home church is Camden First United Methodist Church, Camden. His mother is the Rev. Melissa Williams, and their congregation is located within the Orangeburg District.

Letters to the Editor.

What does an oath mean?

Many Americans are struggling with the meaning of an oath. Oaths are not doing well. Just look at the news.

What is the worth (moral, financial, religious) of a person’s oath? What do we mean when we promise, when we vow, when we pledge our word? If vows and oaths cannot be trusted, then the whole structure of society is at risk.

“Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools” (Cowper). When we are betrayed, it is terrible and sinful. Casual promises, oral agreements, written contracts and formal vows are important. The solemn oath has a sacredness to it. The upraised hand and the hand on the Bible is divine action.

“An oath sworn with the clear understanding in one’s mind that it should be performed must be kept” (Cicero).

Douglas MacArthur said, “I shall return.” President Jimmy Carter told the American people, “I will never lie to you.”

The Hippocratic Oath reminds new doctors of their obligation. Dr. Hunter Rentz was the doctor at a prison and was told to inject poison to kill a prisoner. He refused, saying, “I took an oath not to harm a human life.”

It is time for individuals to have a moral conscience and keep their oaths.

Psalms 15:4 says, “Who despises a vile man but honors those who fear the Lord; who keeps his oath even when it hurts.” Moses said, “This is what the Lord commands: When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said” (Numbers 30:1-2). Deuter-

onomy 7:8 says, “But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors.”

God keeps his oath to us (John 3:16-17).

*Rev. John Culp, retired
West Columbia*

Youth: A poem

Above the heavenly clouds of spring
The sunlight breaks the blue
And for a moment I can feel
The clarity of youth.

To be so young and innocent
Of Earth’s corruptive way,
I want to walk in Jesus’s footsteps
And feel his loving ways.

I turn my head to face the blue
And feel a faith of joy
That youth is not lost fleetingly

Nor time cannot destroy.

*Dr. Linda Hodgin, member
Ashland UMC, Columbia*

An open letter to Christian pastors

I am confused. Immigration officials are showing up locally and are hurting our neighbors. Please tell me what Jesus’s response is? Is he telling us that justice must rule or that mercy must rule? Please tell me. Your silence confuses me. I hope I am not putting undue pressure on you, but if you leave your flock to wander aimlessly—or worse—aimed in the wrong direction, your boss may have a problem with you. You may also be confused, but I will help— your boss is not your congregation. Please pastors, help me to understand.

*Glenn Williams, member
Main Street UMC, Greenwood*

Annual Conference.

Praise and Prayer services call for open eyes and open tables

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—Two Praise and Prayer services at Annual Conferences focused on neighborly love and radical hospitality.

On Monday evening, the Rev. Darlene Dellinger brought a message about seeing people with the loving eyes of God.

In her message, “Am I Being a Neighbor?” Dellinger drew from Luke 10:25-37, on the parable of the good Samaritan.

Dellinger shared how, as a proud child of the 1970s, she would often watch “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood” on television. Rogers always asked, “Won’t you be my neighbor?”

Now she realizes it is a theological question.

In the parable of the good Samaritan found in the Bible, a man is hurt, yet all of these supposedly good people passed him by without helping. Finally, the one considered most unlikely to help—a Samaritan man—stopped to help



“We see people every day, but do we really see them?” Dellinger asked.

in the most extravagant of ways.

The other people saw the injured man; they just didn’t see him truly.

“The issue was not eyesight,” Dellinger said. “The issue was vision.”

She said that’s our problem today in society.

“We see people every day, but do we really see them?” Dellinger asked. “The priest saw a category, the Levite saw a condition, but neither one of them saw a child of God.”

However, she proclaimed, nothing can cancel what God has declared



“There is power in invitation,” Simoneaux shared.

valuable. And the question remains: not “Who is my neighbor” but “Will I be a neighbor?”

Room at the table

The Rev. Steve Simoneaux led a Tuesday morning Praise and Prayer Service on radical hospitality—the idea that God’s table (and ours) should be open to everyone, especially those who are typically excluded.

In his sermon “There’s Still Room!,” the Clemson Wesley Foundation campus minister drew from Luke 14:15-23

with Jesus’s story about the master of the house filling his table with those from the streets—the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.

Simoneaux recalled childhood meals around the table at his grandma’s house with the aromas of gumbo or étouffée. One never knew who was going to show up, from cousins to aunts and uncles.

“There was always room at that table,” Simoneaux said. “We just had to move over and make some space.”

Other tables he’s been at were not always like that; while the food was hot, the reception was ice cold.

He invited the body to consider: What would your table look like?

“When was last time you broke bread with someone who looked different, thought different and maybe even smelled different from us?” Simoneaux asked. “Sometimes I think we’ve become so fat and happy at our own tables we’ve forgotten to shift over and make room for others.

“But there is power in invitation.”

Bishop forms team to answer questions on possible UM Center sale

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—A team formed by Bishop Leonard Fairley will get answers to questions raised by Annual Conference about possibly selling the United Methodist Center and buying or leasing another property.

Announced by Fairley Wednesday morning at Annual Conference, the move came after debate on the conference floor Tuesday when United Methodist Center Board of Trustees sought authorization to

investigate options for selling the current property, buying or leasing another property or pursuing other options.

Center Trustees Chair Hal Clarkson told the body the building is in need of substantial renovations.

“We’ve seen over the last three years our expenses outweigh our revenue, and we believe these deficits will continue,” Clarkson said.

Citing confusion, many asked questions about the various issues impacting such a sale and sought more

information before the body should grant such authorization.

The Rev. Ken Nelson made a motion that the action be tabled until center trustees can provide enough information so Annual Conference can make a more informed decision.

The body approved tabling the action.

Bishop Fairley said he is asking Conference Secretary the Rev. Mel Arant and Chancellor and Parliamentarian Jay Crowe to head that team.



Advocate Book Signing draws crowd at AC

Readers got the chance to chat with Advocate Press authors, purchase books and have their copies signed at the Advocate Press Meet the Author/Book Signing held at Annual Conference Tuesday during lunchtime. Here, the Rev. Amiri Hooker chats with a reader. To learn more about the 40 titles available, most by South Carolina United Methodist authors, visit <https://www.advocatepress.org>.



Local pastors licensed

Monday afternoon saw the recognition of 12 people who have been licensed as local pastors: Edwin Ross Cooper, Shannon Christopher Higgins, Glenda Andree Johnson, Karen Lucille Kirchel, Okereta Marice Mills, Joie Marie Rogers, Patricia Spells Salley, Timothy David Simpson, Gregory Teasdel Sr., Shane Donovan Whitner, Jamal LaRonald Wilkerson and Bonnell Levon Williams Jr.



Fair wages

Clergy got a 2 percent raise out of this year’s Annual Conference. The Rev. Jon Hoin gives the report Monday of the Committee on Equitable Compensation, sharing the need for an increase because of cost of living increases.

Cabinet report celebrates Hope Fund grants, welcomes new district superintendents

The Rev. Cathy Mitchell gave the report of the Cabinet during Annual Conference, lifting up their work throughout the past year.

As the conference shifts from 12 districts to 10, it also bids farewell to three district superintendents who complete their eight-year terms: Terry Fleming, Steve Patterson and Mitchell herself. All return to service in the local church.

Mitchell also offered a hearty welcome to three new district superintendents: the Revs. Megan Gray (Spartanburg District), Tiffany Knowlin-Boykin (Walterboro District) and James Friday (Anderson District). She also welcomed Dr. George Ashford to the extended cabinet as director of innovation and strategy.

Mitchell next shared a report about the Hope Fund—monies from churches that separated from

the denomination in 2023 and 2024 that are being used for church grants.

Mitchell reported that as of May 31, 75 Hope Fund requests were granted from 2023 separating churches (42 percent to African-American churches and 58 percent to White churches); those funds are now exhausted.

For the 2024 Hope Fund balance, 75 percent was designated to Black, indigenous and people of color congregations, with 25 percent unrestricted.

Mitchell said 52 Hope Fund requests totaling \$2.5 million were granted from 2024 proceeds (82 percent to BIPOC congregations and 18 percent to White).

After that, of the \$3.5 million original balance, \$975,000 is left for BIPOC churches and \$516,000 is available for any church.



Far-reaching work

Dr. Jim Salley reports on the good work happening at Africa University, a United Methodist university in Zimbabwe started with the help of South Carolina and other annual conferences. Africa University started in 1992 with 40 students. On June 6, Africa University graduated 698 students from 21 countries on the continent of Africa.

Annual Conference.

United in mission

South Carolina Annual Conference packs 125K meals for Rise Against Hunger

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—From the bishop to district superintendents, from clergy to laity, from kids to the elderly, South Carolina United Methodist men and women of all ages and races gathered together at the Greenville Convention Center Tuesday at Annual Conference to rise against hunger.

Several hundred people worked in teams to assemble, seal and box 125,000 meals that will go to hungry people all around the world through the non-profit organization Rise Against Hunger.

It was the first conference-wide mission project the annual conference has done since before COVID, and the spirit of joy and unity was palpable, many reported. Music played throughout the spacious room, with people singing along together to “Sweet Caroline” and other tunes as they packed meals in fellowship.

“For me, it’s one of the better experiences I’ve had at annual conference,” said Ronnie Lybrand, a lay delegate from the Union Charge in the Spartanburg District. “We had five people at our table, and we had a ball!”

Lybrand has been coming to annual conference for about 14 years, and he believes the conference needs to do a mission project like this every year.

“It brought everyone together,” Lybrand said. “We need to associate together like this. Plus, they played rock and roll music!”

Sharon Staley, laity from St. Stephen United Methodist Church in Orangeburg, has been coming to annual conference for the last six years, and she said the united mission project was “wonderful.”



Photo by Matt Brodie

Volunteers raised more than \$55,000 to fund the effort.

“It was amazing—I really, really enjoyed it. All I could think about was how blessed we are,” Staley said. “I met so many new people, the music was good and we should definitely do it again.

“It builds us up and strengthens us. It connects us as one.”

Volunteers raised more than \$55,000 to fund the effort, and they worked in stations doing different roles around the room. Some loaded the plastic meal bags with rice and dried vegetables, while others weighed the bags to make sure they were filled up with enough food. Other stations sealed the bags, and others boxed them up. Finally, all the boxes were loaded onto pallets to be placed on trucks and sent wherever people need it the most, from Burundi to Haiti and beyond.

The Rev. Bryan Pigford organized the conference-wide Rise Against Hunger event after his church—Central UMC, Spartanburg—did one in February.

That day, more than 70 volunteers packed more than 10,000 meals in two hours, and Pigford was staggered by the impact it had on his congregation. He felt it could have the same impact on the annual conference as a whole, plus bring us together more intentionally after a season of hardship and strife.

‘Campfire and Campus Notes’ cards uplift

The Rise Against Hunger project was one of two Annual Conference participated in this week. The second, “Campfire and Campus Notes,” organized by the Rev. Karen Jones, gave people the chance to write brief, heartfelt messages to United Methodist college students and summer camp staff.

The cards were designed by children at Epworth Children’s Home.

Lynne Tyner, Rock Hill Lay Servant Ministries director and a member of Woodland UMC, Rock Hill, participated in the project and said the notes will be a great encouragement to youth.

“I think it’s so wonderful because these kids are always stressed. The emotional thing with this culture just falls on them,” Tyner said, noting the cards will help counter that negativity with a spirit of Christian love.

Frances Sofley, a lay delegate from Trinity UMC, Anderson, said she feels the same way, and she knows she would have appreciated such a card when she was a young person.

“Especially when you’re a youth and a college student, you need affirmation and expressions of love around you right now,” Sofley said. “Sometimes all the social media implies you’re not enough, but God loves you no matter what.”

South Carolina youth delegates discover their voices matter at AC

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—High school-age youth delegates brought younger voices to the table at Annual Conference, and those delegates say the experience provided an empowering sense that their voices genuinely matter in the church, along with a welcoming behind-the-scenes understanding of how Annual Conference works.

Nine youth represented their churches during Annual Conference 2026 part of the Youth Delegation, a program that started last year. At least four other youth also were part of this year’s event. Chris Lynch, congregational specialist for South Carolina Ministries with Young People, said the students are vital to our work together.

“Having youth delegates as a part of annual conference is a reminder to all that the voice of young people is valuable and needs to be heard. After all, youth and young people are not the church of tomorrow. They are the church today,” Lynch said.



Photo by Matt Brodie

Two of the youth delegates participate.

Jetson Skelton, 16, who is a member of Lee Road United Methodist Church, Taylors, was a delegate last year, and he said this year was a lot more relaxed, as the body didn’t need to vote on General Conference amendments.

He said he appreciates the opportunity to participate in the process.

“I get to have a voice here at Annual Conference, and I also get to meet a lot of new people,” he said. “My grandfa-

ther was a lay delegate for our church for 20 years, and he has so many shirts that say Annual Conference and what year. I was always kind of curious.”

To be here fulfilling that curiosity has been a blessing.

Becca White, 17, is a member of Trinity UMC, Blythewood, and is also in her second year as a youth delegate.

“I really love how much everyone else loves the work here. They want to hear our voice and see our faces, and I think that’s so encouraging,” she said.

Growing up in the church she’d always known about Annual Conference, but she was never terribly interested until her sister became a pastor. Then she realized it sounded like a lot of fun.

“This is the ultimate behind-the-scenes of The United Methodist Church.”

Fellow Trinity member Lydia Riley, 14, served as a youth delegate for the first time this year, and she said people have been really welcoming to her.

“I really liked knowing the background of everything, knowing what

goes on behind the scenes and what’s going on with all the church stuff with all the hard work going into this,” she said. “It’s not just meetings but all the people coming together and conversing and debating.”

Hermoine Rickenbacker, 17, is a member of St. Mark UMC, Taylors, and she said the best part for her has been learning new things and understanding how deep they going into church work.

“The sermons and all the preaching really mean something to me,” she said. “And I love seeing how everyone is so welcoming. They want the youth to be here and make a difference in the future.”

Bryce Williams, 15, is part of Orangeburg District youth. His mom is a pastor, so he has been coming to Annual Conference for many years. But now, having a voice, is empowering.

“I love the experience. It’s a good feeling to have a voice,” he said.

He said they need more youth on the delegation, and that need needs to be communicated better.

Artist says handcrafting cross-and-flame display for AC2026 ‘humbling’

By Jessica Brodie

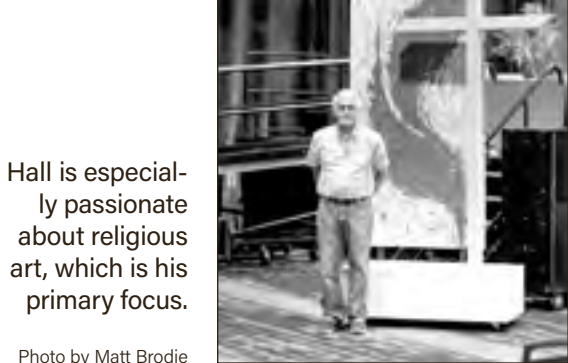


Photo by Matt Brodie

Hall is especially passionate about religious art, which is his primary focus.

GREENVILLE—A striking and prominent part of the Annual Conference onstage display this year was a tall, beveled-edge wooden cross-and-flame artwork.

And the artist behind that artwork, Wayne Hall, said the piece is designed to incite the excitement of the Holy Spirit.

Hall, a member of Washington Street United Methodist Church in Columbia, developed the artwork as a gift to the Annual Conference, and he said getting the opportunity to be invited was a genuine honor.

“It’s kind of humbling,” Hall said. “I didn’t think it would

be that big of a deal, and it’s kind of cool that people are responding to it.”

Hall holds a master’s degree in fine arts from Winthrop University, and he is especially passionate about religious art, which is his primary focus.

For this piece, Hall said, “I came up with taking our logo and abstracting the flame. I knew what the bishop was preaching on, and I wanted to incite that excitement.

“I took liberty of taking the flame and putting a lot of energy into the flame.”

Hall said Dr. Catherine Nance at his church invited him to create the artwork, and he was blessed by the opportunity.

AC2026 makes history with worship led by all ages

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—Children and adults led a worship service at Annual Conference Wednesday morning that lifted up the importance of including “even our little ones” in the community of God.

In the first-ever intergenerational worship experience at Annual Conference, the service incorporated people of all ages into the service, with youth leading prayer and reading Scripture as well as using their musical and dance gifts.

The service kicked off as children in the Silver Hill Memorial UMC Liturgical Dancers performed to the song “Joy.”

Next Toni Norris, grant specialist for the Connecting Children in Worship and Prayer Lilly Grant Initiative—which is funding the conference’s children’s cohort as well as this morning’s service and the interactive playground on the conference floor—brought a welcome.

“This is history—the first intergenerational worship experience at Annual Conference,” said Norris, who is a member of Aldersgate UMC, Greenville. “I hope you experience some new things in worship that you can take back to your church.”

Next Jazmine Sanders and Destini Jackson of New Grace UMC, St. George, both young people, led the call to worship, as the body responded, “We come as children of God of every age.”



Jazmine Sanders and Destini Jackson of New Grace UMC, St. George, lead the call to worship.

Youth also led in the prayer of thanksgiving and the Scripture reading—from John 1:35-51.

In her devotion “Come See for Yourself,” Melanie C. Gordon emphasized the importance of including children in worship.

Gordon, director of the Let the Children Come Initiative at Duke Divinity School and a member of Disciples UMC, Greenville, said that if our children are merely observers during their foundational years, we hold them back from Jesus’s invitation to

come and see. She noted that Jesus showed us how we are to treat children. He didn’t scold them but invited them to come see.

“We want our children, no matter how small, to answer that call to come and see for themselves, to be together with us in the community of God. What better place to be together than in worship? What better place to be spiritually formed than in the arms of those who love you?”

She said in our worship even our little ones can connect with the holy.

“Yes, even our little ones are invited to come and see,” she said.

Looking at the children she proclaimed: “You are amazing. You teach us. You have taught us today through your words and your voices, ... these gifts that allow us to know that best of all God is with us. We see this in you. We hear this in you. And we learn this through you.”

Children in the Philadelphia Praise Ringers led a musical response, then Sanders and the Rev. Constance Nelson Barnes led Prayers of the People.

Gordon, joined by young person Annabelle Mowbray of Dacusville UMC, Easley, offered the benediction, reminding the body, “God can speak with you—no matter how young or old you are.”

Also participating in the service was the St. Stephen Intergenerational Choir, Orangeburg.

AC hears progress report on district reduction, restructuring

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—South Carolina United Methodists got a progress report June 9 during Annual Conference on the sweeping restructuring approved last fall.

The Rev. Ken Nelson, Orangeburg District superintendent, presented a joint report on behalf of the Ministry Advisory Team and Conference-Staff Relations.

Nelson reminded the body that the October 2025 special called session of Annual Conference passed recommendations of the Jeremiah Teams to reduce the number of districts from 12 to 10 in South Carolina. They also approved eliminating a Cabinet-level position in creating the new Office of Congregational Excellence, which will oversee the work of the Office of Congregational Development and the continuing work of the Office of Connectional Ministries.

Bishop Leonard Fairley created transition teams to help the conference flesh out this work. And in a presentation called “From Vision to Implementation,” Nelson shared key information with Annual Conference about important things they need to know, what they can celebrate and what remains to be done. Nelson said the “deeply spiritual” work focused on one shared goal: aligning people, structures and resources for greater kingdom impact. They did this through five areas:

Missional priorities: Focusing on future ministry, this team identified five key mission priorities: children’s ministry, youth and young adult ministry, campus

ministry, evangelism and Christian hospitality, and conference communications.

Logistics: This team focused on transitioning from 12-10 districts, holding listening sessions, completing church assignments, publishing frequently asked questions, developing record retention plans and creating transition support resources.

Legalities/finance: This team focused on property and compliance.

Congregational development: Focusing on innovation and revitalization through the new office of congregational excellence, this team emphasized new pathways for church growth renewal and revitalization.

Black and ethnic ministries: This team focused on growth and discipleship, initiating a conference-wide strategy, developing assessment tools and establishing a leadership development framework with a goal of 10 percent growth short-term.

In terms of “now what,” Nelson said the body must be aware that further district reductions “are likely.” The logistics team is already discussing options with the Council on Finance and Administration, bishop and Cabinet and will continue doing that work. Strengthening Black and Ethnic Ministries will implement their assessment findings and strategic growth initiatives. Missional priorities will move from planning to measurable ministry outcomes. And conference-wide, we will continue aligning resources with ministry.

“Hear this: Implementation is not the finish line,” Nelson said. “It is the beginning of the next chapter of shared ministry.”

Dease celebrates women as architects of the church’s future

By Allison Trussell

GREENVILLE—The church has never moved forward without women, and the future is her, Bishop Robin Dease told the African-American Clergywomen

of South Carolina during the Monday lunch break at Annual Conference.

The North Georgia bishop and South Carolina native was warmly welcomed back home by South Carolina clergy and laity.

“Margins are God’s launching pad,” Dease said, offering examples from throughout the Bible where God sought and used marginalized people—a young girl from Nazareth becoming Christ’s mother and the women from the tomb making the first proclamation of the resurrection.

Who are the prophets on the margins today? Women and especially women of color have been the backbone of the church, Dease said, but are too often treated as the disciples treated the women bringing news of the resurrection, as idle chatter.

She offered a non-church example in Charm La’Donna, the dance choreographer and the creative director behind Bad Bunny’s Super Bowl halftime performance, who chose collaboration over competition, a counter-cultural act.

“When we refuse the lie of scarcity, we open ourselves to possibilities of success,” Dease said.

Women, she said to great applause, see the possibilities of being a church of Jesus. We are still working through issues, she noted, referring to the behav-

iors during and the results of disaffiliation. Post-disaffiliation examinations showed that “men, who had not attended, participated or been involved in the life of the church, suddenly appeared at vote night. ... Advocacy groups pushing for disaffiliation were overwhelmingly led by men, and women were often outvoted by those not involved in a church’s ministry.”

“Across the world, women have stepped into power not because the system accepted them, but because they saw the system failing them.”

The future of the church will be more compassionate, more courageous and more spirit-filled because of women, Dease concluded. “The church will be one shaped by women, architects like those God entrusted the news of the resurrection.”

The clergywomen recognized those who were ordained as elder and provisional elders the night before as well as those who retired at this Annual Conference. Those who passed since the last conference were also recognized.

The Rev. Fadetra Boyd and T. J. Edwards offered special music.



Your Gifts. Your Story. Your Legacy.

Africa University’s class of 2026, comprised of 698 young women and men from 21 African countries, represents another chapter in a story of shared blessings, dreams realized, and hope-filled promise for families and nations. Thank you, South Carolina Conference, for investing in the future of Africa and The United Methodist Church through “the school of dreams in the valley of hope.”



To learn more about supporting Africa University’s transformative ministry, visit <https://support.africau.org>. Africa University Development Office, P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203-0007 | 615.340.7438 | audevoffice@africau.org

Reconciling Ministries breakfast celebrates inclusion at AC

By the Rev. Ed Stallworth

GREENVILLE—Clergy and laity from across the South Carolina Conference gathered at Open Hearts United Methodist Church during Annual Conference for the Reconciling Ministries Breakfast, a time of prayer, fellowship and conversation focused on inclusion, belonging and the future of ministry within The United Methodist Church.

The gathering brought together members and supporters of South Carolina Reconciling Ministries, an organization that advocates for the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ persons in the life and ministry of the church. Some of the organizers, Lynn Shirley and the Rev. Rachel Headden, said the annual breakfast provides an opportunity for participants to build relationships, share stories and encourage one another.

Reflecting on the organization’s journey, Shirley noted how much has changed over the years. “There was a time when this group met that we were clearly outside the love and boundaries of The United Methodist Church in South Carolina,” he said. “That’s how far we’ve come.”

The event featured a panel discussion focused on faith, belonging, and the role of local churches in fostering welcoming communities. Participants shared personal experiences and reflected on both the progress that has been made and the work that remains ahead.

Throughout the discussion, participants shared stories of faith, welcome, exclusion and belonging. While their experiences differed, common themes emerged, including the importance of courageous leadership, honest conversation and creating church communities where all people feel valued.

Among the panelists was the Rev. Natalie Taylor,



A panel shares stories.

the first openly queer person to complete the commissioned phase of the South Carolina Board of Ordained Ministry process. Taylor spoke about the spiritual hunger many people experience and encouraged churches to engage Scripture thoughtfully while learning from voices and experiences that may differ from their own.

The Rev. Mallory Forte, the South Carolina Conference’s first openly gay pastor and leader of an inclusive United Methodist faith community, encouraged churches to be clear about their values and intentional about how those values are reflected in congregational life. Forte spoke about the importance of courage, both for those seeking inclusion and for allies willing to speak up on behalf of others.

Kit Crosby shared how, after feeling unsafe in a church setting, she found welcome and acceptance through the Wesley Foundation at Winthrop University.

The experience, she said, helped her rediscover church as a place where questions could be asked and where people could be welcomed as they are.

Ella Stillwell reflected on the influence of a support-

ive youth minister at Lexington UMC and the encouragement she later found while serving as a counselor at the Hinton Center. She encouraged churches not to underestimate the impact of small actions, noting that many LGBTQIA+ persons carefully research congregations before visiting and often notice details such as language, signage and representation.

Carol Fowler shared the story of her late brother, who was gay and often felt excluded by the church. She encouraged congregations to move beyond silence when discussing issues of inclusion.

“If we can’t talk about it, we can’t ever fix it,” Fowler said.

The Rev. Matthew Alexander, pastor of Trinity UMC in Aiken, encouraged churches to engage difficult conversations honestly and to create space for people whose experiences may differ from their own. He spoke about the importance of listening, truth-telling and remaining committed to being a church where people can experience love and belonging.

Attendee Terry Lupo said she came to support friends and acquaintances and to remind LGBTQIA+ persons that they are not alone.

“We are all community together,” Lupo said. “We need to support each other. And that is what Jesus would do.”

As the breakfast concluded, participants were encouraged to continue listening, learning and building relationships across the conference. Headden reflected on the United Methodist tradition of an open table and offered a vision that captured the spirit of the gathering: “There is no room for hate, but there will always be room for you.”

Stallworth is a member of the Advocate board and pastors O’Neal Street UMC, Newberry.

Annual Conference changes charge lines, closes 11 churches

By Allison Trussell

GREENVILLE—Tuesday at Annual Conference, South Carolina United Methodists recognized charge line changes and closures of 11 churches.

“Charge line changes, mergers and yes, even closures are ways we can better serve each other,” said the Rev. Fran Elrod, secretary of the cabinet, who read the names and changes.

Resolutions for the following church closures were approved:

- Arial UMC, Easley, Anderson District, adopted Aug. 7, 2025.
- Zion UMC, Easley, Anderson District, adopted Jan. 8, 2026.
- Oak Grove UMC, Blythewood, Columbia District, adopted May 6, 2026.
- Epting Memorial UMC, Newberry, Greenwood District, adopted June 9, 2025.
- Lebanon UMC, Newberry, Greenwood District, adopted June 9, 2025.
- Bethel UMC, Hartsville, Hartsville District, adopted April 15, 2026.
- Richburg UMC, Richburg, Rock Hill District, adopted Jan. 10, 2026.
- El Bethel UMC, Spartanburg, Spartanburg District, adopted March 31, 2026.

In addition, Antioch UMC, Pickens County, Greenville District, consented to discontinuance and the transference of the membership, church property and other assets to Dacusville UMC, Dacusville. The resolution was adopted May 6 and will be effective June 23.

Two resolutions of merger were adopted as well. Cornerstone UMC and Epworth UMC, Rock Hill, will become Cornerstone UMC; and Duncan UMC and Immanuel UMC, Spartanburg District, will become Foundations UMC.

Bishop Leonard Fairley offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the churches and asked pastors, former pastors and laity connected to each church to

stand. “We thank you, Lord, for these churches’ ministries. We understand that anything done in your name is not done in vain. So we pause to give thanks for each one of them. They have made us richer. Even though our hearts are breaking, we know that one day there will be a time when no churches will be closed because we’ll be in the church triumphant.”

District line changes

Because of the reduction of districts, many churches had district line changes. The Hartsville District welcomed 38 churches from the Florence District. Marion District received 36 churches from the Florence District. An additional eight churches from the Florence District moved to the Orangeburg District.

The Columbia District increased by 13 churches from the Hartsville District.

Anderson District welcomed 25 churches from the Greenville District. Another 26 churches from the Greenville District were moved to the Spartanburg District.

The Greenwood District received one church from the Anderson District and another one from the Spartanburg District.

Two churches were moved from the Spartanburg District to the Rock Hill District, and five churches moved from the Hartsville to Rock Hill District.

Charge line changes

In the Anderson District, the Liberty-Zion Charge was dissolved, making Liberty a station church and closing ad interim Zion. Arial UMC was also an ad interim closure. Dacusville and Christ were joined to become the Dacusville-Christ Charge.

The Columbia District had three charge line changes. The North Columbia Charge was dissolved, making

Mount Pleasant and St. John station churches. The Upper Richland Charge was dissolved, with Beulah becoming a station church and Oak Grove closing. The Fairfield Charge was dissolved, with both First and Monticello becoming station churches.

The Johnsonville Charge in the Florence District was dissolved. Bethlehem, Pamplico, will become a station church, and Johnsonville and Vox Memorial will continue as the Johnsonville Charge.

The North Easley Charge in the Greenville District was dissolved, making Dacusville a station church and transferring Antioch’s membership to Dacusville. Also in Greenville District, Grace and Liberty Hill were attached to form Grace-Liberty Hill Charge.

Four changes were made in the Greenwood District. The Epting Memorial-Lebanon Charge was dissolved, with both churches closed ad interim, effective Aug. 7, 2025. The Plum Branch Charge was dissolved, with Republican and St. Paul becoming station churches. The Central-Trinity Charge was dissolved with both churches becoming station churches. The Way satellite of

Grace was separated from Grace to become a station church.

The Hartsville District closed Bethel effective April 15.

In the Orangeburg District, the Swansea-Wagener Charge was dissolved, with Calvary and Oak Grove continuing as Calvary-Oak Grove; Swansea is attached to Pelion to form Swansea-Pelion Charge; and Wagener becoming a station church.

Two changes happened in the Rock Hill District. The Richburg-Pleasant Grove Charge was dissolved with Pleasant Grove becoming a station church and Richburg closed ad interim effective Jan. 10. Cornerstone and Epworth merged to become Cornerstone.

Multiple charge line changes occurred in the Spartanburg District. The Tyger River Charge was dissolved, with Immanuel and Duncan merging to become Foundations. Gravely-Memorial was attached to Trinity, Enoree, to form the Gravely Memorial-Trinity, Enoree Charge. The El Bethel-Pacolet Charge was dissolved, with El Bethel closed ad interim, effective March 31, and making Pacolet a station church.

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SCAN ME

AC approves four changes to the Standing Rules

By Jessica Brodie

Annual Conference approved four changes to Standing Rules Monday, with one that will keep important metrics before the body every year.

After a soulful rendition of “Be Still, My Soul” on his harmonica, the Rev. Michael Hood shared each proposed change one by one for a vote. Each were approved overwhelmingly.

The change to SR19 adds a new Order of the Day that, on the first full day of Annual Conference each year, the body will receive the full number

of baptisms and professions of faith in the South Carolina Conference during the preceding year, or the most recent year with available data.

Hood, who chairs the Committee on Standing Rules, noted the change will help keep metrics and data in front of the conference more intentionally, especially given that the purpose of the church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

“It’s about what we do as a connection,” Hood said.

Other changes involve SR51 (enabling Camps & Retreat Ministries to

have more say about who is on their board of trustees and changing the name of group associated with its nominations to Discipleship Ministries in accordance with the current structure of Connectional Ministries); SR53 (removing redundancy from the rule and updating other language for Claflin University’s Board of Trustees) and SR65 (revising that rule per changes Annual Conference made at the special called session in October, adding in Conference Committee on Innovation and Strategy and outlining the new changes).



The Rev. Michael Hood shared each proposed change one by one for a vote.

Photo by Matt Brodie

One resolution fails, four referred at Annual Conference

By Jessica Brodie

Of the five resolutions submitted this year to the Committee on Resolutions, only one came to a vote—albeit unsuccessfully. A sixth, on voting rights, did pass but was not part of the COR slate (see Page 12).

Four of the resolutions were referred to other committees and boards for consideration: Resolution Exploring Pension and Health Benefit Coverage for Provisional and Ordained Deacons, Resolution to Develop and Expand Campus in the South Carolina Annual Conference, Resolution to Develop and Expand Ministries with Young Adults and Resolution for the Development and Support of Young Clergy.

The only one that went before the body—Resolution to Increase Support and Resourcing of Local Pastors—was not approved, failing in a close vote that needed tally by the tellers.

The deacon benefits resolution was referred to the Board of Pension and Health. The campus ministries

expansion and ministries with young adults expansion resolutions were referred to Connectional Ministries. And the support of young clergy resolution was referred to the Committee on Nominations. Those bodies reported on the resolutions during business.

Regarding the local pastor support resolution, COR Chair the Rev. Steve Simoneaux said they support South Carolina’s local pastors and are “very aware” the conference cannot do the ministry it does without them. However, he said, “The committee voted to not approve this, not because we’re not in favor of the spirit of the resolution but because we would like to see more teeth to it in understanding what local pastors need.”

Simoneaux said the committee hopes the Fellowship of Local Pastors will further develop a future resolution: “Spend some time with it and bring back to us next year,” he said. “Put some teeth to it.”

Several spoke for and against the resolution. Pastor Rusty Godfrey, of Lee Road UMC, Taylors,

has been a licensed local pastor for 12 years and said he thinks the resolution is important because it begins the conversation about support.

“It touches my heart deeply because it tells me we are of value to this conference,” Godfrey said. “It may be looked at as putting the cart before the horse, but I respectfully disagree.”

However, Matthew Christ spoke against the resolution.

“It needs to be written fully by the Fellowship of local pastors,” he said.

The Rev. Terry Fleming proposed an amendment that would ask the language become an amendment that would go to General Conference and grant local pastors full voting rights if they have finished the basic course of study. But Fairley ruled the amendment out of order because it is not germane to the resolution.

After a vote by hand and then standing vote were too close to call, tellers helped calculate the final results. The resolution failed.

Hodge leads memorial service remembering 60 departed saints

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—Lifting up the abiding, eternal gift of God’s love, Dr. Sheila Elliott Hodge preached a memorial service at Annual Conference Tuesday celebrating the lives of 60 clergy and spouses who died over the past conference year.

In her sermon “Remains,” Hodge brought a word based on 1 Corinthians 13:8b-13, noting that while we instinctively cling to physical mementos of those we’ve lost, what truly remains and endures eternally is love—the love of God in Christ, expressed through the lives of saints departed, which never fails and cannot be erased by time or death.

Hodge shared how in April 1967, her father’s remains returned to South

Carolina from Vietnam, and over time what reminded of his life seemed to be his commendations, his medals and his pipes that still hung onto his favorite aroma.

“Sometimes it seems to me when a loved one passes away we naturally, instinctively try to hold onto something that remains of them,” Hodge preached to a chorus of amens.

Often we want to hold onto some concrete reminder of what they left behind—the voicemail message they left we just could not erase or the special note or card they gave us.

“We know these things that remain are tangible items and in no way fully express who they were to us, but we hold onto them just the same,” Hodge said.

But the apostle Paul reminds us of



In her sermon “Remains,” Hodge brought a word based on 1 Corinthians 13:8b-13.

Photo by Matt Brodie

Those named are as follows:

Active Clergy: Keith Hunter, Larry Michael Jarrell, Joaquin Enrique Polin and Louise Brown Wright

Retired Clergy: Robert Lee Allen, Washington Webster Belangia IV, Hazel Correll Bennett, John Paul Callahan, Jimmy Taylor Campbell, Daniel Walker Chamblee, James Ray Davis, Roger Russell Dodds, Melvin Wilber Flail Jr., Walter Gene Fuller Sr., Carlos Owen Gardner Jr., Clara Martin Gary, Anthony Nickolas Gavalas, Franklin David Hartsell, Velma Martin Haywood, John Emory Holler Jr., Larry Richard Hyder, Michael Steven Leonhardt, Janice Lee Mabey, James Douglas Marchant, Theodore Roosevelt Morton Jr., Debra Alice Sylvia Quilling-Smith, John Allen Sellers, William Henderson Tanner Jr., Samuel Simpson Warwick, Stanley Edgar Weber Jr. and Patricia Serena Wood

Spouses: Annette Bledsoe Anderson, Connie Bossons Bishop, Nancy Lynn Hooper Broomall, Joyce Osborne Campbell, Eloise McMeekin Clyburn, Howard Edwards Jr., Sylvia Elaine Gain, Kermit Mack Long, Barbara Earle Ropp, Anna Yelton Sistare, Cecile Yvonne Thackston, Lisa McAlister Thompson and Gail Hamby Wilson

Surviving Spouses: Kathleen Jane Cunningham, Earline Mitchum Deese, Lessie Simmons Detwiler, Mary Watson Duffie, Mary Amick Funderburk, Betty Miller Goupil, Eleanor Adkins Haton, Jean Bell Long, Fredna Jones Scott, Louise Worley Sowell, Lovis Rebecca Thomas and Paula Brafford Wilson

Friends of the Conference: Carl Duane Evans, Theodore H. Kohl, Cheryl Bass Rhodes and Bettye Faye Rivers

The service ended with the closing hymn “When We All Get to Heaven.”

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MWF 9-9:45am: ENGL 101 10-10:45am: CALC 102 11-11:45am: SOCI 110

Tu/Th 1-2:30pm: DRAW 201 3-4:30pm: GEOL 102

SLAY

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Annual Conference.



The Rev. David Washington speaks in favor of the voting resolution. For many more pictures from this year's Annual Conference, go to <https://go.advocatesc.org/ac2026>.

Photo by Matt Brodie

AC2026 OVERVIEW

From Page 1

there were none,” Fairley said.

Fairley said we are at a pivotal place where we must begin to see differently.

“We must take our eyes off our golden calf,” he preached to applause. “We must see our way through wilderness and darkness to God’s possibilities and away from Egypt. South Carolina, there’s nothing there for you! The best years of the South Carolina Annual Conference are not behind us; they are in front of us.

“We must dare to see with different eyes and focus on the Promised Land in front of us. We will not go back to Egypt, nor will we listen to the ‘Egypt Committee.’ We can’t go back.”

Maybe what we need is for Jesus to touch us a second time, Fairley offered.

“I know what the budget might say, but I want to see those numbers with the eyes of Jesus,” Fairley said. “He is the one who can take whatever we place in his hands and multiply it. All things are possible to those who believe in Jesus.”

Special recognition

Before calling the 55th session of Annual Conference to order at 10:42 a.m., Fairley lifted up the 70th anniversary of the ordination of female clergy in The United Methodist Church. He also took a moment to honor the Rev. Vivian McFadden, who passed away May 17. McFadden, an African-American woman, in 1974 was the first woman to be ordained in South Carolina.

Fairley also lifted up the presence of Bishop Robin Dease, the first African-American female bishop from South Carolina, now serving in the Georgia conferences. Dease was the keynote speaker at the African-American Clergywomen’s luncheon held Monday afternoon. (See story Page 8.)

Business continues

After greetings, organizational motions and the introduction of the consent calendar, Annual Conference approved four changes to Standing Rules Monday, with one that will keep important metrics before the body every year. (See story Page 10.)

The Committee on Episcopacy presented gifts and recognition to Bishop Fairley and his wife, Dawn, and to the bishop’s executive assistant, Lollie Haselden, whom they called “fantastic.”

The Commission on Equitable Compensation shared about a 2 percent cost of living increase for clergy.

Jen Rodia of United Methodist Communications awarded Dan O’Mara the Communications Award of Excellence,

noting, “Dan embodies the spirit of Christian communications.”

During Epworth Children’s Home’s report, the body approved a statement of relationship between the conference and Epworth, which celebrates 130 years of ministry this year.

After lunch came the first reading of Council on Finance and Administration’s proposed \$9.8 million 2027 budget.

Resolution voting

Of the five resolutions submitted this year to the Committee on Resolutions, only one came to a vote on the floor—albeit unsuccessfully. Four of the resolutions were referred to other committees and boards for consideration. The only one that went before the body—Resolution to Increase Support and Resourcing of Local Pastors—was not approved, failing in a close vote that needed tally by the tellers. (See story Page 10.)

Also late Monday, the Board of Pension and Health shared that they are giving a significant sum to the conference for investment funds, also sharing that rising health care costs mean those covered by conference insurance will see a 13 percent premium increase next year. Most of this is because of inflation, higher than expected catastrophic claims, higher than expected overall claims and a clergy population that is less healthy than the general population.

Monday afternoon saw the recognition of 12 people who have been licensed as local pastors

The day closed with a Praise & Prayer service led by the Rev. Darlene Dellinger on “Am I Being a Neighbor.” (See story Page 6.)

Tuesday starts strong

Tuesday kicked off with a Morning Praise and Prayer Service led by Clemson Wesley Foundation campus minister the Rev. Steve Simoneaux. (See story Page 6.)

Assistant Conference Secretary the Rev. Karen Jones next shared the number of baptisms in 2025—a grand total of 823, with 583 baptisms of people 12 and younger and 240 baptisms of people ages 13 and older.

During the Connectional Ministries report, South Carolina United Methodists overwhelmingly voted to pass a resolution protecting voting rights, democratic participation and equal representation. Proposed by the Advocacy Area of Connectional Ministries, the resolution calls on the conference to

affirm voting rights as a moral and biblical issue and to encourage churches and leaders to actively support voter access, civic engagement and equal political representation, particularly for historically marginalized communities. (See story Page 12.)

Business continues

After the body approved the report from the Committee on Nominations, the Rev. Cathy Mitchell gave the report of the Cabinet, lifting up their work throughout the past year. As the conference shifts from 12 districts to 10, it also bids farewell to three district superintendents who complete their eight-year terms: Terry Fleming, Steve Patterson and Mitchell herself. All return to service in the local church. Mitchell also offered a hearty welcome to three new district superintendents: the Revs. Megan Gray (Spartanburg District), Tiffany Knowlin-Boykin (Walterboro District) and James Friday (Anderson District).

Mitchell also welcomed Dr. George Ashford to the extended cabinet as director of innovation and strategy.

Next, conference received a progress report about the restructuring approved at a special session in October 2025, which reduced the state’s districts from 12 to 10 and created a new Office of Congregational Excellence. (See story Page 8.)

After this, the Rev. Fran Elrod conducted church closings and charge line changes. (See story Page 9.)

Just before lunch, Bishop Fairley called the body into a sacred time to honor the Florence and Greenville districts, which are now joining with other districts. (Coming in next edition.)

After lunch, Dr. Sheila Elliott Hodge preached a memorial service at Annual Conference Tuesday celebrating the lives of 60 clergy, spouses and others who died over the past conference year. (See story Page 10.)

After the memorial service, Annual Conference spent much time asking questions about a request from the United Methodist Center Board of Trustees regarding possibly selling the conference center and finding new space. Center trustees sought authorization to investigate options for selling the current property, buying or leasing another property or pursuing other options. The action was tabled, and the next day, Bishop Fairley told the body he was forming a task force to get these questions answers and report back to Annual Conference. (See story Page 6.)

Next, Conference Co-Lay Leaders Betty Void and Michael Jennings brought their report celebrating the work of the laity. Calling it “an incredible year,” Void lifted up the work of groups such as United Women in Faith, United Methodist Men, lay leaders, Lay Servant Ministries and youth.

The afternoon ended as South Carolina United Methodists joined to pack 125,000 meals for hunger-relief non-profit Rise Against Hunger. Hundreds of clergy and lay volunteers gathered in the convention center to assemble meal packs in a tangible display of connectionalism. (See story Page 7.)

Final day

Wednesday morning kicked off with the conference’s first-ever intergenerational service; it encompassed children, youth and adults throughout the service. (See story Page 8.)

Conference Secretary the Rev. Mel Arant started the final morning’s business by celebrating the amounts collected during offerings over the last few days. The body contributed \$7,655 for the South Carolina Conference Seminary Students Scholarship Fund, \$13,028 for the Miracle Sunday Campaign for the Central Conference Theological Education Fund and \$55,154 for Rise Against Hunger, this year’s conference-wide mission project.

Next, the Rev. Bryan Pigford shared about the work of the Cognitive Connection Ministry around the state that have started since they organized in spring 2024.

After this, the body overwhelmingly approved the \$9.8 million 2027 budget for the Annual Conference.

Next year’s Annual Conference is set for June 6-10, 2027. Arant said the 2027, 2028 and 2029 Annual Conference gatherings will all be at the Florence Center, Florence.

Final service

The event closed with a Service of Sending Forth and the Fixing of Appointments. In a proclamation titled “What Do You See? Who Do You See?” Bishop Fairley lifted up these two questions as the body prepared to leave Annual Conference and do its work in the valley.

Fairley noted that we are called to go share the Gospel, then asked, “But who and what will we see when we get there?”

Sometimes we refuse to see all the people. But we must see the people and possibilities before us as we do our work.

“The day is over for clergy and churches to beat down one another. That day is over!” Fairley proclaimed to applause and cheers, noting every place, every church and every community is filled with possibilities.

“God is already there. We just need to open our eyes and see it,” he said.

After appointments of clergy to churches were distributed, each district superintendent stood on the floor with their respective districts to announce any changes to the appointments as printed.



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Annual Conference.

Annual Conference passes resolution protecting voting rights

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—South Carolina United Methodists overwhelmingly voted to pass a resolution protecting voting rights, democratic participation and equal representation.

Proposed by the Advocacy Area of Connectional Ministries, the resolution calls on the conference to affirm voting rights as a moral and biblical issue and to encourage churches and leaders to actively support voter access, civic engagement and equal political representation, particularly for historically marginalized communities.

Before considering the resolution, which was shared during the Connectional Ministries report, the Rev. Millie Nelson Smith noted that first the body must decide whether to suspend two Standing Rules (29 and 64B), which the body voted to do.

While several asked clarification questions about the resolution, no one spoke in opposition to the resolution, while two spoke in support.

One of those, the Rev. David Washington of Old Bethel United Methodist Church, Charleston, noted, “We’ve been down this road before.”

“When actions don’t line up with the

words being spoken, I have to choose history,” Washington said. “Anytime anything attacks voting rights, we should stand up so every voice should be heard in this country.”

The resolution passed overwhelmingly.

Also during the Connectional Ministries report, Smith noted two other resolutions that had been submitted to Annual Conference but referred to their office have been accepted, and the work they called for will be incorporated into the ongoing work of Connectional Ministries. Those resolutions are the Resolution to Develop and Expand Campus Ministry in the South Carolina Annual Conference and the Resolution to Develop and Expand Ministries with Young Adults.



The Rev. Amiri Hooker answers questions about the voting resolution.

Photo by Matt Brodie

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Annual Conference.

Stewards of the Mysteries of God

Sunday service celebrates 16 called into ministry, honors 26 retirees

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—Issuing a charge to newly ordained ministers to preserve their early passion and calling while guarding against the temptations of relevance, popularity and power, Bishop Paul Leeland preached a Commissioning, Ordination and Retirement Recognition Service June 7 that celebrated 16 called into ministry and honored 26 retirees.

“I don’t want you to ever forget that excitement, that anticipation, that hope of being appointed to a new place. I don’t want you to ever lose that passion or that sense of ministry,” Leeland urged.

In his sermon, “Stewards of the Mysteries of God,” Leeland shared that, as the apostle Paul proclaimed, pastors are exactly this—stewards of God’s great mysteries.

But Leeland urged them to remember those looking to them for example.

“People look to you for a lived word before they look to you for a proclaimed word,” Leeland said.

He urged them to be bathed, saturated and immersed in God’s word, reminding them of Henri Nouwen’s warnings about the three greatest temptations of a spiritual leader: the need to be relevant, to be popular and to be powerful and influential. Indeed, Leeland said he prays at night before he goes to bed, “Lord, keep me from being seduced by power, position, influence or title.”

Looking out at the ordinands before him, he prayed that each would receive the holy gifts of the spirit listed in Isaiah



Bishop Paul L. Leeland preached a Commissioning, Ordination and Retirement Recognition Service June 7 that celebrated 16 called into ministry and honored 26 retirees.

Photo by Matt Brodie

11—counsel, wisdom, understanding, knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Ordained as elders were Darlene Brenda Richardson, James Brunson Rogers and Nona Margaret Woodle.

Ordained as an elder completing change of orders from deacon to elder was Karen Hanyea Lail Jones.

Commissioned as provisional elders were Mary Antoinette Gaboton-Moss, Tyner Joseph Jiunnies, John Nicholas Kronz, Renee Moore Ritter and Paula Jean Stover.

Commissioned as provisional deacons were Amber Scates Forrest, Sandra Charlene MacMillan and Natalie Faye Taylor.

Orders recognized as a provisional member: Darlene Dellinger.

Orders recognized as full elder members: Daniel Troy Hembree and Joshua William Tietje.

Orders transferred as a full elder

member: Laurel Alice Fraser.

Passing the mantle

After the ordination and commissioning, the service shifted to celebrate the 26 retiring clergy. Each came onstage as their names were read to shake hands with Bishop Leonard Fairley as they took their place for the passing of the mantle ceremony.

Representing the retiring class, the Rev. Mary Teasley knelt at the altar with the Rev. Nona Woodle representing the newly ordained class. Fairley placed a stole upon Teasley’s shoulder. In turn, Teasley rose to place the mantle upon the shoulders of Woodle.

“I transfer this mantle from our generation to the young, indicating thereby that the responsibilities and dedication of the older generation will be caught up and carried on by the young, and the spirit of today’s Elijahs will rest upon today’s Elishas,” Teasley proclaimed.

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

The Rev. Nathan Smalls prayed over the new class to conclude the ceremony.

Retirees recognized were as follows:

Constance Nelson Barnes, Joan Kristine Bergmann, Eleanor Cooper Brown, Mary Burch Burnell, Jeffrey Weldon Childress, Gerald Farrow Clinkscales, David Lloyd Fields, James Alan Grubb, Michael Leon Hayhurst, Kathy Priest Hudson, Catherine Jamieson, Martha Ann Johnson, Miriam Wilson Mick, Valerie Know Mireb, Deborah McKnight Patterson, Audrey Gessinger Ritter, Arthur Rose Jr., Rosetta Everna Ross, Gracie Lee Singletary, Nathan Smalls, Asa Gray Stallworth, Mary Victoria Teasley, Kenneth Byrnes Timmerman, Tom Hennies Brodie Wall, Ardell Washington Sr. and Cynthia Burrows Williams.

The service ended with the singing of “Lift High the Cross.” An offering supported the Seminary Students College Fund.



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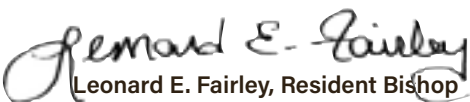
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Ministerial Appointments.

SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

By authority of *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, I hereby fix these appointments for the South Carolina Annual Conference for the 2026–2027 conference year. As commissioned, licensed, consecrated or ordained members of the covenant of ministry, let us offer ourselves without reserve to the responsibilities and opportunities of these appointments.


Leonard E. Fairley, Resident Bishop
South Carolina Annual Conference
June 10, 2025

STATUS KEY

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

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

A status change, changing districts, and appointment changes (including charge make-up or church name changes) will be indicated in bold print.

ANDERSON DISTRICT (58 CHARGES; 80 CHURCHES) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: JAMES L. FRIDAY 1

ANDERSON
Anderson Circuit – Annie K. Jackson (PL) (1/2) 9
(Mount Pleasant, Mount Sinai, Emmanuel)
Marshall Memorial-Ebenezer – T. David Simpson (SY) 2
North Anderson Charge – John L. Verburg (OF) (1/2) 2
(John Wesley, Sandy Springs)
South Main Chapel and Mercy Center – Kurt L. Stutler (¶346.2) (OF) 13
St. John’s – Stephen L. Love 3
Thompson Centennial-Fairfield Charge – Deborah McKnight Patterson (RL) 1
Toxaway – Freda A. Brock (PL) (1/2) 11
Trinity – Roy M. Mitchell 7
Minister of Discipleship/Outreach – Kathryn M. Bariou (FD) 5
Zion – Beverly CroweTipton 11

BELTON:
Latimer Memorial-Homeland Park – Michael L. Vandiver (RE) (1/2) 3
Pisgah-Oak Hill – Wally Culp 2
Union Grove – Amy D. Bratton 15

CALHOUN FALLS:
Calhoun Falls – TBS

CENTRAL:
Lawrence Chapel – Justin L. Ritter 2
Mount Zion – Joseph B. Gambrell (PE) 2
CLEMSON:
Clemson – Thomas B. Wilkes III, 5
Associate & Campus Minister – Steven P. Simoneaux Jr. 14
Discipleship Minister – Margaret H. Wilkes (FD) 5

EASLEY:
Tabor – TBS
Bethesda – A. Judson King 7
Dacusville-Christ – Brian Lee Underwood (FL) 1
Easley Charge – Adrienne Stokes (PE) 2
(Easley Chapel, John Wesley)
Fairview-St. Paul – J. Kevin Gorry (RE) (1/2) 11
First Church – Michael J. Hood 6

GREENVILLE:
Berea Friendship-St. Mark – Christopher E. Arries (RE) 1
Bethlehem – Valerie Brooks-Madden (PL) (1/2) 3
Greenville Parish – Brenda R. Washington (PL) (1/2) 18
(Minus Chapel, New Beginnings Mission)
John Wesley – Daniel T. Hembree 6
Laurens Road – Laura R. Bratton (1/2) 16
Monaghan – Patricia Dianne Boyer (RL) (1/2) 4
Open Hearts – Karen Lail Jones 4
Salem-St. John – Medina L. Miller Gentry (FD) (1/2) 2
St. Matthew – Kurt A. McPherson 5
St. Paul – Charles Brian Humphries 2

GREER:
Slater – Wesley Manly (PL) (1/2) 4

HONEA PATH:
Lebanon – TBS
Trinity – Shannon Bullion 2

IVA:
Bethel-Ruhamah – Richard A. Powell (PL) (1/2) 3

LIBERTY:
Liberty – Vaughn E. CroweTipton (OF) (1/4) 4

PENDLETON:
Pendleton Charge – Andre L. Gary Sr. (PL) (1/2) 3
(Bethel, Central)

PICKENS:
Grace – Valerie K. Mireb (RE) 6
Mount Bethel-Porter’s Chapel – Joe D. Durham (RL) (1/4) 5
Co-Pastor – Brenda W. Durham (RL) (1/4) 5

PIEDMONT:
Augusta Road – Shawn Armstrong 3
Piedmont – Richard W. Waldrep (RE) 5

SENECA:
Ann Hope-Friendship – Ray Tavenner (PL) (1/2) 2

New Harmony-Robinson Chapel – Shane D. Whitner (SY) (1/2) 1
St. Mark – S. Alexander Stevenson 4

SIMPSONVILLE:
Hopewell – Donald R. Brown 10

STARR:
Starr Charge – Tom Cribb (SY) (1/2) 3
(Hebron, Starr)

TRAVELERS REST:
Jackson Grove – TBS
New St. Luke – Bernetha Orr (PL) (1/2) 2
Travelers Rest – Christopher Brian Gilmer 4
Associate – Michelle Dellinger Cockcroft 3

TOWNVILLE:
Dickson Memorial – TBS

WALHALLA:
St. Luke – Kevin B. Lindley 9

WESTMINSTER:
Double Springs-Rock Springs – TBS
Hopewell – TBS
Westminster-Chicopee – Jeffrey J. Hogan (PL) (1/2) 6

WILLIAMSTON:
Grace-Pelzer – Ronald E. Bentley (FD) (1/4) 2
Williamston Charge – TBS
(New Golden Grove, St. James)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection
A. Melton Arant Jr. – Coordinator of Clergy Services, Zion/Anderson CC 7
James L. Friday – Anderson (Easley) District Superintendent 1
Edward L. McCutcheon – Director, Wesley Foundation, Furman University 18
F. Hillary Taylor (¶346.1)(OE) – Ex. Director, South Carolinians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, CC 1
¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency

Andrew T. Jones – Chaplain, St. Frances Hospital Systems (FD), Travelers Rest CC 4
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries
C. Lane Glaze – President & Chair, One Eleuthera Foundation of the U.S., Clemson CC 6

Megan Augustine Boatwright – Clemson ELCA Campus Ministry Pastor, Clemson CC 2

Laura-Allen Kerlin – Regional Dev. Dir., Communities in Schools of SC, Clemson CC 3
Christine Reeves-Pendergrass – Missionary, St. Matthew (Greenville) CC 4

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6, ¶337.3b

William Douglas Herlong – Candler School of Theology, Clemson CC 2 (¶337.3b)

Natalie Faye Taylor (PD) – Greenville Memorial CPE Residence, Travelers Rest CC 1

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1

Angela Renee Johnson (FD) – Minister to Children, Sugar Hill UMC, N. Ga. Conference John Wesley (GV) CC9

Ryan B. Spurrier – Campus Minister, UNC Chapel Hill, NC Conference, Clemson CC 12

OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS
Chris Lynch – Anderson/Spartanburg Congregational Specialist & SCMYP Coordinator

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal:
Sylvia Freeman Watson, CC 1
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional:
Sandra Charlene MacMillan, Travelers Rest CC 1
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical:
Kitty Cooper Holtzclaw 5

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active:
Kristin M. Dollar, Trinity (IN Conf) CC 7
John R. F. Evatt, Mount Zion CC
M. Katherine Matthews, Apex (NC Conf) CC 12
Retired:
Christopher W. Cox, CC TBD 19
Patricia A. Ginn-Griffeth, TBD
George M. Workman, Union Grove CC

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One

Retired:
Carolyn E. Brashear, Trinity CC
Ann B. Fuhr, Lawrence Chapel CC

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONERS
Active: No One
Retired:
Mary Lou Edens – Toxaway CC

RETIRED CLERGY:
Allinder, Joseph E.
Arries, Christopher E.
Ashmore, E. Warren
Batson, Dan L.
Beaudrot, Gayle M.
Benson, Carleathea (RL)
Bowers, Edna R. (RL)
Bowers, Randall E. (RL)
Boyer, Patricia Diane
Bryant Jr., T. Lee
Bynum, William H.
Cannon, Barry W.
Carlisle, Robert N.
Cox, H. Michael
Dawsey, James M.
Durham, Brenda (RL)
Durham, Joe D. (RL)
Elliott Jr., Richard F.
Errington, Joseph R.
Ethridge, Bobbie R. (FD)
Eubanks, Robert L.
Farley, William B.
Fortney, Daniel K. (OM)
Freeman, John M.
Gorry, J. Kevin
Harrelson, Curtis Davon (RL)
Hicks, Granville A.
Hendry, Joyce S. (RL)
Howell Jr., Robert J.
Huff Jr., A. V.
Johnson, Hal B. (RL)
Kelley, Patrick H. (RL)
Lack, P. Michael (RL)
Leppard, James F.
Lewis, Sinclair E.
Marsh, Ed C.
Marsh, Eileen C.
Martin, J. Gregory (RL)
McNatt, Linda M.
Medlin, Anthony Steele
Miller, John Teague
Mims, Louis M.
Mireb, Valerie K.
Mitchell, Paul C.
Morgan, Steven D.
Owens, Kenneth D.
Patterson, James F.
Patterson, Stanley B.
Pearce, Roger Wayne
Pisor, Debra L. (RD)
Ray, Marie E.
Reynolds, Nena
Riser, George M.
Rogers, Cyrus D.
Scott, George W.
Sayre, Bruce
Shattuck Sr., Leslie J. (RL)
Shaw, Charles S.
Shepard, Frederick J.
Shepard, Marguerite K.
Smith, Larry G. (RL)
Smith, S. Randolph
Stillwell, Robert E.
Stoehr, Lorna Lee Curtis
Sullivan, Patricia A. (RD)
Thomas, George
Thompson, Morris C.
Treaster, Fred
Vandiver, Michael L.
Varner, Gregg S. (RL)
Waldrep, Richard W.
Watson, John H. (RL)

ISLE OF PALMS:
First – Charles Andrew Phillips 4
JOHNS ISLAND:
Johns Island Parish – Pattie E. Gordon 9
(Bethlehem-St. James, New Webster)
Wesley – Doris R. Bright 5
LADSON:
Wesley – Eddie C. Williams 1
McCLELLANVILLE:
Sewee Santee Charge – Roye Lynn Kulik (RE) (1/2) 8
(McClellanville, Ocean Grove, Wren’s Chapel)
MONCK’S CORNER:
Centenary – Eleanor Cooper Brown (PL) (1/2) 4
Joshua – Mae Frances Taylor 21
Moncks Corner – D. Mitchell Houston (RE) 1
Smyrna – F. Debra Dowdle (RA) (1/2) 4

MOUNT PLEASANT:
Hibben – Cathy D. Mitchell 1
Associate – Katherine A. Brock (FD) 6

PINOPOLIS:
Wesley – Shamond D. Riddy (¶346.2)(OF) 6

RIDGEVILLE:
Spring Hill – A. Robert Nix (RE) 3

ST. STEPHEN:
All Saints Charge – Marvin Taylor Jr. (PL) (1/2) 5
(Cordesville, New Light)
Bethel – Lillian Washington (RE) 3
Jehovah – Tony Richardson Sr. (PL) (1/2) 12
Mount Nebo – Richard Irving (PL) (1/2) 11
St. Stephen Charge – Lena E. Murdock (RL) (1/2) 4
(Rehoboth, St. Stephen)

SUMMERVILLE:
Bethany – Michael D. Ritter Sr. 5
Associate – W. Isaac Dusenbury 3
Boone Hill – Robert L. Rabenstein III (RL) (1/4) 2
Enoch Chapel-Grove Hall (Enoch Chapel) – Victoria Richardson (RL) (1/4) 22
(Grove Hall) – Virginia B. Stafford (RL) (1/4) 23
Stallsville – Robert L. Rabenstein III (RL) (1/2) 4
Summerville Parish – Darlene Brenda Richardson 4
(Murray, Wesley)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection:
John S. Poole (FL) – Charleston Wesley Foundation Director 5
Jeffrey Salley – Charleston District Superintendent 3

Bethel – Susan P. Leonard 9
Centenary – Lorenzo Moses (1/4) 23
Cokesbury – Suzanne Walker 2
Epworth – Vivia L. Fowler (FD) (1/2) 5
Grace – Benjamin O. Burt 6
Associate – Kim M. Bryant (1/2) 4
John Wesley – John L. Warren Jr. (RE) 1
Associate – TBS
Midland Park Millard Cooper Stonestreet (RE) (1/2) 5
Mount Carmel – Okereta M. Mills (PL) (1/2) 1
New Francis Brown – Cindy S. Shaw (FL) 3
North Charleston – Meredith M. Dark 3
Old Bethel – David V. Washington (FL) 6
St. Andrews Parish – Brent L. Dehlborn (FL) 5
St. Mark – W. Michael Bruce (RE) 3
Trinity – Michael D. Wood (PL) (1/4) 4
Washington – Kerry Brisbon (PL) (1/2) 6
Wesley – Eleanora C. Ellington 5

CROSS:
Cross – Davie Sanders 8
(Jerusalem, Zion)
Greater St. Paul – Raymond P. Gibbs (FL) 5

EDISTO ISLAND:
Edisto Island – Len Ripley (RL) (1/2) 3

FOLLY BEACH:
Folly Beach – TBS

GOOSE CREEK:
Goose Creek – Lisa C. Hawkins 2
St. James – Joshua W. Tietje 5

HOLLYWOOD:
Ravenel – Jeff Godfrey (PL) (1/2) 2
Wesley – Fadetra H. Boyd 2
Wesley Memorial – TBS

HUGER:
St. Thomas Charge – Cheryl G. Johnson 5
Associate – Lee M. Johnson (PL) (1/2) 5
(New Hope, Stewart Chapel, Zion)

ISLE OF PALMS:
First – Charles Andrew Phillips 4

JOHNS ISLAND:
Johns Island Parish – Pattie E. Gordon 9
(Bethlehem-St. James, New Webster)
Wesley – Doris R. Bright 5

LADSON:
Wesley – Eddie C. Williams 1
McCLELLANVILLE:
Sewee Santee Charge – Roye Lynn Kulik (RE) (1/2) 8
(McClellanville, Ocean Grove, Wren’s Chapel)

MONCK’S CORNER:
Centenary – Eleanor Cooper Brown (PL) (1/2) 4
Joshua – Mae Frances Taylor 21
Moncks Corner – D. Mitchell Houston (RE) 1
Smyrna – F. Debra Dowdle (RA) (1/2) 4

MOUNT PLEASANT:
Hibben – Cathy D. Mitchell 1
Associate – Katherine A. Brock (FD) 6

PINOPOLIS:
Wesley – Shamond D. Riddy (¶346.2)(OF) 6

RIDGEVILLE:
Spring Hill – A. Robert Nix (RE) 3

ST. STEPHEN:
All Saints Charge – Marvin Taylor Jr. (PL) (1/2) 5
(Cordesville, New Light)
Bethel – Lillian Washington (RE) 3
Jehovah – Tony Richardson Sr. (PL) (1/2) 12
Mount Nebo – Richard Irving (PL) (1/2) 11
St. Stephen Charge – Lena E. Murdock (RL) (1/2) 4
(Rehoboth, St. Stephen)

SUMMERVILLE:
Bethany – Michael D. Ritter Sr. 5
Associate – W. Isaac Dusenbury 3
Boone Hill – Robert L. Rabenstein III (RL) (1/4) 2
Enoch Chapel-Grove Hall (Enoch Chapel) – Victoria Richardson (RL) (1/4) 22
(Grove Hall) – Virginia B. Stafford (RL) (1/4) 23
Stallsville – Robert L. Rabenstein III (RL) (1/2) 4
Summerville Parish – Darlene Brenda Richardson 4
(Murray, Wesley)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection:
John S. Poole (FL) – Charleston Wesley Foundation Director 5
Jeffrey Salley – Charleston District Superintendent 3

¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:

Jason D. Everson – Chaplain, US Navy, Chapel of Hope, Yokosuka, Japan, Isle of Palms CC 10

George H. Grant – Director of Research in Faith and Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, Bethel CC 27

¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Bernett W. Mazyck (FD) – President/CEO, SC Assoc. of Community Development Corp., Murray CC 14

Richard H. Reams – Director of Dev. and Marketing, Palmetto Community Care, Bethel-Charleston CC 2

Carly K. Wicklund – Pediatric Staff Chaplain, UNC Health Care, Chapel Hill, NC, Bethel-Charleston CC 5

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ¶416.6, ¶337.3b – No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1

Adriane M. Burgess – St. Mary’s Road UMC, South Georgia Conference 8

Wendy T. Hudson – Trinity (Savannah), South Georgia Conference 1

Soon S. Nix (FD) – Associate, Korean Church of Atlanta (3/4), North Georgia Conference 7

Kelli Waters Taylor – Marvin UMC, North Carolina Conference 2

OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS – No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional: No One
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical:
Rebecca A. Rowell (PE), Bethany (CH) CC 1

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active:
Daniel Flessas, Hibbon CC
Retired:
Cermette Clardy Jr., Isle of Palms CC
Gary Corbett Davis, Bethany (CH) CC
David Emory Lupo, Hibben CC

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Brisbon, David A.
Broomall, Richard A.
Brown, Eleanor C. (RL)
Brown, Joanne E.
Brown III, Major
Bruce, W Michael
Cash, H. Carroll (RL)
Clendaniel, Donald
Gaither, Stephen D.
Garrett, Jo Ann (RL)
Houston, D. Mitchell
Hughes, Elizabeth C.
Hughes, Jessie Clark
Ivey, Ruth Ann (FD)
James, David
Jefferson, Ethel Gethers
Jones, Clayton (RL)
Kulik, Roye Lynn
Lee, Robert E. (RA)
Locklair, Josephine M.
Mabey, Janice L. (RL)
Masciangelo, William R. (RL)
McFadden, Vivian
Miller, Bonnie (RL)
Murdock, Lena Elizabeth (RL)
Myers, John David
Cubie, James (RL)
Davis, Gloria
Davis, Lillie K.
Dingle, Shirley (RL)
Dowdle, Frances Debra (RA)
Felder, William H
Harrison Jr., Jerry
Nelson Sr. Dwight A.
Murdock, Lena E. (RL)
Nix, A. Robert
Ott, Burton

Continued on next page

Ministerial Appointments.

Continued from previous page

Rabenstein, Robert (RL)
Ratledge, Jackie S. (RD)
Richardson, Victoria (RL)
Ripley III, Leonard (RL)
Rodeffer, Larry William
Rogers-Berry, Richard
Smalls, Nathan
Smith, David S.
Smith, Debra Quilling
Stafford, Virginia (RL)
Stonestreet, Cooper
Taylor, Kelli W.
Washington, Lillian
Timmerman, Kenneth B.
White, Sara A.
Wilson Jr., Harlan E.

COLUMBIA DISTRICT
(53 charges; 59 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
FRANCES M. ELROD 5

BLYTHEWOOD:
Trinity – Amanda J. Dean (¶346.1)(OE) 1
Beulah – Robert McDowell (OR) (1/4) 4
CAMDEN:
Camden First – Norman Brown (RE) 3
East Camden – Shirley P. Gordon 1
(Emmanuel, St. Matthew)
Good Hope Wesley Chapel – Judith A. Knox 1
Lyttleton Street – Jonathan E. Tompkins 1
St. Paul – Leatha W. Brown 3
West Camden – Raymond Cook Jr. (RL) (1/2) 3
(Rockspring, St. Peter)

CAYCE:
Cayce – Morgan B. Byars 1
COLUMBIA:
Asbury Memorial – Laurie G. Brandes (FL) 3
Ashland – Jonathan D. Harris 2
Bethel – Mason H. Cantey 3
Bluff Road – Stephanie E. F. Stafford (PL) (1/2) 4
Columbia – Kermit C. Moss (¶346.2)(OF) (1/2) 3
Executive Pastor – Ashley McCoy-Bruce 3
Fair Lawn – James T. (JT) Brown 2
Francis Burns – Geneva G. Stafford 8
Grace – Meghan L. Sweeney Cook 3
Heyward Street – Tammy A. Blom (¶346.2) (OF) (1/2) 11
I. DeQuincey Newman – Frank V. James (RE) (1/2) 5
Journey – George A. Ashford 20
Associate – Margo W. Williams (PL) (1/2) 2
McLeod – TBS
Mill Creek – Sharon L. Long (PL) (1/4) 15
Mount Pleasant – Alexander J. Christian (RL) (1/2) 2
Northeast – Antoinette Gaboton-Moss (PE) 5
Shandon – C. Smoke Kanipe 11
Associate – William A. Harvey (¶346.1)(OM) 1
Associate – Margaret R. Cantey (FD) (3/4) 3
Minister of Music and Arts – Donald E. Huss Jr. (FD) 16
St. John – TBS
Suber Marshall Memorial – E. Reggie Rowell (RE) 2
Trenholm Road – James L. McCoy-Bruce 5
Associate – Mollie B. Reddic 4
Director of Music Ministries – Sarah T. Fletcher (FD) (1/2) 18
Virginia Wingard Memorial – Sheila Elliott Hodge 3
Washington Street – Rebecca J. Shirley 6
Associate, Nurture/Discipleship Development – Alston F. Lippert (PL) (1/2) 10
Director of Family Ministries – Katherine L. James (FD) 3
Wesley – Ellis White Jr. 1
Whaley Street – Susan D. Culler (HL) (1/4) 6
Windsor – Claire Van Den Berg 3

GILBERT:
Gilbert – Mark E. Thompson (RE) (3/4) 6
Shiloh – John N. Kronz (PE) 4
IRMO:
Salem – Julie Songer Belman 1
Shady Grove-Caper’s Chapel – Barry A. Allen 2
Union – Stephen P. Taylor 11
Associate – Faye J. Jones (PE) 5
LEXINGTON:
Boiling Springs – TBS
Faith – Hope R. Morris 8
Lexington – James S. “Mack” McDowell 5
Associate – Meegian A. Gossard 4
Red Bank – Jeremy L. Howell 2

LUGOFF:
Lugoff Parish – Lyndon B. Alexander II (PL) (1/2) 1
(Mount Joshua, Mount Prospect, Shiloh)
St. John’s – John Jordan 2
Unity – Enrique R. Gordon 1
WEST COLUMBIA:
Brookland – Christopher Mark Payne (PL) (1/2) 8
Mount Hebron – Ann D. Kovan 2
Platt Springs – Frances “Fran” S. Connell 1
Shiloh – Sandra G. Stillinger (PL) (1/4) 9
Trinity – Darlene L. Kelley 3
WINNSBORO:
First-Winnsboro – Joseph “Joe” Alvin Patton (SY) (1/2) 1
Gordon Memorial-Greenbrier – TBS
Monticello – TBS

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection:
George A. Ashford – Director of Innovation & Strategy, Journey CC 1
Fran M. Elrod – District Superintendent, Columbia District 5
W. Everette “Rett” Haselden – Conference Benefits Officer 3
James “Jad” D. Taylor III – Director, Wesley

Foundation USC 3
Robert M. Vincent – President, SC United Methodist Foundation, Salem, Irmo CC 9
¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Lara Caulder Byrd – Chaplain, United States Navy, Lexington CC 8
Adrienne H. Fink (FD) – Chaplain, Prisma Health, Washington Street CC 12
N. Nichole Middleton – Chaplain, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Trenholm Road CC 17
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Elizabeth A. Murray (FD) – American Church (Paris), Assoc. Pastor (Youth/Young Adults), Lexington CC 6
Luke Moon Taeg Rhyee – Missionary to Guatemala, Mission Society 12
James B. Rogers – Springmore Life Care Retirement Community Chaplain, Lexington CC 2
¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend School:
James William Smith (FE to FD) – Prisma Health Richland CPE Residence, Lyttleton St CC 2
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1
Heather R. Connor – Geneva UMC, Northern Illinois Conference 2
Gary Lloyd Rivas – Duluth New Church Start, North Georgia Conference 1
Amanda T. Young – Mountain View Charge, Holston Conference 2
OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS – No one
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3: Personal:
Jon A. Hoin, Union (Irmo) CC 5
Sara E. Relaford, Union (Irmo) CC 5
Jeri-Katherine Warden Sipes, Union (Irmo) CC 2
Scott W. Smoak, Trinity (Blythwood) – CC 2
¶353.2b, 353.3: Family: No One
¶353.2c: Transitional: No One
¶353.4: Involuntary: No One
¶351: Sabbatical: No One
¶356: Medical: No One

HONORABLE LOCATION
Active:
M. Susan D. Culler, Washington St. CC 11
Scott G. Middleton, Washington St. CC 31
Stephen C. Toth, Washington St. CC 2
Retired:
M. David Arant Jr., Emmanuel CC 28
Benjamin B. Bishop, Cayce CC 26
Glen McCoy, Columbia CC 25
English B. Pearcy, Trinity-West Columbia CC 26

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

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONER
Active:
Leland Spencer, Professor and Chair, Women’s and Gender Studies (USC), Washington Street CC
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Adams, James C.
Alexander, Robert E.
Alley, Joseph W.
Anderson, David L.
Arant Sr., Athon M.
Arant, James S. (RD)
Arant, Ruth H. (RD)
Armstrong, Debra A.
Ballenger, Walter C.
Barnes Jr., Rudolph C. (RL)
Barwick, Kenneth W.
Bauknight, David D.
Bauknight, John M.
Bell, Michael C.
Borom, W. Robert
Branch, Charles S.
Bratton, Scott M.
Britt, W. Donald
Brooks, Boyce F.
Brum, Sonia E.
Buie, Franklin B.
Childress, Jeffrey W.
Childs, William R. “Bill”
Chong, Yu Fong
Christian, Alex (RL)
Clyburn, David A.
Collier, Elizabeth Jane
Cooper, Wiley B.
Cox, Albert L.
Cox, Robert L.
Culp, John W.
Culp, Karin B.
DeDonato, David M.
Edwards, Charlie A.
Etheredge, Ernest C.
Evans, John D.
Evans, William F.
Gramling, Roger M.
Griffin, M. Kathryn
Griffith, Frank J.
Grubb, James A.
Gunn, James H.
Harmon, Paul W.
Harmon, Samuel K.
Hays Jr., Lawrence F.
Henry-Crowe, Susan
Horne, R. Wayne
James, Frank V.
Johnson, Mary L.
Jones, Joel R.
Kennerly, Kenneth R.
Kinnett, Paul “Mac”
Laney, Sterling S.
Lavender, Phil C.
Lee, Young In “David”
Mayfield, Patricia P.
McDowell Jr., Edward H.
McKeown, Robert E.

Middleton, Albert
Middleton, Evelyn C.
Miller, Debbie H. (RL)
Miller Jr., Noble F.
Mims, John W.
Moore II, Raymond L.
Morris, Franklin D.
Moseley, Diane A.
Paik, Miyoung
Parrish, Patricia J.
Pearson, John C.
Phillips, Gary D.
Prill, Kenneth W.
Rodgers, Augustus
Rowell, Eldridge R.
Scott Jr., Otis
Shugart, Steven L.
Simmons, Colin E.
Steil, W. Edwin
Summers, Thomas A.
Taylor, Cynthia C.
Taylor, Randy M.
Teague, Willie S.
Thompson, Mark E.
Tuell, James
Ulmer, B. Susan
Wall, Tom H. Brodie
Watson, J. Austin
Watson, Joe Cal
Westerkam, Diana C.
White, Toni L.
Williams, Robert T.
Williams, Thurmond
Wilson II, Joseph A.
Yongue, Neil

Note: Epworth Memorial staffed by Epworth Children’s Home

GREENWOOD DISTRICT
(43 charges; 55 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
CHRISTOPHER M. LOLLIS 3

CALHOUN FALLS:
Calhoun Falls – TBS
CLINTON:
Broad Street Regena “Jeanie” L. Swanson (FL) 1
GRANITEVILLE:
St. John – TBS
GREENWOOD:
Aldersgate – TBS
Ebenezer – TBS
Kinards – Myra E. Taylor (PL) (1/2) 3
Lowell Street-Mathews-St. Paul Charge – John M. Williams III 2
Lupo Memorial – TBS
Main Street – R. T. Bowling III 2
Mount Carmel – Jo Ann Stone (SY) 3
Panola – TBS
Rehoboth – TBS
St. Mark – Jason Glen Wilson 4
Associate – Robert T. Lybrand (PL) (1/4) 6
Tranquil – Gregory W. Thompson (¶346.2)(OF) (1/2) 1
Trinity-Harris Charge – Thessa G. Smith 5
JOANNA:
Epworth-Springdale – Joie Rogers (PL) (1/4) 4
KINARDS:
Hopewell-Sharon Charge – Kathy Cinnamond (PL) (1/4) 4
LANGLEY:
Langley-Warrentville-Capers Chapel – Leo Roy 2
LAURENS:
Central – Denise Holland (SY) (1/4) 1
Trinity – TBS
First – John P. Bolin 1
St. James – TBS
McCORMICK:
Republican – TBS
St. Paul – Susan Galasso (¶346.2)(OF) (1/4) 1
NEWBERRY:
Central – Billy Keith Stewart 2
Lewis Memorial-Ebenezer Charge – James H. Counts Jr. (RL) 17
O’Neal Street – Ed Stallworth III (AM) 3
Trinity – Myra E. Taylor (PL) (1/2) 3
NORTH AUGUSTA:
Grace – M. Terrence “Terry” Fleming 1
Associate – Jessica L. Kight (FL) 1
Associate Minister of Adult & Youth Discipleship – Amber S. Forrest (PD) 1
The Way – Patrick Taylor (¶347.2) (FL) 1
POMARIA:
New Hope – Jesse F. Rogers (PL) (1/2) 6
PROSPERITY:
Zion – Joseph R. James Jr. 2
RIDGE SPRING
Ridge Spring – Laura A. Kohl (SY) (1/4) 4
Spann – Ross A. Ruark Sr. (SY) (1/4) 2
SALUDA:
Bethlehem – Donna E. Lollis (SY) (1/4) 1
Crossroads-Martha’s Chapel-Mays – Gerald F. Clinkscales (RL) (1/2) 6
St. Paul – Christy P. McMillin-Goodwin (¶346.2)(OF) (1/2) 1
VAUCLUSE:
Vaucluse-Pentecost – Vincent S. Davis (PL) (1/2) 3
WARE SHOALS:
Mount Bethel-King’s Chapel – Michael L. Written (RL) 3
Ware Shoals-Harmony – Janice B. Hughey (PL) (1/2) 2
WATERLOO:
Soule Chapel – Emil Finley (RL) (1/2) 8
Waterloo – Craig Vondergeest (¶346.1)(OE) 1
WHITMIRE:
Whitmire – Karen L. Kirchel (SY) (1/4) 1

HARTSVILLE DISTRICT
(66 charges; 96 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT:
TELLEY LYNETTE GADSON, DS 6
BENNETTSVILLE:
Bennettsville Charge – Larry McCray (PE) 4
(Aaron Temple, Ebenezer)
Bennettsville Parish – Maurice E. McZeke (PL) (1/2) 5
(Shiloh, Smyrna, St. Michael)
Bethel – William Frank Strickland (SY) (1/4) 2
Level Green – Brenda L. Toms (PL) (1/2) 3
Trinity – Allen Nesmith 1
BETHUNE:
Bethel – TBS
BISHOPVILLE:
Bethlehem – Edward “Ed” R. McKnight (¶347.3)(PL) (1/2) 1
Hebron-McBee – Jerry Cal McManus Sr. (PL) (1/2) 2
Mechanicsville – Angela N. Hampton (FL) 3
Mount Zion – Michael S. Brisbon (PL) (1/2) 4
New Haven – Sharome D. Henry (PL) (1/2) 3
Sandy Bluff – Willie Mae Cannon (RL) (1/2) 1
Spring Hill – Kenneth N. Carter (RE) (1/2) 3
BLENHEIM:
Parnassus – William Frank Strickland (SY) (1/4) 2
CHERAW:
Cheraw Parish – O. (Sammy) J. Pazi 5
(Bethel, Mount Zion, Wesley)
First Church – Joseph D. Kovas 2
CHESTERFIELD:
Bethel-Ebenezer – TBS
Chesterfield Charge – Charles E. Teal (RL) (1/2) 3
(Mount Croghan, Pleasant Grove)
St. Paul – Alisha C. Hansen 9
Wesley Chapel – Robin Miles (PL) (1/2) 6
CLIO:
Asbury-Old Clio – Sandra D. Stubbs (PL) (1/2) 8
DARLINGTON:
Hartsville Cooperative Parish* – Reginald E. Lee 6
Associate – TBS
Indian Branch-Epworth – TBS
Shiloh – William A. DuBose (PL) (1/2) 2
St. James – Darren J. McClam (FL) 2
West Darlington – Daniel “Sonny” M. Hall (RL) (1/4) 6
(Wesley Memorial)
DILLON:
Dillon Parish – Anthony D. Caldwell (PE) 2
(Beulah, St. Luke, St. Stephen)
Little Rock Parish – Ronald I. McCall (FL) 30
(Bowling Green, McCoy Chapel, New Holly)

dent, Greenwood District 3
¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend School: No One
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 – No One
OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS – No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional: No One
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical: No One

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

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONER
Active: No One
Retired: No One

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

Oakland-Manning Chapel – T. Michael Summerlin (RL) (1/2) 13
FLORENCE:
Central – Thomas Smith 8
Associate – Ronald “Rusty” B. Crimm (PD) 2
Minister of Faith Formation & Discipleship – Meg B. Jiunnies (FD) 10
Cumberland – Martin L. Quick 5
Dawsey – Matthew A. Price (PL) (1/2) 3
Highland Park – Katherine Haselden Crimm 4
Quinby-Bethsaida – TBS
St. Paul – TBS
Wesley – James (Pete) Peterson (PL) (1/2) 5
HARTSVILLE:
Centenary-Kingsville – Rickey L. Stuckey (FL) 2
Kellybell – Mary B. Burnell (RL) (1/2) 4
Mount Beulah – Levern Epps (PL) (1/2) 6
New Hope – Jacob L. McLeod (RL) (1/4) 4
New Market – Corinthia G. Mack (PL) (1/2) 6
Wesley – Frederick “Fred” S. McDaniel 3
JEFFERSON:
Jefferson-Fork Creek – TBS
Hopewell-Wesley Chapel – Patricia P. Bowman (PL) (1/2) 2
Jefferson – TBS
LAMAR:
Lamar – Paige Wheeler (PE) 2
Lamar-Ebenezer Charge – J. Elbert Williams (1/2) 6
(Ebenezer, John Wesley, Sandy Grove)
Lamar Parish – Emma R. Jones (RL) (1/2) 8
(Newman Swamp, Zion)
LYNCHBURG:
Lynchburg Charge – TBS
(Lynchburg, St. Luke, Trinity)
New Haven – Samuel B. Cooper (RE) (1/2) 11
St. Paul-Elliott – Pernerva S. W. Thomas (RL) (1/2) 4
St. Paul-Wisacky-Warren Chapel – Gracie L. Singletary (PL) (1/2) 3
OSWEGO:
Oswego Circuit John B. Dicks Sr. (RE) (1/2) 3
(Mount Moriah, St. Mark)
PAGELAND:
Salem – TBS
SUMTER:
Aldersgate – Regina H. Moore (OE) (1/2) 2
Antioch – Franklin R. Garrett (RE) (1/2) 3
Clark – Sarah Y. Johnson (PL) (1/2) 4
Emmanuel – James Moses Smith (RL) (1/2) 4
Mount Zion – Troy J. Cato (PL) (1/2) 4
Shepherd – Gwendolyn T. White (PL) (1/2) 3
St. James – Jamal L. Wilkerson (FL) 1
St. Mark – Darlene Dellinger (¶347.3) (PE) 4
Trinity – Angela H. Marshall (FD) 2
TIMMONSVILLE:
Mount Zion – Willie Wilson (RE) (1/4) 3
St. Luke – Willie Wilson (RE) (1/4) 3
WALLACE:
Ebenezer – TBS

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

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Telley L. Gadson – District Superintendent
Hartsville District 6
Millie Nelson Smith – Director, S.C. Conference Connectional Ministries, St. Paul-Camden CC 7
¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
David Todd Morrison – Chaplain, United States Army, Highland Park CC 17
Marvis Lavern Stewart – Staff Chaplain – VCU Community Memorial Hospital, Virginia Conference 3
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Rosetta Everna Ross – Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Spelman College, St. Mark CC 31
¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend School:
Tyner Joseph Jiunnies (PE) – Yale Divinity School, Central (Florence) CC 1 (¶337.3b)
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 – No One
OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS – No One
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional: No One
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical:
Carl W. Hunsucker, TBD CC 5

HONORABLE LOCATION:
Active: No One
Retired:
Linda E. McDaniel, CC TBD
Audrey G. Ritter, Zion, Pageland CC
Howard S. Waddell III, Lyttleton St CC

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONER
Active:
Selena Ruth Smith, Sumter Fire Department 14
Retired: No One
RETIRED CLERGY
Ammons, Gene Sarvis
Bailey, Harold Jack
Beckom, Terry Martin
Best, Kay Adams
Bragdon, Dannye O.
Boatwright Sr., Donald W.
Bowman, Charles Lee (RL)
Brown, Larry Richard (RL)
Brown, Norman A.

Continued on next page

Ministerial Appointments.

Continued from previous page

Burnell, Mary B. (RL)
Cannon, Willie Mae (RL)
Carter, Kenneth N.
Compton, C. Gary (RL)
Cook Jr., Raymond F. (RL)
Cooper, J. Jeannette'
Cooper, Samuel B.
Crouch, John (RL)
Dargan, William "Bill"
Dean, Dewey Levan
Dicks, John B.
Duncan, Jimmie Will (RL)
Epps, Hazel (RL)
Frey, Paul
Garrett, Franklin R.
Gaskins, Joshua (RL)
Hall, Daniel M.
Hedden, Bette A.
Henderson, Michael B.
James, Lindora (RL)
Jones, Emma R. (RL)
Josey, Roberta
Lane, James (JC) Charles
Lawson, Willie
Ledbetter, Pamela
Malachi, Maye E. (RL)
Malachi, Robert L.
McDowell, Julius L.
McFadden, Genova
McLeod, Jacob L. (RL)
Miller, Blondell
Moore, James
Parsons, Barbee Olis
Pietila, Thomas C.
Ravenel Sr., Henry Lee
Ridenhour, Jimmy (RL)
Ritter II, Carl F.
Segars, Barbara (RL)
Short, Charlie A.
Smith, James Moses (RL)
Summerlin, T. Michael (RL)
Teal, Charles E. (RL)
Thackston, T. Reginald
Thomas Jr., Eddie (RA)
Thomas, Pernerva S.W. (RL)
Wagnon III, Leon L.
Watson, Jerry M.
Williams, G. DeVere (RA)
Wilson, Willie
Wood, Mary Kay (RD)
Wood, Paul A.
Yebuah, Frederick N.

MARION DISTRICT (60 charges; 69 churches) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: STEVEN LEE BROWN 4

CADES:
Bethesda – Shawn V. Chestnut 5
Faith – Edwin R. Cooper (PL) (1/4) 1
CONWAY:
Centenary – Alexander "Alex" J. Stoops Jr. (PL) (1/2) 2
Conway First – Kyle D. Randle 15
Associate – Emily L. Kirby (FD) (3/4) 5
Associate/Carolina Forest – E. Tyler Strange 3
Salem – TBS
Trinity – David D. McManus Jr. 1
Upper Conway/Lower Aynor Fresh Expres-
sions – Michael D. Byrd (PL) (1/4) 2

DILLON:
Union – TBS
FLORENCE:
Friendship – TBS
Mount Zion – Palma Duncan Thomas (RL) (1/2) 6
Salem – Briant "Brian" S. Mungo (PL) (1/2) 11

GEORGETOWN:
Duncan Memorial – TBS
Herbert Memorial – Charles L. Wilbanks (RE) 6
Oak Grove – TBS
Sampit – TBS
Union-Elim Charge – Richard Carl Jayroe (RL) 5

GREELEYVILLE:
Greeleyville Parish – John P. Thomas (RL) (1/4) 3
(Wilson Chapel, Long Branch)

HEMINGWAY:
Jeremiah – Norma D. Bartelle (PL) (1/4) 6
Mount Seal – Cynthia B. Williams (RL) (1/4) 6

JOHNSONVILLE:
Johnsonville Charge – Jennifer A. Price (PL) (1/4) 1
(Johnsonville, Vox Memorial)

KINGSTREE:
Asbury – Patrick M. Wilson Sr. (PL) (1/4) 5
Bethel – Evelyn Fulmore (FL) 3
Elijah – L. Johnny Epps (PL) (1/4) 2
Jerusalem – Isiah Brown (RL) (1/2) 4
Kennedyville – Norma D. Bartelle (PL) (1/4) 12
Kingstree – Grayson E. Fallaw (PE) 1
Mount Zion – Walter E. Strawther 2
St. Mary – Mildred M. Brown (PL) (1/4) 3
St. Michael – Barry S. McFadden (1/2) 11
St. Paul – Jerry L. Gadsden 8

LAKE CITY:
Lake City Charge – Carsten Aubrey Bryant 2
(Lake City, Brown's Chapel)

Lake Point–Ninevah Bonnell L. Williams (PL) (1/2) 1
Mount Beulah – Benjamin "Ben" Graham (RL) (1/2) 8
St. John – Mark D. Mitchell (RE) 2
St. Luke – Mildred M. Brown (PL) (1/4) 2
Wesley Chapel – Louis R. Ashley 3

LAKE VIEW:
Lake View – Michael D. Byrd (PL) (1/4) 1
LITTLE RIVER:
Ebenezer – Glen W. Dameron (¶346.1)(OR) (1/2) 6
Little River – Robert A. "Tony"Adams 3
Wampee – Brenton "Brent" A. Staul (PL) (1/4) 2

LORIS:
Camp Swamp – TBS
MARION:
Centenary – Edward "Ed" P. Dayton (¶318.4)(OL) (1/4) 1
Marion First – C. Nicholas Lyerly (FL) 4
Marion Parish – Anthony Alford (PL) (1/2) 6
(Bethel, Pleasant Grove, Springville)
St. Phillips – Ardell Washington Sr. (RL) (1/2) 12
MULLINS:
Mullins Charge – Kaprisha D. Grant (PL) (1/2) 2
(Beulah, Shiloh)

MURRELLS INLET:
Belin Memorial – William F. Malambri III 8
Associate – Sandra Stevens Poirel 3

MYRTLE BEACH:
Joseph B. Bethea – Kim M. Strong (RE) (1/2) 5
Socastee – Paula J. Stover (PE) 3
The Brook – LaSheilia M. Wyatt 1
NESMITH:
Friendship – Ernest W. Frierson 5
St. Paul – James W. Pressley (PL) (1/4) 5

NICHOLS:
Nichols – TBS
NORTH MYRTLE BEACH:
Trinity – Eugene "Gene" A. Aiken 5
Associate – Stephanie L. Schellinger (FL) 2

PAMPLICO:
Bethlehem/Pamplico – TBS
Pamplico – Gary N. Lowe (¶346.2)(OF) (1/4) 4

SCRANTON:
St. John Charge – Jeffrey P. Cila (PL) (1/2) 2
(Scranton, St John, Nazareth-Olanta)

SHILOH:
Shiloh – Corey A. LaSane (PL) (1/2) 3
(Asbury, St. John)

SURFSIDE BEACH:
Surfside – Andrew R. Wolfe 1
Associate – Tae S. Park 6

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c: Within the Connection:
Steven Lee Brown – District Superintendent,
Marion District 4
Amiri B. Hooker – Congregational Specialist
Florence/Marion Districts 3
Emily L. Kirby – Director, Coastal Carolina
Wesley Foundation (FD) (1/4) 5

¶344.1b: Approved by United Methodist
Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend
School: No One

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 – No One

OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS
Lou Jordan – Director, Francis Marion Wesley
Foundation 13

LEAVE OF ABSENCE:
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional:
Paige M. Wolfe (FD), Surfside CC 1
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical:
Samuel B. George III, Surfside CC 20
Steven M. Todd, Trinity (NMB) CC 8

HONORABLE LOCATION:
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active:
Kimberly S. Holt (LOA), Conway First CC 23
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Abraham, Ebbie (RL)
Adams, Quay W.
Alexander Jr., Boyd McIver (RL)
Barber, William Lee (RL)
Brown, Isiah (RL)
Clemons, Robert B.
Crews, Rowan
Daniel, Edmond (RL)
Deal, Alice L. "Ally"
Dunn, Linda B.
Dunn, Robert E.
Dyer, Cynthia H.
Epps, Hazel (RL)
Fenner, Jack L.
Forrest, Rebecca L. (RL)
Frenzel, Joan E. (RL)
***Graham, Benjamin (RL)**
Green, Mary E.
Grimsley, J. Preston
Harper, William N.
Hemingway, John T. (RL)
Heustess, William H.
Howle, George K.
Inabinet, Charles R.
James, Franklin (RL)
James, William S. (RA)
Jayroe, Richard (RL)
Jennings, Charles T. (RA)
Karn Jr, Marvin Wilbur
Land, Kenneth S.
Lazar, Julian H.
Lewis, Harold P.
Lockard–Hawkins, Joanne (RL)
Malphrus, Carolyn
Marcengill, Sam
McIver, Leslie H. (RD)
McKnight, Shirley (RL)
Mitchell, Mark D.
Morehead, G. Dane
Nason Jr., Maurice E.
Nuckles, Marie E.
Olive, George E. (RL)
Phillips, William H.
Roberts, Marsha R. (RD)
Shaw, Bobby
Smiley, John C. (RL)
Smith, Ray K.

Snowden, Mary (RL)
Snowden, Rufus (RA)
Strong, Kim M.
***Thomas, J. P. (RL)**
***Thomas, Palma (RL)**
Timmons, W. Gordon
Vance, Margaret Hutcherson (RD)
Vickers III, John (Jack) Henry
Washington Sr., Ardell (RL)
Watson, Lawrence A.
Wicker, William T. (RL)
Wilbanks, Charles L.
Wilkins, Rebecca A.
Williams, Cynthia B. (RL)
***Wilson, Willie**
Wyatt, Wade A.
* Formerly Florence District

ORANGEBURG DISTRICT (55 charges; 79 churches) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: KENNETH L. NELSON 7

AIKEN:
Trinity – Matthew L. Alexander 3
Wesley – Trenton "Trent" E. Younginer (SY) 1

BAMBERG:
Bamberg Circuit – Arthur Rose Jr. (¶346.1) (OM) (1/2) 10
(Bethel, Mount Zion)
Bamberg Cluster – Sheera Yates (PE) 3
(Franklin, Mount Carmel, Orange Grove)
Barnwell Charge – George Judson Barnes (FL) 4
(Barnwell, Siloam)

Main Street – Javy R. "Rudy" Gwaltney III (SY) 2
Trinity-Pleasant Hill Charge – TBS

BOWMAN:
New Covenant – Sheri Y. White 7
Pineville-St. Stephen – Renee M. Ritter (PE) 1

BRANCHVILLE:
Branchville-Bethel Charge – Kathryn "Katie" H. McCracken (PL) (1/2) 1

CAMERON:
Shady Grove – TBS
COPE:
Canaan – Jimmy Washington (RL) (1/2) 5
Edisto Charge Willie W. Clark (¶346.2)(OF) (1/2) 2
(St. John, Wesley Grove)

Edisto Fork – Curnell Graham (¶346.1) (OE) 1
Union – TBS

DENMARK:
Bethel Park – Javy R. "Rudy" Gwaltney III (FL) 5

EUTAWVILLE:
Eutawville – TBS
Silas – Whittaker V. Middleton (RE) (1/2) 14
Target-Gezirim – David Fields (RL) (1/2) 5

HOLLY HILL:
Providence – TBS

JACKSON:
Wesley Chapel – Raymond "Ray" H. Camp III (¶346.1)(OR) 1

JORDAN:
Jordan Charge – Carolyn "Kelli" R. Heisler (FL) 1
(Bethlehem, Jordan)

LIVINGSTON:
Livingston – TBS
Pine Hill – Jim Smyrl (¶346.2)(OF) (1/2) 2

MANNING:
Manning – William "Bill" H. McCown III 1

NEW ELLENTON:
St. Paul – TBS
NORTH:
North – TBS
St. Mark – Marvin A. Moss (¶346.1)(OE) 4
Trinity – TBS

NORWAY:
New Beginning – Thomas R. Sims (RL) (1/2) 10
Norway Charge – Sheldon L. Withrow (FL) 2
(Lebanon, St. John's)

OLAR:
Olar – Patricia Dangerfield (SY) (1/4) 11
(Kearse, Mizpah, Salem)

ORANGEBURG:
Cedar Grove–Forest Chapel – Harry L. Brown (RL) (1/2) 12
New Light – Brenda J. Thomas 1
North Orangeburg – J. Derrick Cattenhead 5
St. Andrew's – Laura H. Whitt 2
St. Paul's – Albert Shuler (¶346.1)(OR) 3
St. Stephen – Kenneth B. Middleton 3
Trinity – Charlie Thomas 1
Triune-St. John Charge – Lawrence Cantey Jr. 6

PELION:
Bethel, Peachtree Rock – J. Scott Matthews (PL) (1/2) 3
Sharon – TBS

PINEWOOD:
Pinewood – TBS
(Pinewood, Paxville, Andrews Chapel)

ROWESVILLE:
Mays Chapel – Patricia S. Salley (PL) (1/4) 1
Prospect – Minnie Boneparte (PL) (1/2) 2

ST MATTHEWS:
St. Matthews Charge – TBS
(East Bethel, West Bethel, Mount Zion)
St. Paul – TBS

SALLEY:
Clinton – TBS
SANDY RUN:
Beulah – TBS

SPRINGFIELD:
Springfield Charge – TBS
(Neeses, Salley, Springfield)

SUMMERTON:
Summerton – TBS
SWANSEA:
Calvary-Oak Grove TBS
Swansea-Pelion – David L. McElreath (SY) 1

WAGENER:
Wagener – TBS
WILLISTON:
Williston Charge – Melissa Williams (PL) (1/2) 4
(Blackville, Williston)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection:
LaTonya M. Dash – Conference Disaster
Response Coordinator, St. Mark (North)
CC 3

Christopher C. Key – Claflin University
Campus Minister (FL) 1
Kenneth L. Nelson – District Superintendent,
Orangeburg District 7

¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist
Endorsing Agency:

Robert B. Collingwood (RE) – Coordinator
of Pastoral Care, V.A. Hospital, St. Louis,
MO, Main Street, CC 38

¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend
School: No One

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 – No One

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional: No One
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical:
Robbie V. Hall (FL) CC 10
Pamela D Richardson (FL) CC 7

HONORABLE LOCATION:
Active: No One
Retired: Wright Turbeville, CC Jordan

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONER
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Abram Jr., Joseph
Anderson, Minnie P.
Bennett, Jim T. (RL)
Boyd, Ollie M. (RL)
Brawn, Robert A. (RL)
Brown, Harry Lee (RL)
Brunson, Ashley C.
Caughman Jr., K. David
Collingwood, Robert B.
Copeland, Franklin E.
Davis, Gerald E.
Elliott, John H.
Evans, John Wesley
Frederick–Watts, Janice L.
Gain, George R. (RA)
Ganes, Gusta Ger (RL)
Gibson, Jack (RL)
Gordon, Bobby (RL)
Griffin Jr, Alfred
Lewis Jr., William M.(RL)
Martin, Terry
McClam, Mack C.
McCutcheon, Larry D.
Middleton, Whittaker V.
Miller, Anna G.
Miller III, Carey S.
Murdock Sr., Warren
Parker, Greta Louise (RL)
Parker, Jere Keith
Parker, Larry R.
Pettit, Ronald A.
Ponds, G. Bernard
Powell, Rodney K.
Preer, John C.
Reed, Nancy C. (RL)
Reid, Barbara L.
Rucker, Bruce E. (RL)
Rucker, Matthew D.
Saylor, Lucinda L. (RL)
Scarborough, Kathryn W. (RL)
Shrawder Jr, Kermit O.
Sims, Thomas R. (RL)
Sistrunk, Annie H.
Stapleton, John Mason
Studebaker, Donald R. (RL)
Thomas, Alexander (RA)
Washington, Jimmy (RL)
Williamson, David W.

ROCK HILL DISTRICT (39 charges; 59 churches) DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: ANTHONY HODGE 7

BLACKSBURG
Blacksburg Charge – Richard Charles
Andrews (RL) (1/2) 6
(St. John, Sardis)

CHESTER:
Bethel – Shannon C. Higgins (PL) (1/2) 4
Wesley Memorial – Shannon C. Higgins (PL) (1/2) 4

CLOVER:
Clover Parish – Fred Moore Jr. (PE) 2
(Clover Chapel, Green Pond, Mount Harmony)
First Clover – Scott S. Gilmer 2

FORT MILL:
Belair–Osceola Charge – Heather S. Baird 3
Philadelphia – Tammy N. Grey 2
Pleasant Hill – Peter K. Berntson 4
St. John's – Karen H. Radcliffe 13

GREAT FALLS:
Mount Dearborn–Heath Chapel – David
Owens Ussery (RL) (1/2) 15

HICKORY GROVE:
Canaan – TBS

JEFFERSON:
Sandy Grove-Mount Elon – M. Loretta
Cooper (PL) (1/2) 11

KERSHAW:
Kershaw Charge – TBS
(Damascus, Hanging Rock)
LANCASTER:
Camp Creek-Bethesda – Michael E. Catoe
(RL) (1/2) 16
Church of the Good Shepherd-Van Wyck –
TBS
First Church – Neal Y. Woods 6
Grace Lynnwood-Tabernacle – Kendell L.
Healy (PE) 3
Hopewell – TBS
St. Luke-Salem – TBS
Trinity-Fort Lawn – TBS
Zion – TBS

PAGELAND:
Pageland Braber W. Spell (SY) (1/2) 1
Zion-Zoar Charge Teri O. Schell (PL) (1/2) 4

RICHBURG:
Mount Prospect-Ebenezer – Cecilia M.
Davis (PL) (1/4) 7
Pleasant Grove – Stacey C. Newlon (PL)
(1/4) 6

ROCK HILL:
Aldersgate – Joy "Renee" K. Garrison 2
Bethel – Emily Scales Sutton (1/2) 2
Cornerstone – Cindy A. Rumsey 1
El Bethel – Nellie G. Cloninger (RE) 4
India Hook – TBS
Rock Hill Central Charge – Athena Dickey-
Cathcart (PL) (1/2) 5
(Mount Olive, New Hope)
Rock Hill Circuit – Mallory F. Nickerson 3
Rock Hill South Charge – N. Dexter
Williams (¶346.1)(OM) (1/2) 3
(Bethel, Harmony)
St. John's – Cameron (Cam) Y. Treece 2
Woodland – Robin A. Griffith 5

SHARON:
Western York Charge – John Howle (FL) 2
(Sharon, New Zion, Shady Grove)

YORK:
Philadelphia – Melissa Shortridge (¶346.1) (OR) (1/2) 3
Trinity – Wanda D. Altman-Shirah 6
York-St. James Charge – Thomas J.
Bowman Sr. (RE) 4
(Hopewell, St. James, Wesley)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY
¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection:
Laurel Alice Fraser – Director, Wesley
Foundation, Winthrop University 3
Anthony Hodge – District Superintendent,
Rock Hill District 7
Nona M. Woodle – Congregational Special-
ist, Bethel (Chester) CC 3
¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist
Endorsing Agency: No One
¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Kristen Richardson-Frick – Prog. Officer,
Rural Church Div., Duke Endowment, St.
John's (Fort Mill) CC 15

¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend
School: No One

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
¶331.8, 346.1 – No One

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family:
Gamble, Sharon Spann CC Mount Olive 1
¶353.2c Transitional: No One
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical:
Holder, Shelly Ann (FD) 7

HONORABLE LOCATION:
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONER
Active: No One
Retired: No One

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

Continued on next page

Ministerial Appointments.

Continued from previous page

SPARTANBURG DISTRICT (57 charges; 74 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: MEGAN L. GRAY 1

BOILING SPRINGS:
Church of the Covenant – Christopher L. Thompson 1
New Beginnings – Joseph “Christopher” Greene 7

CHESNEE:
Chesnee-Fingerville – Thomas A. Thornton (¶346.2)(OF) (1/2) 7
Friends in Christ – James R. “Jimmy” Lewis (PL) (1/4) 12

COWPENS:
Cowpens Charge – Wayne R. Major Sr. (RE) (1/2) 12
(Salem, St. Mark, St. Andrews)

CROSS ANCHOR:
Cross Anchor Charge – Brian P. Williams (PL) (1/2) 15
(Hebron, Cross Anchor Yarborough)
Golgightly-Tabernacle – William “Bill” M. Rochester (SY) 2

DUNCAN
Foundations – W. Michael Jeter (PL) (1/2) 1

FOUNTAIN INN:
Trinity – Shawna Darnall Vandelune 5

GAFFNEY:
Asbury – Ricky J. Therrell (SY) (1/4) 3
Buford Street – David (Dave) E. Nichols (RE) (1/2) 8
Dunton – James “Jimmy” R. Lewis (PL) (1/4) 3
Limestone Street – J. Ronald “Ron” Singleton (RE) (1/2) 21

GRAY COURT:
Gray Court – Patricia (Pat) A. Gannaway (RD) 3
Owings – Terry M. LeRoy (SY) (1/4) 6

GREENVILLE:
Aldersgate – Amanda G. Richardson 2
Disciples – Narcie McClendon Jeter 3
East Greenville – Redonia M Thomas (RE) 1
(Wesley Chapel, Allen View)
Francis Asbury – Ronald “Ron” E. Cook (SY) (1/4) 4
Laurel Creek – Twana R. Cruell (PL) (1/2) 1

GREER:
Faith – Michael Goldston (1/2) 3
Few’s Chapel – Kane Parris Rollins (SY) 1
Grace-Liberty Hill – Angela M. Etheredge-Erwin 1
Greenville Korean Mission – Kyu-Seok Shin 14
Greer Circuit – Gwendolyn Brown (PL) 1
(Bethel, St. Paul)
Memorial – David B. Smith 3

INMAN:
Inman Charge – Joe L. Blackwelder (RE) 4
(Aldersgate, Inman)

JONESVILLE:
Jonesville-New Hope – Angelia R. Price (RA) 3

LANDRUM:
Jacksons Grove – Nelson L. Stokes (RE) 1

PACOLET:
Montgomery Memorial – TBS
Pacolet Charge – Phillip Wayne Park (¶346.1)(OR) (1/2) 1

SIMPSONVILLE:
Advent – W. Russell Freeman 3
Bethel-Ebenezer – Bradley “Brad” A. Thompson (FL) 5
Simpsonville – Joseph “Joe” D. Cate (PL) (1/2) 2

SPARTANBURG:
Beaumont – Annie R. Crocker (LM) (1/4) 8
Ben Avon – C. Edward Enlow (PL) (1/2) 5
Bethel – W. Bradford “Brad” Gray 7

Cannon’s Camp Ground – Kenneth W. Bundrick (FL) 1
Central – Bryan W. Pigford 2
Director, Christian Education & Programs – Karen K. Freeman (FD) (1/2) 1
Cherokee Springs-Liberty – B. Allan Burden (FL) 3
Fairmont – Josie A. Fenn (PL) (1/4) 3
Gravely Memorial-Trinity, Enoree – Mary S. Nichols (PL) (1/2) 1
Silver Hill Memorial – Morris Waymer Jr. 3
Skylyn-Arcadia Charge – Robert L. “Skipper” Brock (PL) (1/2) 5
Spartanburg Parish – DiAndra N. Jefferies (PL) (1/2) 2
(Allen Chapel, Florence Chapel)
St. James – Heather B. Humphries 1
St. Luke – Thomas Thornton (¶346.2)(OF) (1/4) 3
St. Paul – Cameron T. Levi 1
Trinity – Richard R. Howell Jr. 3
Whitestone – Annie Crocker (LM) (1/4) 3

TAYLORS:
Lee Road – Jerry R. “Rusty” Godfrey (FL) 5
St. Mark – Carlton J. McClam Sr. 4
St. Matthew – James L. Drummond Jr. (PL) (1/2) 2

UNION:
Bogansville – TBS
Grace – TBS
Union Charge Merritt R. “Tuie” Wentz (FL) 15
(Bethel, Duncan Acres)

WOODRUFF:
Emma Gray – TBS

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection:
Megan L. Gray – District Superintendent, Spartanburg District 1
Cathy Louise W. Joens (FD) – Director of Church Relations, Epworth Children’s Home, Aldersgate CC 3
Phillip Lynwood Pace Jr. – Assistant Dean of Religious Life, Duke University, St. James CC 3

¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Traci S. Bennett (FD) – Chaplain III, Tyger River Correctional Institution, Cannon’s Camp Ground CC 20

¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries:
Weston B. Pendergrass – Missionary, Grace (Greer) CC 4
Martha Ann Timmons (FD) – PS I Love You (3/4) & The Children’s Resource Closet (1/4), St. James CC 6

¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend School: No One

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1
James E. Elder (AM) – Newman Spring/Graysville UMC, N.G. Conference, Hopewell (Simpsonville) CC 10

OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS: No One

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: Christine M. Matthews, Disciples CC 3
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional: No One
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical:
Perry D. Evatt, Memorial CC 4
Keyla P. Edwards (LP), Laurel Creek 1
Jo Anna Fallaw, Bethel (Spartanburg) CC 7
Kitty C. Holtzclaw, Disciples CC 5
David C. Inman, Ben Avon CC 8
Charles L. White, St. Mark (Taylors) CC 4

HONORABLE LOCATION:
Active:
John S. Haney, Memorial CC 21
M. Katherine Matthews, Apex (NC Conf) CC 13
Sherry M. Wood, Trinity CC 16

Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: Mary Lou Miller

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONER
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Addis, Howard D.
Allison, Carol D.
Anderson, Thurman W.
Andrews, Richard C. (RL)
Blackwelder, Joe Lee
Bobo, Kenneth G.
Boshell, Donald C. (RL)
Bowers, Michael E.
Brewer, Jones L. (RL)
Brown, David A.
Brown, Will Rogers
Cannon, Carol R.
Cannon, Robert T.
Carter, James B. “Jim” (RL)
Childers, R. Clayton Cole, Joseph L. (RL)
Culp, Wayne A.
Curtis, Brenda I. (RL)
Davis, Lillie K.
Dennis, James D.
Dillard, Jimmy W.
Donigian, George H.
Duncan, Jason C. (RL)
Edwards, Joyce M.
Ervin, David F. (RA)
Fields, George D. (RL)
Fisher, A. Mickey
Fizer, George H. (RL)
Franklin Jr, E. Herbert
Gannaway, Patricia A. Gardner, Les (RL)
Gillespie, Steven D Gilliam Jr, James O. Goulart, Robert I. (RL)
Griffeth, James Ellis
Griffis-Woodberry, Debra Guffee, Michael L. Hayhurst, Michael L.
Hill, Thomas H., Jr. (RL)
Holt, Arthur H.
Hunter, James C.
Hunter, Kathryn O.
Ivey, James W.
Jamison, Louis D.
Jenkins, Jane D.
Joens, Janet C.
King, Sandra S.
King, Steven M.
Kyllonen, Mitchell W.
Lee, Dennis R.
Leonard Sr., Ronald Lee
Mackeil, Alice E.
Major Sr., Wayne R.
McAlister, J. Richard Mick, Miriam W.
Nichols, David E.
Parker, Freddie W. (RL)
Patterson, Deborah M. (RL)
Peterson, Gary L.
Price, Angelia P. (RA)
Rawlinson, Carol M.
Reynolds, Edgar B.
Rickenbaker, Luther H.
Roper, Frances “Lee” (RL)
Ropp Jr., John Wesley
Singleton, J. Ronald
Sistare, James Bart
Snow, Murray A. Stanley, Dwaine C. (OA)
Stokes, Nelson L. Strait, George E.
Teagan, Deborah Luther
Teasley, Mary V.

Thomas, Redonia M. Thomas, Tina
Thompson, Elizabeth A.
Thompson, William L. (RL)
Tillerson, Elbert S. (RL)

Ward, Jon P. (RL)
Warren Jr., John L. Wechsler, Christine M. White, Lloyd E.
Wilkes, Molly F. (RA)
Williams, J. Tom

WALTERBORO DISTRICT (44 charges; 73 churches)
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT: TIFFANY KNOWLIN BOYKIN 1

ALLENDALE:
Central Circuit – Sterling T. Harris (FL) 2
(New Hope, Simpson, Union)
Gillette – TBS
Swallow Savannah – TBS

BEAUFORT:
Carteret Street – C. Bryson Williams Jr. 8
Holy Trinity – SanRoman King (PL) (1/4) 6
Port Royal – Anne Gregory Bridgers (RL) (1/2) 16
Waters Edge – Hans Jerome Hamm (PL) (1/2) 5
Wesley – Tracy P. Colleton-Glover (PL) (1/2) 6

BLUFFTON:
Bluffton – Scarlett Tanner Hester 7

COTTAGEVILLE:
Jericho – Antuan L. Cromedy (PL) (1/2) 2
Macedonia – Kendrick Williams (PL) (1/4) 3
Wesley Grove – Gregory Teasdell Sr. (PL) (1/4) 1

DORCHESTER:
Dorchester Circuit – Edward Jay Stiltz (RL) (1/2) 3
(Salem, Zion)
Dorchester Parish – Alfonza Jones Sr. (RL) (1/2) 2
(Oak Grove, St. John)

EHRRARDT:
Ebenezer-Rizer’s Chapel – Stanley Bernard Ritter (PL) (1/2) 12
Ehrhardt – Lewis L. Christopher King III (PL) (1/2) 23
(Wesley Chapel, St. James, Zion, Lodge)
Friendship-St. Luke – Vivian R. Lingard (PL) (1/2) 17

HAMPTON:
Estill-Black Swamp Dewey L. Shaffer (¶346.2)(OF) (3/4) 13
(Estill, Furman, Mount Carmel)
Fairfax Charge – TBS
(Bellinger Chapel, Brunson)
Hampton-Varnville Charge – Jack W. Hutto (PL) (1/2) 3
Toby’s Bluff-Mount Nebo – Lamonte D. Hodges (PL) (1/4) 12

HARDEEVILLE:
Hardeeville – TBS

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

HILTON HEAD:
St. Andrew By-The-Sea – Steve A. Patterson 1

OKATIE:
Church of the Palms – Randall L. Haase 2
St. Luke – L. Kim Eanes 1

RIDGELAND:
Fisher Chapel-St. Stephen – William H. D. Bowser Jr. (RE) 10

RIDGEVILLE:
Canaan-Sand Hill – James P. Smith 3
New Hope-St. Paul Charge – Lisa M. Way 2

RUFFIN:
Adnah-Williams Charge – TBS
Bells Parish – Leslie “Les” Brown III (¶346.2)(OF) (1/2) 3

(Red Root, Sykes Savannah)
Mount Pleasant – Schoneke B. Summerhill (SY) (1/4) 5
Ruffin Parish – Minnie C. Dickerson (PL) (1/2) 2
(Buckhead, Hickory Hill)
Smoaks Circuit G. Palmer Hudson (RL) (1/2) 2
(Green Pond, Little Swamp)
Springtown – Arthur L. Gamble (PE) 3

ST. GEORGE:
New Grace – Jerry L. Dicks 1
Shady Grove – James B. Grant (PE) 3
St. George Parish (St. Mark, Trinity) – Anthony Rivers (PL) (1/2) 2

WALTERBORO:
Bethel – Tresco E. Shannon 2
Bethel-Red Bank Charge – Walter Harley (PL) (1/2) 5
Colleton Circuit – Curtis J. Young (PL) (1/2) 22
(Bethel, Heaven Gate, Trinity)
New Life – Angela Ford Broughton 6
Walterboro Charge – Jeffrey Martin Collins (PL) (1/4) 3
(Mount Carmel, Peniel, Sandy Dam)
Walterboro Parish – Kathy Brown Anderson (PL-1/2) 3
(Cumberland, Isaiah)

APPOINTED TO EXTENSION MINISTRY ¶344.1a, ¶344.1c Within the Connection:
Tiffany Knowlin Boykin – District Superintendent, Walterboro District 1
¶344.1b Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Lisa Dodd Test (FL) – Agape Hospice of the Lowcountry Chaplain, St. Andrews by the Sea CC 1
Wilhelmina Williams Thompson (FL) – Staff Chaplain, MUSC (Charleston) Canaan CC 1

¶344.1d Other Valid Ministries: No One
¶416.6, ¶337.3b Appointed to Attend School: No One

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES ¶331.8, 346.1 – No One

OTHER LAY ASSIGNMENTS – No One

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
¶353.2a, 353.3 Personal: No One
¶353.2b, 353.3 Family: No One
¶353.2c Transitional: No One
¶353.4 Involuntary: No One
¶351 Sabbatical: No One
¶356 Medical: No One

HONORABLE LOCATION:
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DIACONAL MINISTERS
Active: No One
Retired: No One

DEACONESS/HOME MISSIONER
Active: No One
Retired: No One

RETIRED CLERGY
Bowser Jr., William D.
Bridgers, Anne (RL)
Davis, Frederick R.
Geddis, Roosevelt
Hudson, G. Palmer (RL)
Huggins Jr., Leonard
Jones Sr., Alfonza
Lybrand, Frank E.
Maddox, Susan B.
Marchant, James D. (RL)
McLeod, Contance Nelson
Ross, James Albert (RL)
Smith, Richard Moses
Smith, Theron Walker
Stiltz, Edward J. (RL)

Eleven important tips for churches getting a new pastor

By the Rev. Robert Cox

- Is your church getting a new pastor? Here are 11 administrative items your new pastor will appreciate:
- Up-to-date membership rolls with addresses and contact information (a picture directory is very helpful).
 - Charge Conference Reports for the last three years.
 - Tables I, II, III for the last three years.
 - Giving Analysis for the last three years (how much is given each year, the number of giving units and the amount per giving unit for each year).
 - Full financial statements for the last

- three years (Balance Sheet, Statement of Income and Expenses for the General Fund and any other Designated or Restricted use funds).
- Administrative Council Minutes for the last three years and all policies of the Church Council in writing.
 - Board of Trustee Minutes for the last three years.
 - Any Council Policy statements concerning weddings and funerals.
 - Copies of the church’s Safe Sanctuary policy.
 - Copies of the church’s incorporation.
 - Copies of the church’s insurance policy.

These are suggestions, and your new pastor may ask for more. If you have questions, please contact

Basic Church Administration at rlcox@umesc.org or go to <https://church-admin.org>.

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Photo by Patricia Walker

Ministries.

Church of the Palms named ‘Best of Bluffton’

Church of the Palms United Methodist Church has been named a recipient of the Best of Bluffton 2026 award, a recognition members said reflects the strength, spirit and dedication of its entire church family.

Leaders and members of the congregation recently had the privilege of accepting this honor, marking a special moment of celebration for the church and its surrounding community.

The award highlights not only the church’s ongoing ministries and outreach, but also the relationships and sense of belonging that continue to grow within its walls.

“We are incredibly grateful and honored to receive the Best of Bluffton 2026 award,” said church representatives. “This moment truly reflects the heart of our entire church family.”

The recognition holds particular significance because it comes directly from the community.



Photo by Kathy Hart

Souls on fire

Windsor’s Praise Choir and the Rev. Claire Van Den Berg had souls on fire for Pentecost with red ribbons waving overhead.



Photo courtesy of Toni Strawther

Happy Mother’s Day!

The United Methodist Men of Mount Zion UMC, Kingstree, hosted a Mother’s Day dinner in honor of mothers and their significance in the lives of children young and old.



An all-ages learning experience

The Intergenerational Ministry of New Francis Brown UMC, Charleston, visited the International African American Museum as the culminating trip for Black History Month and Women’s History Month. During the visit, participants learned about the many contributions African Americans made to the rich history of Charleston and South Carolina. The experience also highlighted how African Americans have profoundly influenced the culture, traditions and society of today. “Our children and youth especially enjoyed learning about the history of their ancestors and sharing their thoughts and perspectives with the older adults in attendance,” said Teresa Glover, age-level ministry coordinator. “The trip created meaningful intergenerational conversations that honored the past while inspiring future generations..”

Camps & Retreat Ministries.

Space set apart: the restorative power of a day at Camp Providence

While South Carolina United Methodist Camps and Retreat Ministries is widely celebrated for its week-long residential summer camps, the ministry holds a hidden gem specifically designed for those who just need a powerful day away to rest, reconnect and renew: Camp Providence.

Tucked away on Lake Hartwell in Anderson, Camp Providence stands as a dedicated special events and day-use facility. With a capacity to host groups of up to 100 people, it serves as a day retreat.

The site itself is steeped in a rich tradition of local ministry. Sitting right beside the property is the historic Providence Church, which keeps the spirit of seasonal fellowship alive with summer worship ser-

vices running from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The camp property seamlessly blends this rich history with modern spaces designed for community building, including a brand-new enclosed Lakeside Shelter, a double-slip boat dock and a fully equipped bathhouse.

It is rented to one group at a time, so groups get a completely private, peaceful environment. Gatherings include youth groups, women’s and men’s ministries, family reunions and weddings.

The core mission of SCCARM is to serve churches throughout the South Carolina Conference by providing access to quality facilities that foster “Christian birth, growth, and renewal.” Camp Providence fulfills this mission by offering an intentional space where

groups can escape the noise of the world for just a few hours to focus on what matters most.

The ongoing growth of the site is a testament to the generosity of the conference. Visitors to the Lakeside Pavilion can view the Donor Recognition Tree, a marker honoring the financial gifts and volunteer hours that have allowed this sacred space to flourish and continue expanding its hospitality.

We don’t always have a full week to step out of our busy lives, but Scripture reminds us that even Jesus regularly withdrew to quiet places to pray and rest. For more on Camp Providence, call 864-836-3711 or email office@asburyhills.org, or visit <https://www.sc-carm.org/camp-providence>.

Native American Ministries.

The golden Sacagawea dollar

By Lee Anne Lamar

In the United States, dollar coins have had a cool reception. Objections varied because of the weight of a \$1 coin versus a paper dollar and also because of potential mix-ups between \$1 coins and quarters.

As a solution in 2000, the strikingly beautiful gold-colored Sacagawea dollar coin replaced the silver-colored Susan B. Anthony dollar coin. After many submissions of artworks and much consideration, Sacagawea was chosen to honor Native Americans with her image placed on the front of the new golden dollar coin.

Sacagawea was born to the Shoshone people near the Idaho/Montana border in 1788. Life changed at age 12, when Hidatsa warriors kidnapped Sacagawea. Dramatically, her life changed again when Sacagawea became a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. On that journey she was invaluable acting as an interpreter, negotiator and cultural guide. She was heralded as saving the expedition in a number of ways.

The brilliant front profile shows

Sacagawea carrying her child, Jean Baptist Charbonneau. From 2000-2008 this golden coin had a plain edge and an eagle on the back

In order to honor Native American groups and individuals, the back of the coins changed yearly from 2009 to the present. The coins’ edges changed also; the edges were embossed with the date and the mintmark. Every year the coin’s back changes, revealing a uniquely beautiful scene that depicts many important Native contributions.

Reverse Designs by Year

- 2009: Native woman planting the “Three Sisters”—corn, beans and squash.
- 2010: Hiawatha’s belt wrapping five arrows; honors the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy) and the Great Law of Peace.
- 2011: Two hands gripping a ceremonial pipe; honors the Wampanoag and the 1621 treaty with Plymouth Colony.
- 2012: A chief with horses; 17th-century Native trade routes.
- 2013: Turkey, wolf and turtle (Le-

nape clan symbols) with 13 stars; the Treaty of 1778, the first formal U.S.–tribal treaty.

- 2014: Native man with pipe and woman with food platter; hospitality during the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
- 2015: Mohawk ironworker on an I-beam above New York City; honors Kahnawake and Akwesasne ironworkers.
- 2016: WWI and WWII Code Talkers, shown by Brodie and M1 helmets; two feathers form a “V” for victory.
- 2017: Sequoyah, creator of the Cherokee syllabary (86 characters), which made the Cherokee Phoenix newspaper possible (1828).
- 2018: Jim Thorpe (Sac and Fox), first Native American to win Olympic gold—1912 pentathlon and decathlon.
- 2019: Native Americans in space: engineer Mary G. Ross (Cherokee) and astronaut John Herrington (Chickasaw), first enrolled tribal member in space (2002).
- 2020: Elizabeth Peratrovich (Tlingit), key figure behind Alaska’s Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945; features a

raven in Pacific Northwest style.

- 2021: Distinguished military service since 1775; eagle feathers for bravery, five stars for five military branches.
- 2022: Ely S. Parker (Seneca), Civil War officer who drafted the surrender documents at Appomattox (1865).
- 2023: Maria Tallchief (Osage), America’s first prima ballerina, dancing with four others—“The Five Moons.”
- 2024: Indian Citizenship Act of 1924; American flag and eagle staff represent dual citizenship.
- 2025: Mary Kawena Pukui, Hawaiian scholar, author, composer and hula expert, shown with hibiscus, kukui nut lei and aloha-print mu’umu’u.

There is much more to know and enjoy about these coins that were created to honor our Native People! Minted over the last 25 years, some were never put into general circulation. Collecting these coins increases knowledge of Native contributions.

Hopefully we will keep adding to the Native narrative in this unique way for years to come. Blessings! A’ho!

Volunteers needed to help with UMCSC disaster recovery



Volunteers work on a hurricane-damaged roof this spring.

Disaster recovery ministries in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church are making great progress.

They are hard at work helping families with construction repairs from damage caused by Hurricane Helene.

Volunteers are serving in many counties including Anderson, Pickens, Laurens, Fairfield, Greenwood, Saluda, Edgefield, McCormick, Abbeville, Orangeburg, Allendale, Barnwell and Bamberg. Exterior and interior repairs include roofing, steps, decks, ramps, flooring, walls and ceilings.

Help is needed to assist more families. Teams and individual volunteers are needed to complete construction repairs. Volunteers are needed to listen to homeowners and to visit families needing construction repairs.

Also needed are church groups that can provide a meal for volunteers. Churches that can host volunteers are also needed.

To volunteer or get involved, contact the Rev. Shay Long, volunteer coordinator, at 803-786-9486 or Recovery Director Ward Smith at 803-960-7736.

Alston Wilkes Society.

Helping veterans build stability after service

As Americans prepare to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary this Independence Day, many are reminded of the men and women who have defended the freedoms we enjoy. While military service ends when veterans return home, the challenges they face often continue long after their uniforms are put away.

For some veterans, the transition to civilian life brings unexpected obstacles. Finding stable housing, securing employment, addressing physical or mental health concerns and reconnecting with family and community can be difficult after years of military service.

One of the most visible challenges is homelessness. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, an estimated 32,882 veterans experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2024. While this represents the lowest number recorded since federal tracking began, it also highlights that thousands of veterans continue to struggle with housing insecurity.

Mental health remains another significant concern. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reports that among veterans served through the VA healthcare system in 2024, approximately 14 percent of male veterans and 24 percent of female veterans were diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Conditions such as PTSD, depression and anxiety can create lasting challenges that affect employment, relationships and overall quality of life.

Behind every statistic is a veteran who served our country and deserves the opportunity to build a stable and fulfilling future.

For more than six decades, Alston Wilkes Society has worked to ensure South Carolina veterans do not face these challenges alone. Through transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, case management, transportation assistance, employment support and connections to critical resources, the organization helps veterans move from crisis toward stability and independence.

The impact is measurable. During 2025, Alston Wilkes Society provided more than \$2 million in direct client support and served 1,002 veterans through its Veteran Services programs. In the first quarter of 2026 alone, the organization served 422 veterans, demonstrating the continued need for veteran-focused services throughout South Carolina.

One veteran whose life reflects the power of support and opportunity is William Godfrey. A United States Army veteran, William turned to Alston Wilkes Society and Goodwill's Homebound Heroes program during a period of financial hardship and housing instability. Through determination and support, he earned certifications, secured stable housing and rebuilt his independence. Today, he serves as resident manager and driver for the Greenville Veterans Home, helping fellow veterans on their own journeys toward stability and self-sufficiency.

As we celebrate 250 years of American independence, we also recognize that freedom is strengthened when veterans have access to the resources they need to thrive.

By helping veterans find stability, housing, employment and hope, Alston Wilkes Society honors their service not just on Independence Day, but every day.



Much-needed care

In April, Hospital Bethesda—part of the South Carolina Conference-supported Healing Guatemala—conducted a mobile medical outreach clinic to a village called El Cerro Cabricán in Guatemala. With the help of nine volunteer doctors, nine volunteer dentists, two volunteer ophthalmologists and five Bethesda staff members, they were able to serve approximately 350 people with medical, dental, and ophthalmic care in the name of our Lord, along with delivering medicines and wheelchairs. El Cerro Cabricán is a very isolated mountain village, making access to medical services extremely difficult. Steep mountain slopes, which limit the corn cultivating space, result in a constant shortage of food. For information on how to help their work: <https://healingguatemala.org>.



United Women in Faith by Vickie Failor

The UWF Reading Program

Do you love to read? If so, you should participate in the United Women in Faith Reading Program.

There are a lot of great books on the reading list, and they are broken down in these categories: Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing for Community, Social Action and Spiritual Growth. Each category has books for all ages to enjoy. There are books designed for children, youth and adults. There are hundreds of books to choose from to read.

To participate in the reading program for the year of 2026, you can pick a book from the 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 reading program list. You can only read the book once during this time period to receive credit. Access the reading list at <https://go.advocatesc.org/uwf-reading-program>.

In addition to reading books, you can listen to Voices in the Field and Faith Talk podcasts and receive credit for participating the reading program. If you listen to two Faith Talks you get credit for two books in the Spiritual Growth Category. If you listen to three, it can count as a bonus book. Voices in the Field podcasts count toward the Education and Mission Category. For the podcasts, go to <https://uwfaith.org/resources/podcasts>.

If you read the United Women in Faith Response magazine, you also get credit in the reading program.

There are a lot of ways to participate in the reading program. Some have reading groups with discussions about the books as they read them. If you do not have much time, check out the children's books; they count. You can read several children books within 30 minutes and receive your credit for participating in the reading program.

Reading is connecting. The Reading Program is not meant to be completed alone or in a vacuum. Share the program with United Women in Faith members and members of the community. Help people attain books. Distribute this guide. Connect with local and district groups. Start a book club.

Join the Reading Enthusiasts Group on United Women In Faith Digital. It is free, but registration is required. Go to <https://go.advocatesc.org/uwf-reading-enthusiasts>.

For more information on the reading program, you are welcome to reach out to me at 864-354-8842 or vfailor@bellsouth.net.

Failor is secretary of Program Resources for South Carolina United Women in Faith.

Applications open now for Cohort 3 of Connecting Children initiative

Applications opened June 10 for Cohort #3 of "Connecting Children in Worship and Prayer," an intergenerational worship and prayer initiative of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.

Churches selected for the 2027 cohort will commit a team of four laity plus the pastor to receive training, coaching and support as they move from multigenerational ministry toward deeper intergenerational worship, prayer and belonging.

This is not an application for grant money or financial assistance. It is an invitation for churches to commit to a journey of learning, collaboration and spiritual formation across generations.

Before applying, churches are asked to attend one online Q&A session. Pastors are encouraged to invite potential cohort team members so they can learn more and ask questions.

Q&A sessions will be held on Zoom (via this link: <https://zoom.us/j/93917253562>): Wednesday, June 24, 7 p.m.; Monday, June 29, noon; Sunday, July 12, 3 p.m.; or Sunday, Aug. 23, 3 p.m.

As many as 12 churches will be selected for the cohort. Each church team will participate in quarterly in-person training, online collaboration sessions, coaching and ongoing learning through Portico.

The initiative's five-year goal is to impact 60 churches, 500 children and 7,000 congregational members through the South Carolina connection system.

Churches interested should attend one Q&A session, identify a team of four members to serve alongside the pastor and complete the online application before Sept. 13.

For more information: <https://umcsc.org/children>.

Wesley Chapel celebrates dedication of new Hammond organ, LED sign

GREER—Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church marked a joyful milestone as members and friends gathered May 17 to dedicate a new Hammond organ and a new LED sign, two additions expected to strengthen both worship and community outreach.

Under the leadership of the Rev. LaShelia Mack Wyatt, church leaders said, “The organ will enrich music ministry inside the sanctuary, while the new sign will help the congregation share announcements, service times and messages of welcome with the wider community.”

Known for its long-standing presence in the community for more than 140 years, Wesley Chapel UMC de-



The sign is designed to increase visibility and communication.

scribes its mission as making disciples of Jesus Christ and providing a welcoming place for worship, service and fellowship. In that spirit, the dedication of

the Hammond organ represents more than a purchase; it reflects an investment in music as a vital part of congregational life, from hymns and special

music to celebrations that bring people together.

The newly installed sign also symbolizes a forward-looking step for the church. Designed to increase visibility and communication, the sign will allow Wesley Chapel to highlight upcoming events, seasonal services and ministries in a timely and accessible way. Members expressed hope that the sign will serve not only as an informational tool, but also as a visible reminder that the church’s doors are open to all.

As the congregation celebrates these new additions, the dedication points to both heritage and hope—honoring the traditions of sacred music while embracing new ways to connect with

Rock Hill South Charge celebrates Mother’s Day

On May 10, the Rock Hill South Charge gathered at Harmony United Methodist Church for a joyful and spirit-filled Mother’s Day worship celebration honoring the women and mothers of the church community.

The special guest speaker for the occasion was Lynne Tyner, who delivered a powerful and prophetic message rooted in Psalm 66 and 1 Peter 3. The church said her words encouraged, uplifted and inspired all in attendance, reminding the congregation of God’s faithfulness, strength and the beauty of a godly spirit.

A highlight of the service was the elegant Hat Parade presented by the women of the Rock Hill South Charge, which added a festive and celebratory touch to the morning.

The Rock Hill South Charge Men’s Ministry also played an important role in making the day special by hosting and serving a wonderful breakfast for the ladies following the worship service, creating a warm atmosphere of appreciation and fellowship.

The congregation enjoyed a meaningful time of worship, celebration and fellowship as mothers and women were honored for their faith, strength and lasting contributions to both the church and community.

The Mother’s Day service was a tremendous success and a beautiful reflection of love, unity and gratitude throughout the Rock Hill South Charge.

The Rev. Dexter Williams pastors the charge.

A handful of ashes and an open door

Two Sumter churches draw closer in connection by sharing space

SUMTER—When Rev. Troy Cato stopped by Trinity United Methodist Church on Ash Wednesday to pick up some extra palm ashes for Mount Zion UMC’s Ash Wednesday service, neither he nor the Rev. Angela Marshall could have known that a simple act of sharing would become the beginning of a meaningful partnership between their two congregations.

During that visit, Cato shared the news that, through the generosity of church members and grant funding, Mount Zion finally was prepared to begin long-awaited renovations to their sanctuary’s chancel area and office spaces. The project represented fulfillment of a vision of decades. The challenge, however, was finding a place to worship while construction was underway.

In the conversation, Marshall mentioned that Trinity’s chapel was not being used on Sunday mornings, as Trinity’s faith family gathers in the sanctuary for worship.

It seemed only natural to offer the chapel with an understanding that trustees of Trinity, stewards of property, buildings and equipment, would be contacted for permission. Without hesitation, trustees unanimously approved Mount Zion’s worshiping in Trinity’s chapel as long as needed.

That which began as a practical solution quickly became something much more.

“The past few years have taught many of our churches about separation, grief, change and uncertainty,” said Marshall. “This partnership reminded us that God still is creating opportunities for connection, hospitality and hope. When Trinity opened a door to

offer space, God opened a door for something much larger—a reminder that we belong to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. What happened between Trinity and Mount Zion is a beautiful example of the connectional church at its best.”

Beginning in March and continuing through the end of May, the Mount Zion family held their worship services at 9:30 in the chapel, followed by Trinity’s service in the sanctuary at 11. Before long, members of both congregations began crossing paths in hallways, sharing conversations between services, fellowshiping over refreshments and occasionally attending one another’s worship gatherings.

One of the true highlights of sharing space was a joint Palm Sunday service with a joyous procession of palms. What could have been merely a temporary arrangement became a visible reminder that all are one body in Christ.

Additionally, the partnership between the two parishes extended beyond Sunday mornings as members of Mount Zion have joined Trinity’s Wednesday night fellowship suppers where meals were shared, friendships were formed and barriers that often separate congregations quietly disappeared around the dinner table.

Mount Zion has been worshiping in Sumter since at least 1873 on Loring Mill Road. Trinity, a wee bit older, has had a presence on West Liberty Street since 1827.

Although the churches are separated physically by only three miles, this season helped close the distance in a new way.

Bennettsville Charge hosts community heath fair



The event was held at Aaron Temple UMC.

On Feb. 28, the Bennettsville Charge Outreach Department, representing Aaron Temple and Ebenezer United Methodist churches, hosted a community health fair.

Aaron Temple UMC, Bennettsville, hosted it from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Screening services provided included blood pressure checks, blood glucose testing, vision screening and height/weight measurements with BMI calculation.

Thirty-one participants attended. Four individuals exhibited elevated

blood sugar levels without a prior diagnosis of diabetes. Blood pressure screenings yielded several abnormal results, predominantly among individuals with known hypertension who were not adhering to their prescribed medication regimen. More than half of those who underwent vision screening reported compromised eyesight.

Organizers said the outcomes from this event proved valuable; all participants received feedback on their results along with appropriate recommendations. As well, a cooking demonstration and tasting session were conducted by a nutritionist from CareSouth, with positive feedback on the food provided.

The event concluded with the distribution of door prizes and brunch.

The event was held because diabetes and hypertension represent significant public health challenges in South Carolina. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 38 million Americans are living with diabetes. In South Carolina alone,

approximately 561,200 adults—or 13.3 percent of the state’s adult population—have been diagnosed with diabetes. The CDC further estimates about 25,000 adults in South Carolina are newly diagnosed each year. Additionally, the state faces an obesity epidemic, with approximately 1.4 million adults (35 percent of the adult population) classified as obese.

As well, stroke remains a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the United States. National data from 2023 indicate that South Carolina had the 12th-highest stroke mortality rate nationwide and is situated within the “Stroke Belt,” a group of Southeastern states characterized by elevated death rates because of stroke. Stroke was the fourth leading cause of death in South Carolina in 2023, resulting in 2,974 fatalities.

African Americans in South Carolina are 46 percent more likely to die from stroke than Caucasians, and there were 18,777 hospitalizations related to stroke; 65 percent were younger than 65.

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Young Methodists.

Goose Creek honors graduating high schoolers, preschoolers

Goose Creek United Methodist Church, Goose Creek, recently honored youth for two milestones: graduating from high school and graduating from preschool.

On May 17, the church family gathered to recognize the accomplishments and future aspirations of seven graduating high school seniors.

Three are members of their respective JROTC programs, winning numerous awards and achieving the ranks of second lieutenant, captain and battalion commander. The second lieutenant is enrolled at The Citadel and plans to complete a criminal justice degree with a minor in pre-law. She hopes to work in family law while serving in the U.S Navy. The captain has already entered the U.S. Army National Guard and plans to continue his studies at the College of Charleston. The battalion commander is committed to the College of Charleston in the Honors College program



Photo courtesy Mary Ann Callahan

The church honored seven high school graduates.

where she plans to pursue a major in astrophysics with a minor in biology and hopes to join NASA.

One of the students is a member of the Berkeley Center of the Arts Percussion, where she has won numerous individual awards while participating in competitions with the Goose Creek High School award winning bands. She will be attending the University of South

Carolina this fall, majoring in speech pathology. Another young person, also a member of the award-winning Goose Creek High School Band (playing trombone), received a gold cord for technical education-entrepreneurial, marketing and fashion design. She will be attending Brenau University, Georgia, majoring in business and fashion design, and dreams of having her own fashion house. Another is a student athlete winning awards in tennis, wrestling, track and field and flag football. She is a certified patient care technician, plans to pursue a degree in radiologic technology and plans to assist with coaching other high school female wrestlers. She hopes to join the U.S. Coast Guard.

The last senior is three-year varsity wrestler (winning numerous competitions and a varsity letter) and received OSHA forklift training and certification. A scholarship winner, he will be attending college this fall majoring in aviation

maintenance and is considering joining the US Air Force. His dream job is to become an astronaut.

A cake reception followed the service with each receiving gifts from various church members and groups.

On May 29, Goose Creek hosted the pre-K graduation ceremony for 17 students of the Academy for Little People, a Christian day care. The church was filled with parents, family and other well-wishers celebrating this all-important step in the lives of these young people. Donned in their blue caps and gowns, they marched proudly to the music of "We Are the World." They entertained those in attendance with their voices, singing songs and reciting poetry. Following the presentation of their diplomas, a reception was held in the Goose Creek Fellowship Hall.

The Goose Creek church family said they are proud of each of them and wish them God's blessings.



Wesley Foundations by the Rev. John Sterling Poole

Graduation season

Graduations are a vital part of college campuses and campus communities, and they are an exciting and tough milestone for campus ministries. They're exciting because we send these disciples out into the world to transform it; tough because we say goodbye to these students who have become a vital part of our ministry community.

However, this is a necessary part of campus ministries. We exist to serve these students in this brief but significant transitional season where students make a life-changing step out of the schooling environment into the workplace. Campus ministries serve to disciple these students in order to bring them into deeper relationship with Jesus Christ as well as teach them how to be the church.

Sending the students looks different at each Wesley Foundation/Fellowship, and at Charleston Wesley, Senior Send-Off has become one of my favorite nights of the year. Instead of the formal message, the seniors offer up words of wisdom and appreciation back to the rest of the student body.

What they share is heartfelt and very moving: memories, jokes, joys, anxieties, regrets.

This year, Ava Hussey shared: "When I think about my time in college five, 10, 20, 30, 40 years from now, I will probably remember my time with Wesley the most."

After this, we celebrate communion together one last time before sending the seniors off and every other student into summer.

God does such amazing work throughout campus ministries, and the memories that are created for these young students will go along with them for the rest of their lives. Even though it can be a fast and short four years (sometimes even shorter), the impressions the Triune God leaves on their hearts can set their journeys on a trajectory to change the world.

This sending is a necessary part of what we do in campus ministry, but if there is no church ready to receive these students, there is a disconnect. These students are going out to (re)connect with the church, and it is important that we all endeavor to ensure that they connect and find new spiritual homes in the next exciting season of life of post-college life.

Let us all covenant together to receive these students and help continue what the Spirit grew during their journey with Wesley Foundations/Fellowships throughout college. Together, we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Poole is director of Charleston Wesley Foundation. To learn more about each Wesley Foundation: <https://linktr.ee/UMCSCWesley>.

New Covenant youth ministry celebrates outstanding academic achievement

By Wanda Shuler

New Covenant United Methodist Church Youth Ministry celebrated the achievements of three of its youth recently: Zion Wright, Daniel Williams Jr. and Antonio Haynes.

Wright participated in the Orangeburg County School District's Inaugural Secondary Writing Competition, Master of Mechanics, March 26. He earned first place in the eighth grade division, an accomplishment that reflects his dedication, talent and hard work. Representing Bethune Bowman Middle/High School, Rowesville, he advanced to the final 21 contestants, showcasing exceptional writing skills and determination throughout the competition. For his achievement, he received a monetary gift of \$300, a trophy and a medallion. His essay was published in the Orangeburg County School District Master of Mechanics, Literary Arts Magazine 2026, Vol-



Haynes



Williams



Wright

ume I. He is the son of Latoya Russell.

Williams earned the honor roll for the third quarter. The church said his accomplishment is a reflection of his dedication, discipline and commitment to doing his very best.

He is the son of Julia Rickenbacker and Daniel Williams Sr.

Haynes, also the son of Julia Rickenbacker and Daniel Williams Sr., on March 24 took the Oath of Enlistment at the Fort Jackson Military Entrance Processing Station, marking a significant milestone in his journey of service to the nation. Surrounded by a sense of purpose and commitment, this moment symbolized his official entry into the United States Armed Forces. His faith played an important role in shaping his values, guiding his decisions and giving him strength and purpose as he begins this new chapter of life.



College update

Spartanburg Methodist College President Scott Cochran shared about the strong and necessary work being done at all four of South Carolina's United Methodist-related colleges and universities: Claflin University, Columbia College, Spartanburg Methodist College and Wofford College. He also welcomed Wofford's new president, Jay Dowd.

Photo by Matt Brodie



Photo by Matt Brodie

Holy rest

Arthur Spriggs, director of Camps & Retreat Ministries for the South Carolina Conference of the UMC, lifts up the important work they do to foster holy rest as well as discipleship of youth.



Photo by Matt Brodie

Salkehatchie: Changing lives

Ward Smith, Salkehatchie board chair, lifted up the ministry of Salkehatchie Summer Service, which celebrates 50 years in August 2027 of changing lives through home repair ministry. The first camp of the summer started June 6. Smith said there will be 26 camps this summer in nine districts, helping 70 families through 1,000 volunteers.



Adult Lessons
by the Rev. Genova McFadden

About the Author
McFadden is a retired elder in full connection in the South Carolina Conference. She is a contented retiree blissfully living in gratitude. She holds degrees, credentials and titles from several outstanding institutions, including a bachelor's degree, a master's in social work and in divinity. She also has experience serving in various capacities within the United Methodist connection and as a licensed independent social worker for the state of South Carolina. She celebrates being a part of God's creation and continues serving God's people wherever they are. In collaborative pursuits with Mother Nature, she finds inspiration, peace and sanctuary in the natural world.

God’s liberating gospel

July 5
The Power of Healing in Community
Lesson Scripture: Acts 3:1-10; Acts 5:12-16
Background Scripture: Acts 3:1-10; Acts 5:12-16
Key Verse: Acts 5:12-16

This passage centers on the growth and expansion of the faith through the prophetic and powerful influence of the 12. A central part of their mission was performing “signs and wonders among the people.” Up to this point, their ministry centered on spreading the Gospel through Scripture and their powerfully motivating proclamation of the word. Here, the 12 turn to performing healing ministry congruent with Jesus’s ministry of healing and casting out “impure spirits” of those who came to him. Likewise, the apostles drew people from other towns to the message of the Gospel. As the number of believers grew and healing increased, the community of faith grew beyond Jerusalem. Even in a climate of disapproval from the rulers, new believers grew in numbers and in diversity.

As this is being written, every day we are inundated with media replete with stories about wars, conflicts and strife, struggle and divisions among the diverse peoples of this world. This can leave feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and despair. (The Temptations’ song “Ball of Confusion” is an apt summation.)

I truly believe the greatest malaise of these times is hopelessness. What can a hopeful future possibly look like in light of so much confusion, abject hatred and division? There is a need for healing in this land.

How does a community of believers in a world fraught with separation and divisiveness live out our call to increase, spread and sustain the faith through healing in all its forms, and unite in community for the manifestation of the reign of God?

If we are to grow the faith we must stand solidly on the courage of our convictions in the face of real challenges to answering the call and mission to fulfill God’s redeeming purpose and bring about the reign of God.

July 12
The Holy Spirit is Not for Sale
Lesson Scripture: Acts 8:4-25
Background Scripture: Acts 8:4-25
Key Verse: Acts 8:14-25

This passage is a clarion call to the persons, churches and ministries who seek financial gain or profit through ministry: “Beware! The Holy Spirit is not for sale. The Spirit of God is not a

material thing that can be bought or sold!” Would that some religious entities today take a hold of that fact, the works of the church for people in this world might have greater effect. Peter and John understood that it took more than money to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Here, Simon the Sorcerer had been a remarkable sensation in the city of Samaria, gaining so much popularity that he considered he was someone “great” (8:9). He became a believer and was baptized yet never received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Upon encountering Peter and John, and witnessing that the Spirit was given through the laying of hands, he offered them money to receive this power. For all of his following Philip, being baptized and profession of being a believer, he still missed the point! A careful reading of this passage shows that he wanted to buy the power of laying on hands—not the power of the Holy Spirit! No wonder Peter rebuked him; he still didn’t get it. Why do people get confused about the power (or use/misuse) of money?

A previous lesson in this study addressed a pervasive sense of hopelessness experienced by many in today’s world. Perhaps the suffering of lost or failing hope could be alleviated with an understanding and conviction that the Spirit is God’s gift—available to all—and not a magical power or sorcerer’s conjuring available for a price.

Christian hope is a gift of God that envisions fulfillment of God’s redeeming purpose for the world.

July 19
At Home With Each Other
Lesson Scripture: Acts 10-11:18
Background Scripture: Acts 10-11:18
Key Verses: Acts 10:1-48

This passage of Scripture marks an inflection point in the narrative of the apostles’ missionary work. Three points of emphasis: 1) Diversity. The diversity of people God calls to be included among God’s people is by divine design (vv. 45-46); 2) Equity. God shows no partiality; “in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him” (v. 35); 3) Inclusion. Cornelius’ conversion represents the beginning of the church’s mission to the Gentiles (vv. 1-5). (“Gentiles” can also mean “nations.”)

We have been engulfed in harmful, destructive and sustained rhetoric around so-called Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives within the public and private sectors in this nation. Have professed people of faith ever contem-

plated another “DEI”? The Christian doctrine of human being is *imago dei*. Dei is the Latin name for God; imago is Latin for image. Integral to Christian identity, the imago dei says we are all created in the image and likeness of God. God’s creation shares the essence (spirit) of the imago dei (John 17:23). If then, dei is God, and the creator saw fit to fashion humanity in God’s own image and likeness, is repudiation of DEI also repudiation of God? Of the imago dei?

If we take it seriously, living according to divine purpose, being in the imago dei is soul work. When we participate in God’s divine purpose we are at one in the imago dei and with each other. We are participants in the coming reign of God: a diverse calling of people to be at home with each other—even those with religious devotion but not yet a believer.

If you know the calling of the community of believers is to bring people into the reign of God, who would you include? Who would be excluded?

July 26
The Real King Showed Up
Lesson Scripture: Acts 12:1-25; Luke 9:7-9; 23:6-12
Background Scripture: Acts 12:1-25; Luke 9:7-9; 23:6-12
Key Verse: Acts 12:1-23

The death of Herod is recounted in dramatic and horrendous fashion. Some would say - “Ha! - he got what he deserved.” I am certain there were those who celebrated Herod’s death, marking the end of his cruel and oppressive domination. I am a “Comments reader”, meaning, whenever I read an article – especially about politics of the day – I go to other readers’ comments to see (and understand) other points of view. I find humor and wit, vitriol and disparagement, and sometime what we can only call nonsense and foolishness! Though I hold my own views about the present political regime, it disturbs me deeply when there are people wishing for the death of any political leader. In that, we become more like that which we despise than who we strive to be. Yes, I long for the days when chaos, division and retribution are not the primary features (and mode) of governing. Yes, let there be “death” to the division and disunity that seems to have a grip this world. Yet, we must remember that as people of faith, our call is to peace; our call is to love one another, our call is to tear down walls and build bridges in bringing about the Reign of God. And most important, as we work to restore, rebuild and release – our call is to have compassion – even (or especially) for flawed, and even evil minded leaders (who truly suffer greatly!) that would exploit and terrorize us for power and riches. Our call is to continue, as a faithful community the radical, life saving, and liberative work of Jesus Christ. So, how do we live in and up to the faith we profess? Who gets the final word – God or empire?

Obituaries.

Rev. Vivian Patricia McFadden



McFadden

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.—The Rev. Vivian Patricia McFadden, a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died May 17, 2026.

Prior to her retirement in 2000,

Rev. McFadden served the Johns Island Associate before becoming the first Black woman to be commissioned in the United States Navy Chaplain Corps, where she served beginning in 1974.

Funeral services were unknown at the time of printing.

Rev. McFadden is survived by her son.

Ashford honored with Singletary Community Impact Award

Dr. George A. Ashford Jr. has been named this year’s Carol Singletary Community Impact Award honoree.

Ashford was awarded the honor on May 18 in Charleston at the Annual Summer Institute, sponsored by Fact Forward.

In granting the award, the organization notes Ashford’s ministry reflects a deep and enduring commitment to empowering youth, strengthening communities and advancing justice through the transformative work of the local church. As pastor of Journey Church, he has championed initiatives that nurture the spiritual, academic and leadership development of young people, particularly those who have been historically marginalized by racism and systemic inequities. Through programs such as Freedom School partnerships, Journey Kids discipleship, children’s choir, mentorship initiatives and the Pastor and First Lady Honor Roll recognition, Ashford has helped create environments where young people are affirmed, supported and encouraged to pursue excellence in both faith and education. His ministry consistently emphasizes helping youth see themselves as leaders who can shape their communities and contribute to the common good.

Ashford also works to foster cross-sector collaboration that addresses the broader social determinants affecting families and communities. Journey Church has partnered with schools, community organizations and civic leaders to expand opportunities for youth and families. Fact Forward has helped the Vision of You program prepare adolescents for adulthood, teaching them to make smart, healthy life choices.

Through pastoral leadership and community engagement, the organization said, Ashford continues to inspire communities to pursue faith, justice and opportunity for the next generation.

Leave A Legacy To Change Lives

The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation
P. O. Box 5087, Columbia, SC 29250-5087
scumf@bellsouth.net

Happenings.

Event Calendar.

June	US/ticketing/sej-bmcr-harambee--2026
June 16-July 23—Canaan Academy for Excellence, Canaan UMC, Cope, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. For more information, please contact the Rev. Leonard Huggins, 803-837-3235; Sandra Sprinkle, 803-747-0577; or Rev. Jimmy Washington, 843-714-7952.	July July 3—United Methodist Center closed
June 19—Juneteenth (United Methodist Center closed)	July 4—Independence Day
June 21—Father’s Day	July 6-10—Children’s Acting Workshop, Virginia Wingard UMC, Columbia, 9 a.m.-Noon. \$10. Call the church office at 803-772-0794.
June 24-28—Harambee Youth Conference, Claflin University, Orangeburg. Register: https://www.zeffy.com/en-	July 13—Orangeburg District Connectional Ministries meeting, St. Mark UMC, North, 6:30-8 p.m.

Salkehatchie helping 70+ families this summer

Salkehatchie camps are repairing homes in nine districts this year: Anderson, Charleston, Columbia, Florence, Greenwood, Marion, Orangeburg, Rock Hill and Walterboro. By the end of June, they will have helped more than 40 families with construction repairs including shingle roofs, interior walls, floors, ceilings, windows and doors plus some electrical and plumbing.

The 12 July camps will help more than 30 families with repairs to make their homes drier, warmer and safer.

In August 2027 they will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Salkehatchie.

“Thank you for your steady support and continuing to encourage youth and adults to participate,” said Salkehatchie Board President Ward Smith.

Youth must be 14 and older to participate. If you have interest in attending a Salkehatchie camp this summer, please email salkehatchie@umcsc.org immediately.

This summer’s camps and dates are as follows:

- Winyah Bay: June 6-13
- Piedmont: June 13-20
- Moncks Corner: June 13-20
- Sumter: June 13-20
- Edisto Island: June 13-20
- Clover: June 13-20
- Rock Hill: June 20-27
- Sand River (Aiken): June 20-27
- Penn Center: June 20-27
- Marlboro-Flowers: June 20-27
- Catawba: June 20-27
- Circuit Rider (Johnsonville): June 20-27
- Bishopville: June 20-27
- Foothills: June 27-July 4
- Santee: July 4-11
- North Strand: July 4-11
- Columbia: July 11-18
- Black Swamp: July 11-18
- Fairfield: July 11-18
- Lake Murray: July 11-18
- Bamberg: July 11-18
- Emerald City (Greenwood): July 11-18
- Summerville (NEW): July 18-25
- Calhoun County: July 18-25
- Creekfront (Murrells Inlet): July 19-25
- Newberry: July 19-24



Children’s Sermon by the Rev. Meg Cook

Parable of the Sower

Date: Sunday, July 12, 2026
Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9
Time frame: 3 minutes (aiming for 3–5 minutes max)
Supplies: None, optional make action signs on cardboard or the screen (path=stomp, bird=flap arms, rocky ground=crouch and pop up, thorns=wiggle fingers and good soil=grow tall, arms high). If you do choose to make signs, get an assistant to hold up the signs at the right times.

Do: Welcome the children and invite them to come forward. Smile at the congregation and say: Today I need help from the children and the big people. Can everyone help me tell a story? (Wait for responses.) Great! Today we’re going to act out one of Jesus’ parables.

Say: Jesus told a story about Sower, which is someone who plants seed. We might call them a farmer today. We’re going to act out the story, will you help me? Every time I pretend to throw seeds, I want everyone to make the motion I tell you. Let’s practice. And big people, feel free to modify these moves!

When I say PATH, stomp your feet. (Practice.)

When I say BIRDS, flap your arms. (Practice.)

When I say ROCKY GROUND,

crouch down low and then pop up quickly. (Practice.)

When I say THORNS, wiggle your fingers like prickly plants. (Practice.)

When I say GOOD SOIL, start low and slowly grow tall with your arms reaching high.(Practice.)

Excellent! You are ready.

Say: Jesus said a sower went out to plant seeds. (Pretend to scatter seeds broadly across the congregation.) Some seeds fell on the PATH! (Congregation stomps.) And the BIRDS came and ate them up! (Congregation flaps.) The sower kept planting seeds. Some seeds fell on ROCKY GROUND. (Congregation crouches and pops up.) They sprang up quickly, but they didn’t have deep roots.

The sower kept planting seeds. Some seeds fell among the THORNS. (Congregation wiggles fingers.) The thorns grew up around them. But the sower kept planting seeds. And some seeds fell on GOOD SOIL. (Congregation grows tall.) And those seeds grew and grew and produced a big harvest!

(Pause and smile.) Jesus finished the story by saying, If you have ears, hear! (Point to your ears.) I think Jesus was saying, Listen up! This is important!

Ask: Which soil would you want to be? (Pause for answers.) Me too. And here’s something important: good soil isn’t perfect soil. (Pause.) Good soil is soil that is ready. Ready to listen. Ready to learn. Ready to love. And did you notice something else about the story? The sower kept planting seeds everywhere. So many seeds! Seeds on the path. Seeds on the rocks. Seeds among the thorns. And seeds in the good soil. A careful farmer might try to save every seed. But in Jesus’s story, the sower keeps scattering them.

That’s what God’s love is like. Abundance! God plants love. God plants hope. God plants grace. Everywhere! God is even planting seeds today, right here in your head and hearts (pause). I love that. Will you pray with me?

Prayer (echo): Dear God (echo), we love you (echo). Thank you for planting love (echo) and hope (echo) and grace (echo). Help us be ready (echo) to listen and learn (echo) and grow with you (echo). Amen (echo).

Cook pastors Grace United Methodist Church, Columbia, and is the author of the Herbert the Hippo series from the Advocate Press, which is available at <https://www.advocatepress.org>.

LSM ‘Train the Trainer Academy’ is Aug. 1

COLUMBIA—The 2026 South Carolina Conference Lay Servant Ministries Train the Trainer Academy will be held Aug. 1 at Washington Street United Methodist Church.

The event begins with check-in at 9 a.m. The program begins at 9:30 a.m. and runs until 3:30 p.m.

The cost is \$25 per attendee. Only district directors of Lay Servant Ministries will register the facilitators they choose to attend the academy.

As in the past, there will be a light breakfast. Snacks, coffee and juice will be available beginning at 9 a.m., and lunch will be provided at 12:15 p.m.

The morning Train the Trainer Session will feature Toni Norris as the facilitator. Norris facilitated this session last year and plans to have an exciting, engaging presentation to equip facilitators to better teach the lay servant classes offered in the respective districts. During lunch, Bishop Leonard Fairley is slated to speak, along with his wife, Dawn. Those who have retired as district directors over the last several years will also be honored.

After lunch, around 1:15 p.m., the group will divide and attend one of five presentations of specific classes offered in the schools: Basic with Youth Addendum (Nancy Rivers, facilitator), Leading Bible Study (the Rev. Kris Bergmann, facilitator), United Methodist Heritage (the Rev. Sheri White, facilitator), Justice in Everyday Life: A Look at the Social Principles of the UMC (the Rev. Alston Lippert, facilitator) and Forgiving What We Can’t Forget (Makeiba Lewis, facilitator).

The year saw the highest number of persons participating in the academy since the COVID pandemic. They hope to exceed last year’s attendance as they seek to train new persons to facilitate classes and provide recertification for those facilitators who have not attended the academy in the last three years (as required by Discipleship Ministries guidelines for facilitators of lay servant courses).

To serve as an instructor, contact your respective district director of Lay Servant Ministries and discuss that possibility. To find your district director’s contact information: <https://www.umcsc.org/lsm>. Click on the directory for the full information.

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A much-needed retreat: Rock Hill district clergy gather

By Dr. Anthony Hodge

Sometimes we don't know what we need until we are actually doing it. This was the case for clergy in the Rock Hill District on April 21 at Grace-Lynnwood United Methodist Church.

Organizers saw the need for this particular retreat based upon all that

has transpired over the last few years within the UMC as a whole and in particular with the churches and clergy in the Rock Hill District. This was a great opportunity to bring district clergy together for purposes of sharing, reflecting and brainstorming in hopes of finding ways to equip and support one another in moving forward in positive

ways in spite of the grief that individuals have had to deal with.

Organizers of the retreat were myself along with the Revs. Heather Baird, Renee Garrison, Robin Griffeth, Melissa Shortridge and Nona Woodle.

Small groups discussed five questions that were broken up into five areas: Opening Reflection Questions; Questions for Naming Grief, Frustration and Loss; Questions for Meaning-Making; Questions for Healing and Restoration; and Questions for Moving Forward.

For each area, retreat participants were given an opportunity to respond to two questions.

What took place on April 21 is only the beginning for the clergy and laity of the Rock Hill District. A worship service was held May 17 called A Service of Hope for Moving Beyond Our Grief at Woodland UMC from 6-7:30 p.m. There is talk of organizing a grief support group for persons who wish to be in a more intentional supportive process within the district.

Shortridge shared, "Like many of our churches, I realized clergy were struggling. Some were struggling with guilt and grief at the loss of members and finances, feeling as if they had failed. Others felt angry, betrayed, hurt, lost, alone or forgotten as they struggled on the front lines to lead a church into uncharted territory. I felt we needed a safe place to share what we were feeling, realize we were not alone in our struggles and learn from one another how best to move forward with the support of our leadership and colleagues. To lead healthy churches, we need to be healing and healthy leaders."

The Rev. Renee Garrison said, "When Dr. Hodge asked for clergy volunteers to be a part of a team working to help bring healing to clergy, given the hurt and pain around the United Methodist denominational split and the aftermath of COVID trauma, I was feeling compelled to assist because I feel some solidarity with my clergy colleagues around the trauma of both circumstances and I know many of our laity are experiencing hurt and pain

around the denominational split and the aftermath of COVID trauma as well. I wanted to be a part of helping to bring healing and hope to my clergy brothers and sisters so that we can all move beyond the grief and pain and be able to help our churches move through the grief and pain so we can faithfully make disciples of Jesus Christ and live into the new reality of our churches and ministries that has come through these circumstances."

Woodle, the district congregational specialist, said she felt there was a need for our clergy to express all that they have been carrying throughout this very difficult season.

"I was happy to work with this wonderful team to put together a retreat to do just that," Woodle said.

Going forward, Shortridge said she was praying for ongoing sensitivity and awareness of the feelings and struggles of one another, checking in with one another and participating in cohorts designed to support, empower and equip one another in our personal as well as our professional lives.

She also said she would like to see us encourage our congregations to partner and work together with other churches in our local areas so that we can pool our resources and support one another.

Garrison said she would like to see district clergy find joy and passion in ministry once again beyond the grief and, as a result, find new ways to be in ministry together so that all can grow ministries.

"We cannot do this alone. We need one another. We need to be in ministry together," Garrison said. "I'd like to see more churches intentionally doing more together, supporting one another and helping one another to grow."

Woodle hopes there will be real follow-up in a timely manner.

"Such a session with the same group feels like a natural next step to allow these conversations to continue," she said.

This was definitely a much-needed retreat and, like the other organizers, I am hopeful we will continue to build on what we have experienced thus far.



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