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April 2022

General Conference postponed to 2024

By Jessica Brodie

Issues from the pandemic have forced another postponement of General Conference, this time to 2024 (exact dates and location still unknown).

On March 3, the United Methodist Commission on the General Conference announced that because of COVID-related and governmental policies and constraints,

the quadrennial event cannot be held in 2022 as they had hoped. Of particular concern is a massive backlog of visa applications that could prevent many delegates outside the United States from participating.

Many who had been hoping the event would be held to settle debate over same-sex weddings and “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy—and even how to leave the denomi-

nation if they so desire—are disappointed. One group has decided to launch a new denomination May 1 rather than wait until the 2024 event (see more, below).

General Conference is the highest legislative body in The United Methodist Church. It usually meets once every four years to revise church law, adopt resolutions and pass plans and budgets. Lay and clergy delegates from

every conference in the UMC—including eight South Carolina laity and eight clergy—attend and vote on the matters.

Originally, General Conference 2020 was slated for May 5-15, 2020, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but the pandemic prompted organizers to shift it first to 2021 and then to

See “General Conference,” Page 14

United Women in Faith

Women’s organization rebrands to accurately represent membership

By Jessica Brodie

In an effort to reflect the true nature of their group, United Methodist Women has rebranded, changing their name to United Women in Faith.

The change, which took effect March 3, was a surprise for most of the group’s half-million members, with the exception of a handful of people including their Program Advisory Group, bishops and conference presidents.

A new logo, new programs and new website are among the changes, announced en masse via email and a Facebook event where leaders celebrated the change and their ongoing cultivation of diversity.

Sue Owens, South Carolina United Methodist and president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction United Women in Faith, as well as a member of the organization’s Program Advisory Group, was among the few who knew in advance about the change.

Owens called it a healthy shift, noting all women of faith were welcome to be part of the group, but the name felt exclusionary toward women of Baptist, Presbyterian, Church of Christ and other denominations who are very much a part of the group along with United Methodists.

“As long as United Methodist Women had ‘United Methodist,’ it excluded those ladies,” Owens said.

Owens noted the group has changed its name more than 25 times throughout its 153-year history. It started as the Methodist Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society in 1869 and also included the Woman’s Missionary Association and the Woman’s Home Missionary Societies.

See “United Women in Faith,” Page 11

Walking them home

Mercy House establishes end-of-life space for homeless



Elena Eckert is one of several board members of Mercy House, a new ministry located in the parsonage of Bethel UMC, Rock Hill, to provide end-of-life care for the homeless and others in need of support.

By Jessica Brodie

Our transition from earth to our heavenly home is an intimate, personal and vulnerable time. Many of us prefer to be in a peaceful setting, surrounded by family and our closest friends, as we pass from this world to the next.

But for those at the end of their life who are homeless or do not have a safe or dependable support system, this can be

a time of uncertainty, struggle and discomfort.

With this in mind, one group of United Methodists in the Rock Hill District have stepped up to offer a place where people can receive both hospice care and the love of Christ.

Called Mercy House, the new ministry is located in the parsonage of Bethel United Methodist Church, Rock Hill.

See “Mercy House,” Page 15

Methodists push legislation to remedy poverty along I-95 Corridor

By Jessica Brodie

United Methodists and others concerned about a long-term solution to persistent, intergenerational poverty in South Carolina are trying to pass a bill in the South Carolina General Assembly this term.

The bill would establish an I-95 Corridor Authority to remedy the problem, building heavily on the 10-20-30 Provisions of the Congressional Research Service, a public policy research institute of the United States Congress.

Legislation has been filed in both the State House and State Senate.

The House bill (H4985) has been referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and is waiting to be assigned to a subcommittee. Rep. Lonnie Hosey (D-Barnwell) is the sponsor along with Reps. Pat Henegan, Bill Cly-

burn, Michael Rivers, Deon Tedder, Robert Williams, Kimberly Johnson, Ivory Torrey Thigpen, Justin Bamberg, Roger Kirby, Jerry Govan Jr., Gilda Cobb-Hunter, Shedron Williams, Jermaine Johnson, Terry Alexander and Cezar McKnight.

The Senate bill (S1174) is identical. It has been referred to the Committee on Finance and also is waiting to be assigned to subcommittee. Sponsors are Sen. Brad Hutto (D-Orangeburg) along with Sens. Kevin Johnson, Kent Williams and Vernon Stephens.

“It’s very late in the session, but we’re trying to get it through,” said Marvin Ira Lare, a retired South Carolina United Methodist pastor and

See “I-95 Corridor,” Page 12

Drive-thru drama brings Easter story to life for community

By Jessica Brodie

COLUMBIA—For more than 25 years, one church in the Midlands has been sharing the story of Jesus in a unique and wholly accessible way: through a drive-thru Easter drama open to the public.

Rehoboth United Methodist Church, Columbia, started “The Week that Changed the Whole World,” An Easter Drive-Thru Drama, sometime in the 1990s—no one is quite certain when. And since then the production has expanded. Other churches in the area help, and it features eight

different live-action scenes depicting the last days of Jesus, all in the church’s parking lot.

“The parking lot winds and twists, and every time you weave you get a scene,” said L.W. Smith,

See “Easter Story,” Page 24



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Confirmation students 'all fine' after bus crash

By Jessica Brodie

AIKEN—Nearly three dozen confirmation students from St. John's United Methodist Church, Aiken, had a close call last month after their charter bus crashed on the way home.

But other than a few bumps and bruises and one youth ministry staffer with a mild concussion, everyone was fine.

According to St. John's senior pastor Dr. Tim McClendon, the sixth and seventh graders were heading back home Sunday afternoon, March 6, after a confirmation retreat at Hinton Rural Life Center in North Carolina. They had just emerged from the mountains and were in Westminster when the bus experienced an electrical issue and lost power.

"By God's providence, they were off the curvy, steep roads just above Clemson," Mc-

Clendon told the *Advocate*, noting the driver lost all ability to control the bus beyond slowing it down.

But thankfully, McClendon said, they had just come to a level, grassy, "marvelously flat place," and the bus rolled into a ditch.

"The kids fell from one side of the bus to the other, which was frightening, but they were all fine, thank God," McClendon said.

Another blessing in what could have been an awful experience was the encounter they had with the Westminster community, who showered them with love and care in the aftermath of the accident. As McClendon, two other associate pastors and parents were driving to meet the bus and care for their flock, community residents, Westminster fire and rescue workers and even a member of the

county council showed up to help get everyone out of the bus and assess for injuries. McClendon said a nearby church, Lifeline Community Church, ferried the kids to their church building, where they fed them and let the kids play basketball until their parents and pastors arrived.

"There were so kind," he said.

St. John's held their confirmation ceremony March 27 and took up a collection for that church as a gesture of appreciation for all they did.

"It could have been a horrible, horrible tragedy, and if had happened 30 minutes earlier (in the mountains) it probably would have been," McClendon said.

Instead, it was an example of God's providence and the love shown by God's people.

Weekly 'Lenten luncheons' help two churches build relationship amid shared history

By Jessica Brodie

CHARLESTON—Two historic and long-connected churches in South Carolina's Holy City are joining this Lenten season for weekly luncheons to help foster unity and relationships.

Bethel United Methodist Church, on Pitt Street, and Old Bethel UMC, on Calhoun Street, share a history. Started in 1797, Old Bethel was one of two churches commissioned in Charleston by Methodism founder John Wesley; the other was Centenary UMC. In its early days, said Old Bethel pastor the Rev. David Washington, White people, freed Black people and enslaved Black people all worshipped together there until the Civil War. After Reconstruction, the church gifted Old Bethel to the Black congregation and rolled it to its present location on Calhoun Street, building another, called Bethel, on Pitt Street.

"We come from a mixed group in the foundation of the denomination

in this state," Washington said, something all churches would do well to remember as they strive to get along despite racial and other differences.

"Our efforts are to let both churches know we serve the same God," he added, noting when we get together there won't be a "Black heaven" or a "White heaven" or an "Asian heaven." We'll all be together.

"We need to learn to do this down here on earth, forge relationships," Washington said.

Washington and Bethel pastor the Rev. Susan Leonard both participate in the weekly joint luncheons. They take a Gospel from the lectionary, then espouse on how the Scripture might be speaking to them that particular week.

"We hope it helps churches see how their pastors might break down and interpret these verses," Washington explained.

This is the first year they have done weekly luncheons together.

Andy Cox named credit union president, CEO

By Jessica Brodie

COLUMBIA—It's official: as of April 1, Andy Cox is now the president and chief executive officer of the South Carolina Methodist Conference Credit Union—again.

Cox, a member of Chapin UMC, Chapin, who has served as the credit union's acting president since July, fills the position vacated by the Rev. Rex Wilson, who retired in June after 14 years of service.

Cox served the credit union from 1998 to 2007, when he left to serve at Epworth Children's Home, then went to The Oaks retirement community in 2012, becoming chief executive officer in 2015. The Oaks had been a United Methodist-affiliated senior-living home until last spring, when long-term financial issues prompted its sale to a for-profit company.

The first part of that sale was completed last March, and Cox stayed on part-time at The Oaks as CEO and president until this spring,



Cox

when the second part of The Oaks' sale—that of The PACE, Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly—was completed. That sale was final March 1.

"It's been an interesting journey, and I'm really excited about it," Cox told the *Advocate*. "As I told the board at our last meeting, I joined the credit union when I was a young teenager. My dad had been

a member, I got my first car loan here and ... I have a long history with the credit union and really appreciate what the credit union is and what it does for its members. I really like the cooperative spirit that really is the hallmark of credit unions."

Credit union Board Chair the Rev. Roger M. Gramling said Cox's official return as president "is a gold letter day for the Credit Union."

"We are pleased beyond words to have Andy back as president, and we look forward to the leadership which his many years of

experience and expertise offers for the future of the Credit Union," Gramling said.

The credit union offers savings; certificate products; car, personal and church loans; and other services to its members across South Carolina. Under Wilson's leadership, the credit union's membership expanded from pastors and conference-affiliated employees to anyone who is a member of any United Methodist church in South Carolina.

Cox, the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Albert L. Cox of the South Carolina Conference, is married to De Anna, and they have one son, Tal.

Cox is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Science in management with honors. Prior to coming to the credit union in 1998, he was employed by the Fort Jackson Federal Credit Union (now Allsouth) and the South Carolina Federal Credit Union.

He has also been employed by Citizens and Southern National Bank and First Citizens Bank.

Second part of Oaks sale now complete

By Jessica Brodie

A two-part sale of The Oaks—a former United Methodist-affiliated senior-living home in Orangeburg that had been about \$17 million in debt—is now complete.

On March 1, the second part of the closing of the sale of The Oaks' assets occurred with the sale of the PACE program, Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, to The Oaks of Orangeburg LLC.

The first part of the sale, that of the retirement community itself, occurred last spring, March 31, 2021.

Andy Cox, former president and chief executive officer of The Oaks, said when The Oaks Board of Trustees decided on this course of action, the goal was to see their ministry to seniors continue though through new ownership. With the closing of the sale of the

PACE program, Cox said, this goal is accomplished along with relieving The Oaks of its liabilities.

The final step is the process of closing the corporation, which the Methodist Oaks Board of Trustees will proceed with over the next number of months.

"I am thankful to the Board of Trustees for their faithful service and continued focus over this long and arduous process," Cox said.

Clay Fowler, owner and operator of Orangeburg's Longwood Plantation Assisted Living and Magnolia Place Memory Care, is the manager of The Oaks of Orangeburg. He'd reported last year that the conclusion of the sale meant the Methodist Oaks wouldn't have any remaining debt.

Cox echoed that sentiment, noting he is grateful the liabilities are no longer an issue.

Sexual abuse survivors book offered at discount in honor of awareness month

April is sexual abuse awareness month, and in honor of that, the author of a "survivors to thrivers" book is offering a 25 percent discount on her book to support survivors of trauma and sexual abuse.

Authored by a United Methodist connected with South Carolina, Tambry Harris, the book is called "Awakening the Light: A Survivors to Thrivers Going-Forward Story." The book aims to

bring hope and healing to survivors of trauma and sexual abuse, as well as bring a holistic approach to healing including mind, body and spirit, and shine awareness into how therapy, medical and faith communities can use this resource for the people they serve.

It is available on Amazon at www.amazon.com/dp/1943070946/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_309T34DF10AZ1V3PAZTZ



Elrod named new Columbia District superintendent

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, resident bishop of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, has appointed the Rev. Fran M. Elrod as superintendent of the Columbia District.

Elrod, senior pastor of Clemson United Methodist Church in Clemson since 2018, will succeed Dr. Cathy Jamieson after the 2022 Annual Conference.

She also will serve as secretary of the Cabinet.

Jamieson has served the Columbia District as superintendent since 2014. She is completing her term at the 2022 Annual Conference.



Elrod

Elrod was born in Columbia and graduated from Columbia College in 1995 with a Bachelor of Arts.

She was ordained in 2003, after studying at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and her graduation in 1999 from Erskine Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity. In addition to her appointment to Clemson UMC, Elrod has served Wesley UMC in Hartsville, St. John's UMC in Anderson, Trinity UMC in Honea Path and Calhoun Falls UMC. Her ministry also has

included work as an oncology and palliative care counselor for AnMed Health in Anderson.

In addition to Elrod's work in local churches, she has served in many ways, including as a member and chairperson of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and as a member of the Bishop's Ministry Advisory Team and the Conference Committee on Congregational Development. She has served as chairperson of the Hartsville District Committee on Ordained Ministry and as registrar of the Anderson District Committee on Ordained Ministry.

She also has served as a delegate to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference.

Elrod is married to Larry Elrod. They have three adult children and four grandchildren. She enjoys kayaking, reading, hiking, fishing and spending time with her family.

Methodist spiritual director expands care, ministry with free class for laity

By Jessica Brodie

A retired United Methodist pastor passionate about clergy care is now hoping to bring some of that same wisdom to laity.

The Rev. Ken Owens, now a certified spiritual director, has put together a free class for congregations and small groups called "What is Spiritual Direction and Who Is It Right For?"

The 90-minute class is available via Zoom, and Owens is also willing to travel to churches to teach the class in person as well as offer a sermon.

Spiritual direction is the consistent ongoing work of examining our relationship with God, celebrating how God is growing us and identifying barriers.

"It is about feeding our souls so that we can answer and be sustained in our callings," Owens said, noting that spiritual direction is for all Christians, lay and clergy, and is done in one-on-one meetings or in very small covenant groups. "As Methodists, we believe in sanctification. Our born again, or justifying grace, experience may be the formal starting line of our following God, but it's only a starting line. We are invited and expected to keep growing in God."

People of faith have already been struggling with a myriad of issues, and between the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, not to mention ongoing issues within the denomination, many are having a tough time maintaining a strong spiritual life in

such volatility.

Last year, the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church launched Clergy Care, a ministry to help pastors and other ministers access resources and opportunities for support and personal growth.

But Owens and others are also feeling called to reach out to laity and offer similar classes and retreats for them.

Owens is also planning to offer free classes via his website on occasional Sundays from 2:30-4:30 p.m. On April 10, he will offer "What Does a Methodist Need to Know About South Carolina History?" to explore links from our past that influence how we do church today in South Carolina.

For example, Owens said, "Why do our

various traditions select the music they choose? Or why are some strands of South Carolina Methodism big on social justice issues while others avoid social justice issues? Why is evangelism big in some places, but not others? Why do parts of our church respond well to authority and others are suspicious of it?"

In other words, he said, what are the blessings and the traumas from many years back, sometimes long-forgotten but still powerful, that have direct influence on how we do church today, and how might God be calling us forward for healing and joy and service?

These classes are available to laity and clergy. To learn more, Owens can be reached at 864-436-5158 or kenowenssd.com.

United Methodist with kidney disease hosts kidney disease awareness march

Stephanie Ponds Henry, member of Good Hope Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church in Camden, has Stage 4 kidney disease, is on the national transplant list and is praying for a living donor.

On Saturday, March 12—in honor of World Kidney Day March 10—Henry and her family hosted a Kidney Health/

Kidney Disease Awareness march.

The march started at the courthouse in Camden and proceeded to City Hall. The purpose was to bring awareness to kidney disease and to remember those who have died as a result.

"During my diagnoses of kidney disease and the re-

cent need for dialysis, I have felt that God is using me for something much greater. I wanted to take this opportunity to formally invite you to come walk the journey with me," Henry said.

Henry is the health benefits specialist for the South Carolina Conference of the UMC in the conference office.

Lawrence Chapel expands drive-up food pantry

In the spirit of loving their neighbors, Lawrence Chapel United Methodist Church, Central, has expanded its drive-up food pantry.

The new, larger structure—dubbed the Goodness Grocery—was officially opened with a blessing from the Rev. Mollie Bame Reddic on March 13.

More capacity means the pantry can expand its offerings: fresh produce from local

farmers; pet food and supplies; diapers and feminine hygiene products; and grooming kits with basics like a toothbrush/toothpaste, deodorant, body wash and a razor.

Guests at the Goodness Grocery are also able to submit prayer requests, and these pleas are lifted up during Sunday's worship service.

A lot of work went into the expansion, which was bolstered by two grants. In

March 2021, the Connectional Ministries division of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church awarded more than \$3,700 to help pay for the construction of the 8- by 4-foot food pantry. In November, the food pantry received \$2,500 from Dabo Swinney's All-In Foundation to purchase fruit, vegetables and other goods from local farmers.

Demand from throughout the community remains strong—the food pantry shelves are restocked almost every day. The drive-up format was particularly suitable at

the height of the pandemic. A food pantry committee and volunteers help ensure that neighbors are well served. And the congregation has been spiritually and financially supportive of the effort.

Members at Lawrence Chapel feel blessed that they can demonstrate its mission "to practice the love and teachings of Jesus" with this food ministry.

The food pantry was birthed out of the Forward Focus experience that Lawrence Chapel went through roughly four years ago.



More capacity means the pantry can expand its offerings, including fresh produce, toiletries, diapers and more.

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Viewpoints



Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

Resurrecting temples

I admit I'm struggling with mixed emotions this month. I'm disappointed General Conference has been postponed, though I understand—we can't ensure valid online voting, and we can't get all our delegates here in-person because of visa and other pandemic-related issues.

I'm alarmed a new denomination is not only starting but urging churches to leave The United Methodist Church. While I applaud their efforts and courage to take a leap of faith and start something new, something more in line with their theological convictions, it feels uncomfortable and upsetting, like I'm experiencing a divorce or a death.

I'm horrified at the destruction I see in Ukraine and elsewhere. I know wars have been happening as long as humans and sin have existed, but watching people devise new methods to obliterate cities with bombs, tanks, guns and other weapons of mass destruction is disgusting and heartbreaking.

As a woman of faith, I don't know what to do beyond pray. And so that is what I do—I pray. For I know that I can't fix the mess of this world, but I know who can: God.

We humans like to think we know all the answers. We like to think we know what God meant when this or that was expressed in the Bible, or that we are acting in God's name when we serve the best we can.

But the truth is we know very little in the grand scheme.

Yet we serve a mighty and all-powerful God who knows all, sees all, commands all and remains triumphant through it all.

So while my emotions are wobbly and I strive to find peace with all the changes going on around me, I don't have to fear. I only have to trust.

For I know everything will work out exactly as God intends.

As Jesus said in John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (NIV).

This Easter, consider the resurrection story afresh. Consider the temple Jesus spoke of, the temple that would be destroyed but raised up in three days. But of course, as the apostle John tells us, "the temple he had spoken of was his body" (John 2:19-20).

What temples are we holding onto when we need to trust God? How can we look at Jesus's sacrifice with new eyes this season given everything else going on?

He is risen, and we are risen with him.

And that is all that matters in the end.

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Bishop's Corner

by Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

Hopeful and steadfast

"On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isaiah 25:6-9

On a visit to the Garden of Gethsemane outside of Jerusalem, while looking upward at the gates to the city of Jerusalem, my pilgrimage group entered a section of the garden to pray.

Our group shared this space with 33 miners that had been rescued during the 2010 Chilean mining accident. We were there beside these people of faith who spent two months trapped underground, unsure of whether or not they would be rescued, yet remaining hopeful and steadfast.

It moved me to know that I was sharing space with people from so many different walks of life; people who brought with them so many different causes for celebration or concern.

For in this very place where Jesus prayed, not for his own will, but for God's will to be done—in this place of prayer and peace—we prayed.

These miners, crammed like the canned fish that first sustained them in a space the size of a two-person dormitory apartment—538 square feet—had defied the odds and showed the world that there is hope even when the worst seems certain.

Indeed, their survival was born of

strength and patience as well as a resilience that God instilled in them.

For two years running, the lives of South Carolinians have been crammed into the midst of pandemic, unrest and divisiveness that has wreaked havoc on our lives and communities.

It has taken a toll on us both literally and emotionally. Our routines were disrupted and we legitimately have feared for our health and for the well-being of our loved ones.

Yet, just as those miners emerged from the depths of the earth, in many ways, we are beginning to emerge from the darkness and depths of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even while it is still dark, we rejoice in Easter's simple, but glorious, message that Jesus lives!

We celebrate our Risen Savior on Easter Sunday, that day when everything changed. That day that Christ emerged from the darkness of death into the light of life everlasting.

While it is still dark, we recognize that the hope of the resurrection is that the world is not just where Jesus died, but this world is where Jesus lives!

The power that raised Jesus from the dead can raise us up from despair, disillusionment, defeat, pandemic and all of its ramifications. We proclaim Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The one who wipes away the tears from all faces, the one for whom we have waited.

In our drive to keep our churches current and relevant in this modern day, let us acknowledge and remember that we share space with generations of saints who have paved the way, paid the bills and kept the church doors open so that "while we breathe, we hope."

As we celebrate in this Easter season, may we remain steadfast in our faith and lean with hope and gladness into the God-inspired future that is emerging.

Letter to the Editor

Uncertainty vs. faith

The virus COVID-19 has caused so much uncertainty—945,000 deaths. It is hard to know what will happen to our health, the safety of our children and loved ones and the conditions of everyday living.

Then there is the uncertainty of the climate in the world. The uncertainty of the economy in the world. The uncertainty of peace in the world as the Russians invaded Ukraine. The threat of nuclear weapons Putin is making.

The rumors that The United Methodist Church will be divided cause uncertainty in our beloved church. The question becomes, "What will happen to our church?" The United Methodist Church will not be "United" anymore, just as the denomination Southern Methodist was established because of racism.

Just as Putin invaded an innocent country as Ukraine, there are religious leaders known as Global Methodist Church who want to split the UMC over the fear of the LGBTQ people. Uncertainty is the condition of so much in our lives. There are no absolutes except God. Now is the time to love all people and realize God holds the future and our lives.

Mark 3:25, "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand."

Romans 8:39, "Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rev. John Culp, retired
Columbia

UMCSC offers new COVID-19 guidance

After the Centers for Disease Control eased its guidelines, the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church released new COVID-19 guidance for churches, modified March 1. Read the guidance at <https://www.umcsc.org/bestpractices>.



Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Carol Rexroad Cannon

We did

Author's note: This statement is a personal testimony and confession. It is written from the perspective of a White United Methodist who has lived and served in South Carolina the past forty years. Thus, the "we" is not inclusive of all readers of the Advocate. It includes primarily White persons.

I appreciate Bishop Will Willimon sharing the story of Rev. Hawley Lynn's courage in 1947 when he raised the question, "Who lynched Willie Earle?" and answered "We did" (February *Advocate*). Rev. Lynn dared to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. I've read Will's book on the subject and commend it to you. The lynching of Willie Earle is a horrific part of our state's history.

I'd like to take that question and apply it to our own time. Who killed Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Walter Scott, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery? We did.

Or closer to home, who killed Samuel Hammond Jr., Delano Middleton and Henry Smith on the campus of South Carolina State University on Feb. 8, 1968? We did. We were the ones who chose to support and enforce the cultural norm that Black and White people couldn't bowl in the same building.

Who killed Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Tywanza Sanders, Rev. Sharonda Singleton, Cynthia Hurd, Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Myra Thompson and Rev. Daniel Simmons Jr. at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston on June 15, 2015? We did. We were the ones who created and sustained a culture that formed Dylann Roof.

We are the ones who support the myth that White people are better than Black people. Whenever we choose that guns and gates provide more security than a handshake and open door, we support fear more than trust. Whenever we decide that our children will be better served by being homeschooled or attending private school with children "like us" rather than attending public school with "other" children, we support suspicion and differences more than acceptance and equality. When we wonder "What is that car doing in our neighborhood?" when it has a Black driver, or when we check our pockets or clutch our pocketbook more tightly when we see a Black shopper, we are judging a person based on the color of their skin. When we say "Our church is not ready for a Black pastor," we are saying "I am not ready to support and stand up for a Black pastor in opposition to my friends and neighbors who disagree."

In the United States today, we continue to commit the sin of racism. In various ways, we choose the kingdom of mortals based on fear, division and mistrust rather than the kingdom of God based on justice, peace and love.

O Lord, have mercy on us. Give us grace to repent of our sin and to walk in the way of Jesus. May it be so. Amen.

Cannon is an elder who retired in June after serving in the South Carolina Conference for 40 years.



Photo courtesy of Tanya Sari

Pumpkin Patch proceeds

The Rev. Laura Whitt, pastor of Aldersgate UMC, Sumter, shares a smile with guests from Sumter United Ministries and Christian Charities. Aldersgate UMC donated all the proceeds from its annual Pumpkin Patch to these two local organizations. This year, they were able to donate a record amount of \$6,700 to each organization.



United Women in Faith

by Vickie Harvey

A spiritual uplift

Do you need a spiritual uplift? Is there a need to bring a new perspective to your prayer life and revitalize your soul?

Then come and join the South Carolina Conference of the United Women In Faith as we gather virtually for our Spiritual Growth Event.

The title for our event this year is "Surrounded by Prayer." Our Scripture is based on Philippians 4:6, "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

We will gather virtually via Zoom on Saturday, April 23. You will not have to travel, and you may enjoy this event from the comfort and convenience of your home. The Spiritual Growth Committee is very excited to bring this event together. Our host will be the Spartanburg District, whose president, Lisa Caldwell-Salters, is extremely excited about this event. Our host church is United Methodist Church of the Covenant located in northern Spartanburg County. We are looking forward to Scripture, a devotional and the dynamic music that will be provided by the district.

Our speaker will be Annie Crocker. Annie is instrumental in the Lay Servant Ministries of the Spartanburg District. She is lay pastor of Beaumont UMC in the Spartanburg District. Annie's church is multicultural and she has started many dynamic programs since becoming pastor. Annie also has been a strong leader in United Women In Faith and the missions and ministry of the organization. She is an inspiring speaker with a warming smile and love in her heart.

Since our theme is "Surrounded by Prayer," you may wish to set up a small worship center in your home. Some of you may wish to have a prayer shawl, your Bible, a picture or a figurine that will help you center your heart and mind during this event. You may wish to take a picture and share with others.

Along with uplifting music, wonderful prayers and a message that you need to hear, we will have a time for your prayer request. These prayer requests will be a part of our Love Feast as we share a small meal of a snack and drink. This activity will be much like the one we used at our Annual Meeting. Azilee Dickey from the Florence District will be our prayer leader on that day.

Conference events such as our spiritual growth event help us to grow spiritually. In this way, as Christian women we are better able to understand that we are a part of God's mission in the world. Meditation, prayer, Scripture and message gives us a clearer vision to act on our faith, hope and love.

Register in advance for this meeting: <https://tinyurl.com/4rfphv53>

Since there is no charge to attend, we ask that you consider donating to our four mission projects. Make checks payable to SCCUMW. Checks may be sent to SCCUMW c/o Ruby Hannah, 3015 Audubon Dr. Hanahan, SC 29430.

Harvey is spiritual growth coordinator.



Southern Mutual supports LSM

Southern Mutual Church Insurance started a tradition by supporting Lay Servant Ministries under the leadership of past conference Lay Servant Ministries Director Jackie G. Jenkins. The support is greatly appreciated by the current LSM co-directors, David Salter and Becky Green. The funds from SMCI will be used to continue to develop leaders and get totally engaged with the four priorities of Connectional Ministries. Pictured are Thelma Hudson, Walterboro District lay servant director, and Pamela Goodwine-Glover, SCUMC LSM secretary.

Around the Districts

Columbia District

Cayce UMC, Cayce, hosted a Food Truck Rodeo March 26. The event featured live music by Pantasia and activities for kids. Donations of non-perishable food items were appreciated.

Washington Street UMC, Columbia, and Journey UMC, Columbia, partnered to hold a service of repentance and healing March 27 in Washington Street's sanctuary. The service included testimonies, prayers and choirs from both churches.

Congratulations to the Rev. Carsten and Christine Bryant on the birth of their son. Cameron George was born Feb. 16.

Greenville District

Mountain View UMC, Taylors, will host a monthly Veterans Coffee House gathering for veterans to gather for conversation, information and fellowship. The gathering will be held the fourth Thursday of every month from 8:30-10 a.m. The grand opening will be April 28.

Orangeburg District

Clafin University, Orangeburg, broke ground for a new Student Center March 25, 2022. The new building will centralize student services in one location and include a campus bookstore, university pantry and hair care center.



An Epworth moment

Manning UMC celebrated Epworth Sunday Feb. 20 in celebration of Epworth's 125th anniversary. Members expressed appreciation to Epworth President Beth Williams, Director of Church Relations Rev. Kathy James and Director of Independent Living Laurie Brandes for sharing about the future for Epworth Children's Home. Manning presented Epworth with a check for \$3,000. Flowers were arranged by Jo Gamble.

S.C. men hear wisdom from Francis Chan, Jerrad Lopes on resilience

By Jessica Brodie

United Methodist men across South Carolina gathered Feb. 27 for a virtual Men N Ministry retreat that featured two well-known author-speakers, Francis Chan and Jerrad Lopes, and three breakout discussions designed to get men thinking about resilience.

"I thought the event went great," said Men N Ministry President Marvin Horton. "We had about 450 connecting and 200-plus from our 25 'Major Sponsor' and 'Local Sponsor' churches."

Horton also said several sponsor churches invited other churches, both within the UMC and from other denominations, to join them to watch and participate in the event.

Mount Horeb United Methodist Church, Lexington, served as the host church, and the two-hour event included song and worship opportunities as well as wisdom from the speakers.

The speakers brought their messages conversationally through interviews conducted by Mount Horeb pastors. L. Jonathan Holston, resident bishop of the South Carolina Conference of the UMC, also participated in a question-answer style interview where he shared wisdom about resilience, sin and our connection to God.

The event also featured remarks from the Rev. Jeff Kersey, Dr. Stephen Love and others, plus a Prayer Room lead by the Rev. Chris Snelgrove and Men N Ministry Prayer Advocate Dennis Sullen.

Prior to the Sunday night virtual retreat, men gathered in-person Friday morning for a golf tournament, led by Kenny Bingham, and on Friday night participated in an oyster roast at Mount Horeb with the rest of the church's men.

Keep your eyes up

Lopes, author, speaker and founder of *Dad Tired*, was interviewed by the Rev. Chad Myers, who asked him about adversity, exhaustion and staying on-course.

Responding to Myers' question about what discourages men today, Lopes spoke on spiritual weariness as a huge issue.

"There's a difference between a man who's physically exhausted and a man who's spiritually weary. Tiredness is OK—you can figure out your schedule better, get better sleep, but weariness is deeper," Lopes said, noting it's like an exhaustion of the soul.

For men experiencing this, Lopes said, the root is often unrepented sin. While men might have confessed sin to God, there is tremendous healing in confessing to one another. Another reason is that men have lost sight of eternity because they are so focused on their Twitter feed or Instagram feed.

"They're bombarded by the world's chaos, and their soul is getting crushed over and over and over again, and they've lost sight of the bigger story: God has something bigger for you."

Lopes said the world has always been chaotic. It is nothing new for believers. This is why keeping our eyes up—on God—is so important.

And, he added, when adversity does come, don't rush to get through it as quickly as possible.

"Jesus said a blessing is anything that gets you closer to me," Lopes said—and sometimes, that is hardship. "So maybe don't try to rush to get out of (hardship). Maybe the blessing is right where you are today."

Lopes said he finds himself getting short-tempered with his wife and kids when he gets frustrated about daily concerns—finances, career, future—and he loses sight of "how the story ends."

That end-story is something he's learned much from his wife about; she serves as an oncology nurse and often has the privilege of walking people through their last days on earth.

"We are constantly reminded life is so, so short," Lopes said. "As men we chase a lot of stuff, get excited about a lot of things—that



Above, Francis Chan (left), pastor and bestselling author of "Crazy Love" and other books, does a Q&A with the Rev. Trevor Miller. Below, Jerrad Lopes, author, speaker and founder of *Dad Tired*, chats with the Rev. Chad Myers about staying on-course.



new iPhone coming out, that boat I'm saving up for, a game. But at the end of the day I want to be really passionate about eternal things because real, real quickly we're going to be gone."

Lopes closed by emphasizing how important community with other men is in his personal Christian walk.

"If you leave me alone, I'm prone to wander, not prone to Jesus ... so if you're a man who thinks, 'I got it, I can free-range this, go solo,' you'll probably drift in the wrong direction. In bowling we put bumpers up with young kids. Well, community for men is those bumpers.

"At the end of the day, if you're serious about following Jesus there's no way you can do it alone."

The wholeness of community

Next, the Rev. Trevor Miller chatted with Bishop Holston about sin, soul weariness and staying in community with others when it comes to being resilient.

"Sin is our way of doing our own thing in our own way and our own time," Holston said.

But we know deep within our souls when we are not right with God, he said. Yet sometimes we think we can do everything on our own.

"If you feel you have no resilience, think: When's the last time you prayed? Prayed for someone with someone? Prayed with your wife with children?"

He echoed Lopes in reminding men to keep their faces up and live in the light of eternity. That is one important thing the pandemic taught this world: tomorrow isn't assured. We don't always know the outcome of a given day. For him personally, Holston said relying on other people makes a big difference in his life.

"I try not to be a lonely, lonesome person who tries to do it all myself," he said. "Community makes me whole."

Issues and pruning

Next, Chan, pastor and bestselling author of "Crazy Love" and other books, was interviewed by Miller.

Speaking from his base in Northern California, Chan talked about how resilience can feel fleeting today.

"Issues can divide us—masks, vaccines,

Black Lives Matter—but nothing was supposed to divide us as the body of Christ," Chan said. "Yet we're not resilient in our love for each other."

That love starts from within, and from deep and intentional time alone with the Lord.

"Our strength comes from being alone, you and God. You come out of those times invincible. Many of us lack faith, but (Jesus) calls us members of his own body. In a very real way, we are attached to that much power. That alone should cause me to be a resilient person," Chan said.

Chan said there are a few key ways to develop faith resilience. It starts with hunger for Christ and for his word to dwell in our hearts.

"For most of us, Christ does not abide in our hearts," Chan said. "He's someone we visit, even every morning, but somehow we allow things to distract us so he doesn't dwell there."

Hunger will help with that.

Another important factor is carving out distraction-free time to be with God.

"You have to fight for silence and figure out a rhythm, figure out quiet, self-controlled, sober-minded prayer before the Lord," he said.

Chan said there is a weak and shallow aspect to United States churches in the last decade, but he said believers don't have to worry.

"It might be a pruning and a separating to reveal the real church," Chan said. "People step up during times like this, or fall away, and Christ said in last days the hearts of many will grow cold because of the increase in lawlessness.

"The trials are supposed to create perseverance so we keep getting stronger and stronger."

Pruning always looks horrible, Chan said, but it creates fruit.

"I'm seeing a younger generation that has a hunger I didn't have in high school and college, a willingness to sacrifice anything, so I'm very hopeful. They're having prayer gatherings til 2 a.m., a willingness to go anywhere for the kingdom."

Truth over feelings

Finally, Miller spoke with Mount Horeb's senior pastor, the Rev. Jeff Kersey, about his

thoughts on Chan's words, resilience and being a man of God today.

Kersey said men are often finding satisfaction in the wrong places, yet they wonder why they have no hunger for God.

"Outside of our faith in God, we men psyche ourselves up, think we can fix problems, medicate ourselves with alcohol or drugs," Kersey said. "We keep ourselves so busy we don't have time to think, or buy a bunch of stuff and get so overextended because we're trying to find satisfaction, or becoming a victim and want people to feel sorry for us.

"All those things give us false hope and false resilience but will fade, creating emptiness inside us."

Miller asked Kersey to pick a key way men can stay resilient, and Kersey offered what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount—if you want to be resilient and stay standing through the tough times, the troubled times, you've got to put his words into practice.

"There's no question we'll get knocked down but not destroyed. There will be confusing times but never despair."

Kersey closed by noting that men need to stay in relationship with God and keep God's word in their hearts.

"If we rely on our feelings, our feelings will betray us. But if we know, if we take seriously the word of God and we are in relationship with him, then if I feel like giving up I don't. Faith is not what we can see but what we know to be true. Faith doesn't take you out of the problem but through the problem. Faith won't take away the pain but will give you the ability to handle the pain. Faith won't take you out of the storm, but will take you through the storm."

In short, he said, if I rely on my feelings, I'll probably sink and give up. It's far better to rely on what I know in the Word of God.

Next year

Next year's Men N Ministry Retreat is set for Saturday, Feb. 25.

"I personally hope and pray next year will be an in-person event," Horton said.

He and the rest of the Men N Ministry team thank Mount Horeb for hosting as well as the church sponsors.

Thanks, sponsors

Major Sponsoring Churches (those contributing \$600 and more) included Mount Horeb (four-year sponsor); Windsor UMC, Columbia District (four-year sponsor); McBee Chapel, Greenville District (one-year sponsor); Aldersgate UMC, Sumter, Hartsville District (four-year sponsor); St. John's UMC, Aiken, Orangeburg District (four-year sponsor); Good Samaritan UMC, Rock Hill District (four-year sponsor); New Beginnings UMC, Spartanburg District (three-year sponsor); Reidville Road UMC, Spartanburg District (four-year sponsor); Ashland UMC, Columbia District (four-year sponsor); Belin Memorial UMC, Marion District (four-year sponsor); and Bethesda UMC, Easley, Anderson District (one-year sponsor).

Local Sponsoring Churches (those contributing \$100-\$599) included Rehoboth UMC, Columbia District (four-year sponsor); Lee Road UMC, Greenville District (two-year sponsor); St. Luke UMC, Hartsville District (two-year sponsor); Lytleton Street UMC, Hartsville District (three-year sponsor); Surfside UMC, Marion District (two-year sponsor); Silver Hill Memorial UMC, Spartanburg District (three-year sponsor); Platt Springs UMC, Columbia District (one-year sponsor); Centenary UMC, Hartsville District (two-year sponsor); Edgefield UMC, Greenwood District (two-year sponsor); St. Mark St Stephen UMC, Walterboro District (two-year sponsor); New Light UMC, Orangeburg District; St. Mark UMC, Greenwood District (three-year sponsor); Woodland UMC, Rock Hill District (four-year sponsor); and Journey UMC, Columbia District (one-year sponsor).

Advocate awards Wofford rising freshman Susann Breazeale with \$1,000 college scholarship

The South Carolina United Methodist Advocate has selected Susann Breazeale, a rising freshman at Wofford College, as the newspaper's 2022 college scholarship recipient.

Breazeale plans to major in government/journalism (pre-law) and will receive \$1,000 from the Advocate toward her studies at Wofford in the 2022-2023 academic year.

The Advocate's scholarship is for students who are South Carolina United Methodists and who are planning to enroll or are already enrolled at one of the four United Methodist



Breazeale

colleges in South Carolina: Claflin University, Columbia College, Spartanburg Methodist College or Wofford College.

The scholarship is available to students with an interest in communications, journalism or business.

Breazeale has been an active member of Grace United Methodist Church, Pickens, all her life.

Baptized as an infant at Grace, she grew up in the church, completing confirmation in 2016. Her pastor, the Rev. Valerie Mireb, noted she served as an acolyte for nine years and a communion steward, plus has assisted with

children's church, Christmas Eve preparations and other church ministries.

She was the editor of her high school newspaper, The Sapphire, and in that capacity, she said in her application essay, "I saw firsthand how shared writing can bring people together, not unlike how the Word within the Bible also serves to bring people together for a common good. I made a conscious effort to involve those who were unseen a lot of the time, to bring them into the fold of the life of our school by seeking them out for interviews, quotes and photographs. I sought not only to feature those who were involved with many school events, but also 'the least of these'—those who often stood on the

sidelines or were largely unknown by many. My efforts were to make all feel included and represented by my words, just as journalism in ministry does."

"Today, writing, journalism and our relationships with those around us continue to be a way to spread the good news of Jesus Christ," she wrote.

Through the intersection of government and journalism, she hopes to bring people together for a common good, to help the unseen and unheard be seen and heard.

The application process for the Advocate 2023 scholarship has begun, with a deadline of March 1, 2023. For more information: www.advocate.org/about-us/scholarship.

Peter Mageto elected AU vice chancellor

An exhaustive, global search process that generated interest from more than 3,000 people in Africa, North America and Europe culminated in the election of Dr. Peter Mageto to lead Africa University as its fifth vice chancellor.

Bishop Mande Muyombo, North Katanga Episcopal Area, announced the election by the Africa University Zimbabwe Board of Directors on March 22.

Mageto, a Kenyan, is the first non-Zimbabwean to lead Africa University, a pan-African, United Methodist-related institution with its main campus located at Old Mutare, Zimbabwe. He brings to AU 12 years



Mageto

of university-management experience and 31 years of ministry.

Mageto, the former deputy vice chancellor at AU, has served as interim vice chancellor since the sudden death of Professor Munashe Furusa in January 2021. An accomplished academic in the study of ethics and leadership, Mageto captures his vision and grounding philosophy in four words: our people, our values.

Responding to the board's decision, Mageto promised that academic excellence, innovation, accountability and institutional advancement would undergird Africa University's fourth decade of continental impact.

"I am humbled by the confidence that the AU Board of Directors has shown in appointing me as the fifth vice chancellor," Mageto said. "I am convinced that God has privileged me to offer servant leadership characterized by the truth, transparency and integrity in his project, Africa University, for a purpose. I accept this appointment as a vocation with humility and gratitude. I will do my best to take AU to greater heights in the education sector."

The search for a vice chancellor, led by Muyombo who chairs the Africa University Zimbabwe Board, garnered 63 applicants, including 30 from sub-Saharan countries. The review process produced a shortlist of 12 for in-depth assessment and three highly qualified candidates for interviews.

Claflin University earns third place in U.S. News and World Report ranking of HBCUs

Most colleges and university administrators covet high graduation rates and view them as indicators that help determine the value and worth of their academic programs. Graduation rates may also influence the decisions prospective students make about what colleges or universities are the best investments of their time and resources.

Claflin University's commitment to academic excellence and lowering student debt was reaffirmed by a U.S. News and World Report Short List ranking that placed Claflin third among 10 historically Black colleges/universities with the highest four-year graduation rates among first-time, full-time students who started in fall 2014.

"This is by far the most powerful and

impactful of our impressive rankings," Claflin President Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack said. "This ranking is consistent with our value proposition that includes providing affordable and exceptional educational experiences while maintaining higher student retention rates and shorter time for degree completion than the national average. This is what matters most to our students, parents and stakeholders."

According to U.S. News, The Short List is separate from the publication's overall rankings. It is a regular series that magnifies individual data points in hopes of providing students and parents a way to find which undergraduate or graduate programs excel or have room to grow in specific areas.

U.S. News surveyed more than 1,850 colleges and universities for its 2021 survey of undergraduate programs. These schools self-reported myriad data regarding their academic programs and the makeup of their student body, among other areas.

U.S. News also stated that this data is the most accurate and detailed collection of college facts and figures of its kind.

U.S. News and World Report previously

ranked Claflin in the "Top 10" on its list of the Best HBCUs for the 11th consecutive year.

Claflin is the only HBCU in South Carolina ranked in the "Top 10" of both categories.

The prestigious publication also ranked Claflin seventh in the Best Regional Colleges in the South category and third among the Top Performers on Social Mobility for Regional Colleges in the South.

Columbia College partners with Workshop Theatre of South Carolina

COLUMBIA—After an ongoing relationship between Columbia College, specifically Cottingham Theater, and Workshop Theatre of South Carolina since the 2017-2018 academic year, the two organizations gathered together to sign an official memorandum of understanding March 8.

The two organizations have worked together for four years, but both are excited to make the partnership official and go forward together to serve the community through the art of theatre. Executive Director Jeni McCaughan, Board of Trustees President Darci Strickland Rush and Board of Trustees member Jocelyn Sanders were present to represent Workshop Theatre of South Carolina, and Columbia College was represented by President Tom Bogart.

"Even though we have worked closely with Workshop Theatre for some years now, we felt it was important to celebrate this milestone," Bogart said. "We are thrilled to make it official and move forward with our work together."

Thank your children's ministry staff in the June Advocate

Does your children's minister go above and beyond what is expected when it comes to cultivating kids in your church? Are you getting ready to kick off your first vacation Bible school in awhile? Or do you just want to give a big "thank you" to the person responsible for tending the youngest of your congregation's flock?

This June, the Advocate is offering a chance for your church to recognize their children's minister or ministry team with an appreciation ad.

"We know how important children's ministry staff and volunteers are to the growth of any church," said Advocate Editor Jessica Brodie. "This is a great way to express support and show your children's

ministers their work is valued—and how much they mean to you."

Three sizes are available for the children's ministry appreciation ad. All are the same width (five inches) but the height varies:

- Small: One inch tall, \$38
- Medium: Two inches tall, \$76
- Large: Four inches tall, \$152

To place a children's ministry appreciation ad in the June edition, email text to atrussell@umcsc.org or send to Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203.

Deadline is May 10.

Churches will be billed for the ads unless otherwise noted.

For questions, call Allison Trussell at 803-786-9486.

South Carolina Conference United Women in Faith

Spiritual Growth Event via Zoom

All persons are invited to attend this Uplifting Event
Registration is Free

Surrounded By Prayer

Saturday April 23, 2022 at 10:00 AM

The South Carolina Conference of United Women in Faith Spiritual Growth Committee is very excited to present our Virtual Zoom Event! We are looking forward to you joining us. Our host will be the Spartanburg District and our host church is United Methodist Church of the Covenant.



Our session will be 90 minutes and led by Annie Crocker, pastor of Beaumont United Methodist Church in the Spartanburg District. Annie has been involved for many years with United Methodist Women and is a compassionate preacher with a loving heart.

Register in advance for this meeting:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8128128128>

Any questions? Please contact our Registrar,
Carman Wannamaker-Amos
Phone: 864-270-1065
Email: wannamakeramos@msn.com

Visit our website: <https://www.umcsc.org/discipleship/united-methodist-women/>



United Women in Faith

Help others know about the Advocate's ministry on Advocate Awareness Sunday May 15

This spring, the *South Carolina United Methodist Advocate* will hold its annual Advocate Awareness Sunday, an effort to introduce United Methodists across South Carolina to the newspaper ministry.

This year's *Advocate* Awareness Sunday is May 15.

The *Advocate* has a number of items for churches and others to share, including talking points, bulletin inserts, a video and more.

"The *Advocate* is a great way to help churches be con-

nectional and know what is going on in the denomination across the state, but not everyone knows about the *Advocate*," said Editor Jessica Brodie. "We hope our readers will do what they can to spread the word so our newspaper continues to thrive for future generations."

Founded as the *Southern Christian Advocate*, the *Advocate* was first commissioned by the General Conference of 1836 to be published in Charleston, one of three papers authorized by that conference. Highly respected across the

denomination, it is currently the oldest newspaper in Methodism and has won 123 journalism excellence awards in the last decade.

The *Advocate's* mission is to inform and connect South Carolina United Methodists by independently reporting relevant news, engaging readers, providing a forum for dialogue and sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Find the video and other resources at www.advocatesc.org/awarenessday.



Photo courtesy of Karen Kendo

Talented hands and warm hearts

The women of First UMC, Harleyville, Walterboro District, are dedicated to fulfilling the mission of The United Methodist Church in their local and extended community. Each month, their program focuses on an organization or mission they can learn more about and support. At their February meeting, they heard from Shannon Younger, a nurse in the neonatal intensive care unit at Summerville Medical Center. Younger explained a typical day in the NICU. She had informed the ladies in advance that the nurses love to have colorful blankets and quilts to put on the isolettes to bring some warmth, color and comfort to the parents. An isolette is a clear plastic enclosed crib that maintains a warm environment for a new baby and isolates him or her from germs. A baby, especially a premature baby, who cannot maintain body heat can be protected from drafts and cold in an isolette. That was all First UMC's women needed to hear. The NICU was showered with an abundance of quilts and receiving blankets, with more promised to come. The Rev. Mickaylla McDonald is the church pastor.



The Upstate coordinator for End Hunger spoke to the reality of hunger in the Greer community and how their organization works to get food on the tables of those in need.

Memorial Mission Kids raise almost \$3K to fight hunger

By Katie Jeter

On Sunday, Feb. 6, members of Memorial United Methodist Church, Greer, gathered to support their Mission Kids in their efforts to raise money for The Society of St. Andrew's End Hunger initiative.

Attendees shared a simple supper of rice and beans—the type of meal more than 60 percent of the world's population are eating today because that is all they have.

The Upstate coordinator for End Hunger spoke to the reality of hunger in the Greer community and how their organization works to get food on the tables of those in need. Memorial UMC adopted a bushel of fruits and vegetables. Because of the generosity of Memorial's church family, they received a pledge for each item and exceeded their goal of \$806.

They raised \$2,949 through the event, which will provide more than \$49,000 worth of food to the community and beyond through End Hunger.

It was a special and successful night for Memorial where the children and youth came together with the men of the church to host an event that will bless many who are hungry today.

What a joy it is to carry out the motto of our Mission Kids: We learn, love, serve and grow together.

Jeter is director of children's ministries.

Epworth Children's Home

Blooming with the fullness of life

As the flowers bloom during this time of year, Epworth also blossoms in assisting children and families to live fuller and richer lives.

The two Columbia campuses are reopening to community activities and to volunteer groups while district community-based programs continue to grow in number and size.

In 2021, the more traditional programs that are housed on the Millwood and the Trenholm Road campuses continued to serve Epworth's guests with an array of evidence-based services. The residential, independent living and family care programs housed 174 individuals and provided them with around the clock supervision and services.

The Early Intervention Center provided its 128 children and their families with a variety of on campus preschool and/or home-based services. The Epworth Center for Counseling served 291 Midlands clients this past year.

The newer programs are beginning to expand their footprints as staff members are added and trained. Homebuilders, which serves families in crisis in their own homes, has been established in the Lowcountry, the

Midlands and the Upstate. Homebuilders in the Pee Dee area is now in the planning stage. The foster care program has been established in the Upstate, Lowcountry, Pee Dee, Rock Hill and Columbia areas, and as churches continue to reopen to missions, new foster care hubs will be established. Last year, Epworth placed 223 children in the 150 foster homes that were recruited and trained by Epworth staff members.

South Carolina Conference United Methodist congregations are continuing to reach out to support this ministry of "people making" with the use of facilities, volunteerism, donations of goods and services needed by foster families and children and through financial gifts. Congregational giving to Epworth has increased while simultaneously assisting Epworth to reach the \$8 million mark in the annual conference endorsed "Every Child is a Miracle" financial campaign.

So it is with deep appreciation and high hopes that the \$10 million campaign goal will be reached, and missional hubs will be established in every district in South Carolina as flowers appear and children bloom with the fullness of new life.



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The participants wore plaid tartans to add to festivities.

Wightman women host World Day of Prayer

The Wightman United Women in Faith of Prosperity recently hosted a 2022 World Day of Prayer ecumenical service for churches in their community.

In doing so, they used a Tea Party theme with hot and cold tea, sandwiches and tea cakes. The participants wore plaid tartans.

This year's theme, "I know the plans I have for you," was written by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It was based on the letter Jeremiah wrote to the exiles in Babylon who were in a place of suffering, uncertainty and opposing views. For Jeremiah, God's plan was clear, and the women shared this assurance by singing and worshipping. They lit seven candles that represented the seven continents of the world to show that prayerful action can bring hope and new life to all people who God promises to take care of.

Each attendee received a seed of hope to ponder where it needed to be planted in their lives and communities. A seed, nourished by prayers of intercession and actions of love, binds all together around the world.

The service concluded with prayers for the people of Ukraine as they endure the destruction of their country and way of life and face an uncertain future.

Native American Ministries

Native American Ministries Sunday

In accordance with the *Book of Discipline*, Para. 816(6), "Native American Ministries Sunday shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the Third Sunday of Easter (second Sunday after Easter)."

This year, that date will be May 1.

Many churches are at different points of opening and/or attendance because of COVID. If your church is permitting visitors, the Native American Committee will provide speakers for Native American Ministries Sunday. Availability does depend on the number of requests, but the NAC has increased the number of its speakers.

NAC provides speakers throughout the year, and it may be easier to schedule later in the year as COVID conditions hopefully continue to decrease. Pastors or Native American representatives simply have to call and set up a date that matches both the church's schedule and NAC speakers.

In the *Discipline*, Native American Ministries Sunday is one of the six "Special Sundays"; thus, NAC is not an outside agency asking to come into your church. NAC is part of this conference. All offering monies are sent directly to the conference office, with 50 percent remaining in-conference to support the NAC.

The purpose of Native American Ministries Sunday is to provide education about American Indian tradition, culture, spirituality and inclusion in our conference.

Even today, American Indians are often questioned whether they worship the same God or if they are going to do something "strange" if they come and speak at a church. NAC members address these myths and stereotypes, explore American Indians history, explore Native spirituality and identify the obstacles facing American Indians today.

They also provide updates about NAC actions including outreach, education and ministry.

All speakers arranged by our committee are approved by the conference. However, a church may elect to get their own American Indian speaker. If he or she is not a United Methodist pastor or certified lay speaker by this conference, you must obtain permission from your district superintendent for this person to speak. If you select a different speaker, please remember the purpose of this Special Sunday is not a "show and tell," or "performance" event. Likewise, it is not an opportunity for vendors to sell their wares. There are state and federal restrictions on the sale of Native American arts and crafts. Please honor the purpose of this Sunday.

Our primary mission is "to make the invisible, visible."

To arrange a Native American Ministries Sunday, contact Z. Tracy Pender, Native American chair, at 803-905-5672 or tracy-pender@hotmail.com. Email is preferred.



Pictured are some of Wayne UMC's volunteers. In front from left are Jenny Freeman, Lisa Fodor, Renee Thompkins, Linda Mook, Becky Green, Ebbie Mitchell and Karen Lee. In back from left are Paul Fodor, Greg Thompkins, Wes Mook, Allen Freeman and Pam Whalen.

Wayne UMC Mustard Seed Ministry provides weekly meals to shut-ins

The Mustard Seed Ministry at Wayne United Methodist Church, Georgetown, was recently created to serve their shut-ins with a weekly meal.

Wayne UMC is a small church on the coast, and for many months several members kept asking the same questions, "How can we use our building to serve God? What does God want us to do with the space we have?"

One day the church secretary mentioned what a great kitchen Wayne has and about possibly doing food fundraisers for people who need help. From there, the Mustard Seed Ministry at Wayne took off.


Wayne members decided a good way to use their kitchen would be to cook meals once a week and take to church shut-ins and other community members who need assistance. The following Sunday the ministry was announced, and before church was over, they had enough volunteers to create three teams.

As usual, God provided in ways they couldn't even imagine. Currently they are serving an average of 30 meals weekly and now have four teams that take turns weekly preparing the food and delivering it.

They have also expanded the ministry to include serving those in the surrounding neighborhoods who also need assistance.

Recently, a couple who received a meal asked if they could provide the meal one week. They felt so blessed and wanted to pass the blessing on to others.

As members said, God is good, and they can't wait to see what he will do next.



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Ken is available to come speak to your group or church about Who Spiritual Direction is right for, and how the practice works on an individual and group level.

For more information on booking your free introductory session, booking Ken to speak to your group, or learn about upcoming classes simply visit kenowenssd.com

Rev. Ken Owens
Spiritual Director
kenowenssd.com
(864) 436-5158



In Appreciation of Mary Lee Blackwelder, church administrator

Mary Lee is an enthusiastic supporter of many programs in our church! In her 14 years here, she has helped us through building fundraising campaigns, the building of a new Family Life Center, development of and streamlining of administrative procedures, and communicating vital information to all involved parties for various programs. In addition, she shares her musical talents during services, concerts, and programs as needed.



Mary Lee is a great planner and organizer (and person!) and does not hesitate to fill in when needed. She oversees the VBS dinner program, feeding upwards of 100 people each evening, as well. She is the church cog that keeps Pleasant Hill running smoothly!

*Thank you, Mary Lee. We appreciate you so much! You are a blessing!
Pleasant Hill United Methodist Church, Fort Mill, South Carolina*

Thank your children's ministry staff in the June Advocate

Does your children's minister go above and beyond what is expected when it comes to cultivating kids in your church? Are you getting ready to kick off your first vacation Bible school in awhile? Or do you just want to give a big "thank you" to the person responsible for tending the youngest of your congregation's flock?

"We know how important children's ministry staff and volunteers are to the growth of any church," said *Advocate* Editor Jessica Brodie. "This is a great way to express support and show your children's ministers their work is valued—and how much they mean to you."

Three sizes are available for the children's ministry appreciation ad. All are the same width (five inches) but the height varies:

- Small: One inch tall, \$38**
- Medium: Two inches tall, \$76**
- Large: Four inches tall, \$152**

To place a children's ministry appreciation ad in the June edition, email text to atrussell@umcsc.org or send to *Advocate*, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203. **Deadline is May 10.**

Churches will be billed for the ads unless otherwise noted. Questions? Call Allison Trussell at 803-786-9486.

Mrs. Mac Circle makes pocket prayer quilts to uplift others

By Violet B Legette

The Mrs. Mac Circle of United Women in Faith spent a day making pocket prayer quilts as a mission project to be given to anyone in need of prayer.

The circle is part of Midland Park United Methodist Church in North Charleston.

Pocket prayer quilts are mini-quilts that are four inches square. Inside, each contains a little cross. The pocket prayer quilts can be kept in a pocket or purse, and when needed the recipient can touch it and feel the cross inside as their prayer is uplifted.

The backside of the pocket prayer quilts is stamped with the following information: "Pocket prayer quilt: This was made especially for you to slip into your pocket. Throughout the day when your fingers touch the cross that is tucked inside the quilt, be mindful of God's love and grace for you. Keep it as a tangible symbol of God's presence and a reminder of prayers that are being said for you each day. Mrs. Mac's Circle, Midland Park United Methodist Church, North Charleston."

At right, members of the circle create their pocket prayer quilts.



Mount Seal celebrates Black History Month

Mount Seal United Methodist Church, Hemingway, celebrated Black history this year by remembering Dr. Martin Luther King and his inspiring "I Have a Dream" speech. King made this speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on Aug. 28, 1963.

King was portrayed at Mount Seal by Joshua Gaskins.

Mount Seal also presented a musical using songs from the slavery era that are still popular today. When these songs were sung by slaves, they carried coded messages. "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" voiced hope to the slaves that ultimately they would find comfort in a heavenly home. "Steal Away" carried a message for the slaves to run away on their own or with the Underground Railroad. "Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child" tells the story of a mother who had seven children and in one day watched all of them sold to different slave owners.

"We can only imagine the hurt and agony that our ancestors endured," said Coretha Grate. "These songs, as sorrowful as some might be, fill our hearts with gratitude and appreciation as to how far our Mighty God has brought us."

Six-year-old Marcus Mitchell offered some valuable words from King: "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward."

The congregation also had visit from Mae Carol Jemison, NASA's first African-American female to travel in space. She was portrayed by Gloria Gardner. Gardner was dressed in astronaut clothing and accompanied with astronaut music.

Azasha Scott ended the month with an inspiring performance. She gave a rendition of Amanda Gorman's "The Hill We Climb." Gorman has already made history as the youngest inaugural poet in U.S. history.



Gloria Gardner portrays Mae Carol Jemison, NASA's first Black female astronaut.



Six-year-old Marcus Mitchell delivers an inspiring quote by Dr. Martin Luther King.



MerriElizabeth and Drennan Cable helped raise money for the church building project.



Kids kick off fundraising effort for building project at Cherokee Springs

By Rev. Mason Cantey

Although we are beginning to move away from the practice (rightfully so), of talking about our children and youth as the future, we still have a lot of work to do as we seek to make the whole life of the church more inclusive of them. I was recently shown just how capable kids are, not only to participate in the life of the church, but to lead facets of it.

MerriElizabeth and Drennan Cable attend Cherokee Springs United Methodist Church in Spartanburg along with their parents, Callie and Eric. The church recently began building a much-needed fellowship hall and community space. Even with a fair amount of money already raised, the pandemic had steadily raised the cost of the project.

In came MerriElizabeth (M.E.) and Drennan. With help from their mom, M.E. and Drennan each ran their own fundraisers for the church's building campaign. Using her great-grandmother's recipe, M.E. baked and sold poundcakes to members of the church along with their friends and family.

When asked about what she learned from carrying out the fundraiser, M.E. said, "I

learned that there is more to fundraising than you would think." She also said her favorite part was "handing them out and seeing the smile on their faces, because that made the whole thing worthwhile."

Drennan held a fundraiser that coincided with Valentine's weekend this year. With his mom's help, he baked deep-dish heart-shaped cookies, which were sold in pairs of either sugar or peanut butter. Drennan said he enjoyed learning how to bake cookies, and his favorite part of the experience was delivering the cookies "and the next week getting compliments."

Together, this brother and sister raised \$990. When asked what advice they would give kids their age about fundraising projects like theirs, they said, "It is fun when you get the results" and "Make sure when you are planning to do a fundraiser that you have time to designate for the project. Also, be sure you don't procrastinate on time."

The building process is under way at Cherokee Springs. The congregation hopes to be in their new building sometime this summer.

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What does your time in the Bible look like?



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Regardless of who you are or where you're at in your spiritual life, Don Hocker understands the importance of spending time with God and reading His words to us. After ten years studying the Bible each morning, his dog Lucy nestled at his feet, Don now pours his wisdom, insights, and humor onto the pages of *Just Me, Lucy, and the Lord* (High Bridge Books, 2021).

This 31-day devotional contains:

- Daily Bible passages
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- Insightful questions and thoughts to take you deeper
- Prayers to help you begin conversation with God

Just Me, Lucy, and the Lord, by Don Hocker, available as eBook or Paperback
(Don is a certified lay speaker in the UMCSC)

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Sheryl Jones, Administrative Assistant at Bethel Methodist Columbia

Sheryl, we celebrate you!

Your kindness, your work ethic, your efficiency, and your commitment to a job well done are much appreciated.

So much of your work is behind the scenes, but we SEE your dedication and faithful service.

More importantly, the Lord sees your efforts to further the ministry of his Gospel in our community. For all of this, we say thank you. You are a blessing to us all.

In Gratitude and Love,
Rev. Julie Songer Belman, Rev. Reggie Rowell, Carol Burger,
Bill Webb, Joseph Barnett, and your church family at Bethel

Women to gather via Zoom for ‘Surrounded By Prayer’

The South Carolina Conference of United Women in Faith will present “Surrounded By Prayer,” a Spiritual Growth Event, held via Zoom Saturday, April 23, at

10 a.m. All are invited to attend this free and uplifting event. Spartanburg District will host, with host

church United Methodist Church of the Covenant. Annie Crocker, pastor of Beaumont United Methodist Church, will present a

90-minute program. Register at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81221234567>

2022 United Women in Faith Legislative Advocacy Day a success

By Laurie Fite

More than 200 United Women in Faith (formerly known as United Methodist Women) from across South Carolina took part in the 2022 Legislative Advocacy Day sessions.

Meeting virtually over four separate sessions in February, the attendees were presented with outstanding speakers on topics both interesting and of some urgency in our state.

The event was coordinated by the conference chairperson of social action, Linda Eichenbaum, aided by the various district social action chairs throughout the state.

The first session was Wednesday, Feb. 2, and featured opioid prevention coordinator and diabetes educator Ava Dean. She presented a program from “Holding Out the Lifeline: A Mission to Families,” which focused on overdose prevention and safe storage of medications. Dean gave important information about the growing numbers of South Carolinians who suffer, both knowingly and unknowingly, with diabetes and heart issues. Not only did she give information on what these diseases do to the body, but also tips on things the average layperson can do to prevent these crippling diseases. Dean further shared about the ever-growing opioid crisis in the state and the safe storage of medications to preserve efficacy of the medicines and safeguard their use.

On Tuesday, Feb. 8, the director of the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center, Sue Berkowitz, presented a workshop on “Predatory Lending in South Carolina.” This has been a problem in South Carolina and the rest of the United States since the 1700s. With the proliferation of payday lenders and auto title loan businesses, consumers are provided with an easy way to get money and a difficult path to pay back the loans. Berkowitz shared prevalent harmful business practices seen across the state as well as past legislative victories which have helped to quash some abusive practices. She inspired and encouraged attendees to move forward in the fight against businesses that target and practice discrimination against certain communities.

The Thursday, Feb. 17, session, titled “Parents as Primary Sexuality Educators,” was led by Carol Singletary, who has a rich professional background working with primary pregnancy prevention programs, the South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and the Fact Forward Project. She encouraged all parents and grandparents to learn the facts about teen pregnancy, about birth control options and about resources so they might speak knowledgeably, honestly and gently with their children. These efforts can help reduce the incidence of babies born to young mothers who may not have

the maturity, capability or means to support a young family. The final session on Saturday, Feb. 26, was “Kinship Care Program of DSS” and featured Tamra Scott-Wilson, Department of Social Services state director of the Kinship Care Program, along with two regional coordinators, Chastiti Washington and Erica Cunningham. They explained the philosophy and guiding principles of child safety, permanency and well being. Kinship care may be either formal or informal. Informal kinship care is a private arrangement outside of the legal system. If or when, however, a child abuse/neglect case reaches the legal system, formal kinship foster care is an option that includes stipends and other benefits to help family care for children who would otherwise enter the foster care system.

The Legislative Advocacy Day annual program has proved to be a highlight of the program year of the organization. It features excellent speakers, relevant topics and concrete suggestions for women to come together to bring about change in their communities and in South Carolina.

The sessions are on YouTube (search for SCCUMW2022 Legislative Advocacy Days).

Fite is social action chair for the Greenville District.

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH: An ‘exciting time’ for organization

From Page 1

In 1972, United Methodist Women first became the women’s mission organization as part of The United Methodist Church’s Board of Global Ministries, and in 2012, the UMC’s General Conference voted to make United Methodist Women autonomous.

But since then, its interfaith work has soared, and the new name not only reflects the existing change within the group, but also allows for those women’s circles that are part of churches leaving the UMC to continue under the same umbrella.

“It’s an opportunity for those women whose churches have pulled out to stay active in our organization,” Owens said.

Cathy Ford, president of the South Carolina Conference United Women in Faith, noted the mission of the group is to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

She expressed praise for the new organi-

zational website, at uwfaith.org, which she called “informative, engaging, inspiring and very bold and colorful.”

In a press release issued by United Women in Faith, the group said they are launching an array of new and improved programs to nurture current members and welcome new women to join to put their love in action on behalf of women, children and youth.

The new programs are fruits of research conducted the past five years with more than 24,000 United Methodists and women of other Christian traditions participating in the surveys, focus groups and interviews. The input also informed the prayerful discernment of staff and elected leaders.

Not only do the changes address the different needs and life stages of current members and new women and expand options for membership and engagement, the release shared, “The new name also aims to welcome current members whose local churches may choose to disaffiliate from The United Methodist Church as well as women of other faith traditions who want

to join.”

Other changes include the following:

- A new “all-access” national membership option enabling women to join United Women in Faith via the new website and participate online or in person at local units or larger events;
 - Soul Care Retreats, a pilot recruitment program focused on nurturing women’s bodies, minds and spirits;
 - Innovations to Mission u, the organization’s spiritual growth and transformative education program, with new curricula each year: one for children, one for youth and one for adults using one biblical theme; and
 - More targeted giving options and interactive online resources for members.
- Harriett Jane Olson, CEO of United Women in Faith, called the change an “exciting time” for the organization.

“Looking back, we see the through lines for our organization—faith in God, love for each other and commitment to putting our faith into action supporting women, children and youth,” Olson said. “These commitments have been expressed in different ways at different times using different names, always calling women to world changing action. This combination of a new look, more accessible resources for members and new ways to participate positions us for impact in our own journeys and in how we engage the world that God so loves.”

‘Ainise ‘Isama’u, United Women in Faith board president, said she believes their members will be excited about the changes. “Things change. People change. But God remains, and that continues to be the purpose behind everything that we do in this organization.”

In recognition of Sis. Regina Holliday, a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ and the Administrative Assistant for Good Hope Wesley Chapel UMC, Camden, SC.
I appreciate all that you do.
Rev. Brenda Thomas

St. Andrews UMC Salutes Elizabeth Woodall

We at St. Andrews are incredibly thankful for the exemplary work that Elizabeth has done as our Administrative Assistant. We are blessed to have such a top-notch, competent administrator who tackles each task with determination, dedication, and a smile.

Elizabeth’s helpful presence with any request and her care and compassion for all whom she encounters creates an inviting atmosphere.

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I-95 CORRIDOR: Continued

From Page 1

long-time champion of equity and justice issues. Lare penned "Champions of Civil and Human Rights in South Carolina," a five-volume anthology spanning 1930 to 1980 with oral history interviews of key activists and leaders of the civil rights movement in this state. And he has long felt passionate that something must be done to remedy what has come to be referred to as the "corridor of shame," a poor, rural region along Interstate 95 in South Carolina long-plagued by economic and education struggles.

Joined by Dan Ligon and others deeply concerned about this, Lare is hoping to pass the bill. Similar legislation was introduced and passed the House and Senate in 2011, but then-Gov. Nikki Haley vetoed it.

"We can't just let this die," Lare said. "It's important for our Methodist constituency to be aware of this, not only in those districts but the whole state."

The bill would create the I-95 Corridor Authority, a proposed state agency that will provide increased economic opportunities for those living along the I-95 Corridor.

Programs will focus on three areas: education, health and economic development. Partnerships will be established with existing organizations working in these areas. In ad-

dition, best practices will be introduced from other parts of the country. Offices will be established in Orangeburg and Florence.

You can read the legislation in full at <https://www.scstatehouse.gov>. The Senate bill is at https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess124_2021-2022/bills/1174.htm and the House bill is at https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess124_2021-2022/bills/4985.htm.

Lare said the state is sitting on a huge amount of funds from the closing of the nuclear plant, as well as federal COVID relief funds and surplus revenue from a boom in the state economy as it recovers from COVID, that it can assign to various programs and projects. The total surplus available exceeds \$5 billion, and he believes this would be a project worth those funds.

"A very significant part of our state is like a third-world country," Lare said, between education, health, job concerns and economic development. "Besides the humanitarian and Christian concern of the people in those areas, this would afford them the opportunity to improve their lives and what they would receive from society and contribute to it."

He is hoping United Methodists will pray about this bill, consider participating in public hearings and contact their legislators.

The legislature's crossover deadline is April 10.

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GENERAL CONFERENCE: Separation, pensions and more

From Page 1

“The visa issue is a reality that is simply outside our control as we seek to achieve a reasonable threshold of delegate presence and participation,” commission chairperson Kim Simpson said. “Ultimately our decision reflects the hope that 2024 will afford greater opportunity for global travel and a higher degree of protection for the health and safety of delegates and attendees.”

The commission said the physical attendance of as many delegates as possible at the General Conference is critically necessary. A commission-appointed technology study team reported in February 2021 that it wasn't feasible to create a virtual alternative of General Conference that would safeguard the integrity of the voting and credentialing process, meet legal requirements and support the complexity of the legislative committees required.

The commission said postponing the 2020 General Conference to 2024 means a venue is not an issue, as they have already secured for what would have been the regularly scheduled quadrennial event. An announcement about that location will come soon.

South Carolina's Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston emphasized that the event had been postponed, not cancelled, and encouraged South Carolina United Methodists to remain patient and continue firm engagement in mission and ministry.

“We also should remember that we are a global church, spanning four continents and scores of nations, each with its own societal and technological challenges,” Holston said. “As part of a worldwide denomination, we must see the work that we do not only from our own perspective, but also through the eyes of others. While we in the United States are fortunate for the progress that has been made in re-engaging in person after more than a year of isolation, we must acknowledge the difficult path that remains ahead in this struggle for many of our fellow United Methodists abroad.”

Secretary of the General Conference, Gary Graves, said the further postponement raises a number of questions not addressed in the *Book of Discipline*.

“As the postponed 2020 General Conference now enters the typical cycle of preparation for a General Conference that would have been held in 2024, we will need to look to the Judicial Council for clarity regarding which preparations and processes are based on the postponed 2020 General Conference and which would need to be enacted should this be seen as a new 2024 General Conference,” Graves said.

Separation issues

The postponement brings a number of

questions.

Some theological conservatives have decided they are no longer waiting for the UMC's General Conference. Instead, they plan to launch a new denomination, the Global Methodist Church, on May 1.

That new denomination, shepherded by a caucus called the Wesleyan Covenant Association, has been in planning stages for some time but was waiting until General Conference. That is when proposals for denominational separation will be considered and perhaps adopted, such as the Protocol of Reconciliation & Grace Through Separation, which would allow congregations to leave the UMC with church property and funding.

But with that and other potential separation protocols postponed until 2024, the question becomes what UMC law allows now.

The UMC Council of Bishops is bringing questions related to such a possibility to the Judicial Council.

Judicial Council ruling requested

The UMC Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church is requesting a declaratory decision from the Judicial Council, the denomination's top court, on whether an annual conference can separate from the denomination under the provision of the *Book of Discipline*.

The bishops are asking for an expedited ruling so that there is consistency among the annual conferences and to avoid action by individual annual conferences that may violate the *Discipline*.

That request has been added to the Judicial Council's docket. The questions are as follows:

1. May an annual conference of the UMC within the United States separate from the UMC under the *Discipline*?

2. Since Para. 572 of the *Discipline* already provides a process for annual conferences outside the United States to separate from the UMC “to become an autonomous Methodist, affiliated autonomous Methodist, or affiliated united church,” should the process and requirements of Para. 572 be viewed as minimum standards devised by the General Conference for any annual conference to separate from the UMC under the holding in Decision 1366?

3. Pursuant to Judicial Council Decision 1366, must the General Conference first act to establish the procedure and requirements for separation of an annual conference within the United States before a vote can be taken by the annual conference to separate from the UMC?

4. If an annual conference within the United States takes a vote to separate from the UMC but the General Conference has not established the procedure and require-

ments for separation of an annual conference, what is the effect of the vote and what authority, if any, does the annual conference have to act on the vote and legally effect a separation?

5. If an annual conference within the United States may separate from the UMC, what are the requirements under the *Discipline* for a separation, including, but not limited to:

- the bodies (such as jurisdictional conferences and other annual conferences in addition to the separating annual conference) that must vote to approve the separation and the required vote(s);
- matters of church law related to use of the name United Methodist, or any part thereof, use of the UMC Cross & Flame or other intellectual property, including the United Methodist Hymnal;
- maintenance of retirement benefits and compliance with civil law and the requirements of Wespath concerning the same;
- compliance with any applicable state law requirements, including such requirements related to foundations, credit unions, title to real property and the annual conference's articles of incorporation; and
- disposition of property held in trust for the denomination pursuant to the UMC's trust clause, such as endowments, designated funds (including funds for specific ministries of the UMC), cemetery associations, camps, historical records and archives and any other property held in the name of the separating annual conference?

6. Must any separation of an annual conference from the UMC provide dissenting members, local churches, districts, clergy and affiliated entities such as camps, Wesley Foundations and health facilities an option to remain a part of the UMC and join another annual conference?

Pension questions also

The postponement of General Conference also has implications for Wespath, the United Methodist pension agency.

Wespath created a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions about church and conference disaffiliations, including those surrounding pension withdrawal liability payments, the Clergy Retirement Security Program and more. For example, as of press time, Wespath notes the pension withdrawal liability requirement in the *Discipline* applies regardless of the separation path taken by the departing church. Wespath also notes that under current plan terms, a local church that separates from the UMC may not be a plan sponsor of the Clergy Retirement Security Program and, therefore, cannot take pension responsibilities with it when separating from

the UMC.

These FAQs, which are routinely updated, can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/wespathfaq>.

Bishops discern ways for churches choosing to separate, seek guidance on Jurisdictional Conferences

WASHINGTON, D.C.— The Bishops of The United Methodist Church in their March 15 called meeting discerned pathways for churches choosing disaffiliation and separation.

The bishops have met two consecutive weeks to discern pathways forward in these changing times.

The bishops affirmed by an overwhelming majority that Para. 2553 in the *Book of Discipline* would be the primary paragraph used for disaffiliation and separation. It is understood that different contexts may require utilization of additional paragraphs in the current *Discipline* namely Paras. 2548.2 and 2549; and that they would employ the values and principles as outlined in Para. 2553.

It is also understood that Para. 2553 is not operative in the Central Conferences, but in matters related to disaffiliation and separation, the values and principles of 2553 would be used. Para. 2553 was added to the *Discipline* at the 2019 GC Special Session.

In addition, the Council of Bishops affirmed by a strong majority that they would hold to a set of values and principles in all matters of disaffiliation and separation, including mutual recognition of Christ in the other, caring for pension liability and the voting threshold, where the decision to disaffiliate from the UMC must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the professing members of the local church present at the church conference.

The Council of Bishops has also asked the Judicial Council for a declaratory decision regarding Jurisdictional Conferences to be held to elect and assign bishops. They have tentatively set Nov. 2-5, 2022, for Jurisdictional Conferences should the Judicial Council rule in favor of holding the regional meeting. This date was previously scheduled for Jurisdictional Conferences following the General Conference.



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Mollie Grooms, everything that you do for and on behalf of the Rock Hill District is greatly appreciated!

You definitely help to model the concept that "Team work makes the dream work."

Dr. Anthony Hodge, District Superintendent, along with the clergy and laity of the Rock Hill District are extremely blessed to have you as the district's administrative assistant.

Thanks for all that you do for each of us, Mollie!

MERCY HOUSE: Ministry will open doors in mid June

From Page 1

Organizers are putting finishing touches on the space so it can open its doors in mid-June.

“It’s a place where we celebrate a person’s life and also walk alongside them through that narrow space between heaven and earth. It’s a privilege to be part of that, and so often for homeless people, the concerns are: will I die alone, will anybody find me and will anybody care?” said Connie Cochrane, Bethel member who is part of the Mercy House board. “Our hope is that we can relieve that fear.”

Cochrane, Donna Williams, Mary Newlin, Elena Eckert and Becky Moon form the nascent board of Mercy House, which began out of the church’s longtime overnight shelter for homeless men, and now its additional day shelter for homeless men and women.

Williams, a member of nearby Friendship UMC, Rock Hill, said she has volunteered with Bethel Shelters for seven years and Cochrane for 10, and over the years, several of the homeless men they have grown close with have passed away. They created a memory board recently to honor some of these men, and Williams said this got them thinking: Is anybody going to be with these others when they die?

“One gentleman we know of passed away by himself,” Williams said. “We know we wouldn’t want our family members to pass away without someone there, and these men and women have become our family.”

Several of the shelter volunteers began praying about a ministry and talking with area hospice agencies, and they discovered that when someone is at the end of their life or facing a serious health situation and needs hospice or recuperative care, if they do not have a permanent address, they cannot access certain benefits to ease their transition.

Soon they learned Bethel’s pastor, the Rev. Emily Sutton, was moving out of the parsonage into a home she and her family purchased, so Mercy House formed and approached the church, seeking to use the space. The ministry is using the space free of charge, except for utilities and insurance, and is available to the organization on a year-to-year basis because of the itinerant system of the UMC.

“Now, not only do we shelter homeless people and serve as the Epworth Children’s Home foster care site for the district, but we also have a partnership with Mercy House,”



Mercy House is located in the parsonage of Bethel United Methodist Church, Rock Hill, and organizers are putting finishing touches on the space so it can open its doors in mid-June.



“So often for homeless people, the concerns are: will I die alone, will anybody find me and will anybody care?” said board member Connie Cochrane. “Our hope is that we can relieve that fear.”

Sutton said.

And it’s all on the Bethel main campus—a small but active church that does big things in the name of the Lord.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Mercy House will be an independent living home able to accommodate four men and women from the three surrounding counties (York, Lancaster and Chester), who will live onsite and receive their end-of-life care. Guests will be referred by a licensed hospice agency and have a



“We know we wouldn’t want our family members to pass away without someone there, and these men and women have become our family,” said board member Donna Williams.

diagnosis of less than six months to live. Volunteers will spend time with them, maintain the house, provide meals, do laundry and supervise trained staff, such as certified nursing assistants who will care directly for the guests.

“More and more now as our population

is aging, people live alone and family is not close enough by to provide care,” Cochrane said.

Cochrane said one man they cared for before Mercy House formed was legally blind, he had two strokes and no family nearby, and he ended up alone in the hospital when they finally learned about his situation. Others have fallen and died outside near the railroad tracks.

“They pass away alone,” Cochrane said, something that feels wrong if Bethel can do something about it.

Williams said Mercy House organizers view their ministry as an extension of the existing shelters at Bethel.

“We see this as a continuum of care for those experiencing homelessness,” Williams said. “I heard it said best the other day: ‘We will be there to help walk someone home. It’s not a goodbye, but a ‘walking you home.’”

Cochrane said the faith community in their area is strong, and she’s confident they will see a phenomenal response from area volunteers.

“There are so many things falling in place, ‘God sightings,’ we call them, that convince us this is what we’re being asked to do,” she said.

Williams agreed, noting they are hoping sharing their story can inspire other congregations to consider new ways they can help their communities. She said Mercy House is based on the parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:34-36 about how the man who showed mercy was the one who served as a true neighbor.

Mercy is what it’s all about, Williams said.

“If there’s any space you can use at your church, you need to start thinking outside of the box about what you can do to offer help.”

Sutton said she’s proud and heartened by this response to a felt need in the community.

“This situation isn’t just happening here,” Sutton said. “This is happening in communities across the state. There’s a huge underserved population in this state, and as housing prices continue to rise, it causes rental prices to continue to rise, and this causes a major problem for people.”

To learn more about Mercy House, connect with them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mercyhouserh or email mercyhouserh@gmail.com.

Mrs. Session goes the extra mile to make sure we are equipped with the information that is needed. She is calm and cooperative during these stressful times. St. Mark, Oswego, values Mrs. Session!

JOSETTE JARRETT
the Kingtree United Methodist Church **JEWEL**

Josette is the face of our church – hard working, devoted, and creative! Always willing to try something new or step into a new role, she is behind every scene making ministry happen seamlessly while modeling her love of Jesus in a fun and FABULOUS way. Anyone visiting her desk wants a little of the faith she’s got. We are so thankful for her!

Rev. Tiffany Knowlin-Boykin and all of Wesley UMC extends our gratitude and appreciation to our administrative professional **Ida S. English** We honor you for all you do!!

Lamar UMC is thankful for our church secretary, Ann Parnell, and all she does for us! Thank you, Ann!

Thank You to everyone who helps do church administration:
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St. Andrew By-The-Sea Thank you from the pastors, staff and congregation on Hilton Head & in Bluffton

2021 South Carolina United Methodist Record of Giving

NOTE: Churches giving 100 percent are in bold.
 Churches who increased their giving over 2020 are marked with a +.
 (CL) indicates a church that was closed during 2021.

Anderson District 55 out of 72 Churches Contributed 100% 85.88% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid
Ann Hope	8,769.00	4,261.00	48.59% +
Arial	3,012.00	3,012.00	100.00%
Bells	10,692.00	10,692.00	100.00%
Bethel/Iva	4,343.00	4,343.00	100.00%
Bethel/Pendleton	8,717.00	8,717.00	100.00% +
Bethesda	66,178.00	66,178.00	100.00%
Calhoun Falls	6,502.00	6,502.00	100.00%
Central	5,956.00	5,956.00	100.00%
Chicopee	2,219.00	2,219.00	100.00%
Chiquola	6,061.00	2,066.00	34.09%
Clemson	107,712.00	107,712.00	100.00%
Dickson Memorial	25,003.00	25,003.00	100.00%
Donalds	1,837.00	—	0.00%
Double Springs	2,611.00	—	0.00%
Easley Chapel	8,906.00	8,906.00	100.00%
Ebenezer	3,997.00	3,997.00	100.00% +
Emmanuel	4,563.00	4,563.00	100.00% +
Fairfield	5,781.00	5,781.00	100.00%
Fairview	6,379.00	6,379.00	100.00%
First/Easley	61,077.00	5,089.77	8.33%
Friendship	5,410.00	5,410.00	100.00% +
Gilgal	4,022.00	4,022.00	100.00%
Golden Grove	2,652.00	—	0.00%
Grace/Abbeville	35,023.00	35,023.00	100.00%
Grace/Pickens	33,534.00	33,534.00	100.00%
Grace/Williamston	8,154.00	8,154.00	100.00% +
Hebron	2,844.00	1,445.00	50.81%
Homeland Park	3,264.00	3,264.00	100.00%
Hopewell	4,402.00	4,402.00	100.00%
John Wesley/Anderson	3,726.00	3,726.00	100.00%
John Wesley/Easley	5,635.00	—	0.00%
Latimer Memorial	13,088.00	13,088.00	100.00% +
Lawrence Chapel	22,229.00	22,229.00	100.00%
Liberty	11,534.00	11,534.00	100.00% +
Main Street/Abbeville	30,299.00	30,299.00	100.00%
Marshall Memorial	4,227.00	4,227.00	100.00%
Moore's Chapel	1,606.00	—	0.00%
Mount Bethel	5,540.00	5,540.00	100.00%
Mount Pleasant	3,152.00	3,152.00	100.00%
Mount Sinai	3,356.00	3,356.00	100.00%
Mount Zion	18,433.00	18,433.00	100.00%
New Harmony	4,362.00	4,362.00	100.00%
New Hope	9,882.00	9,882.00	100.00% +
Pelzer UMC	5,047.00	5,047.00	100.00% +
Pendleton	37,202.00	37,202.00	100.00%
Porter Chapel	9,135.00	923.00	10.10%
Robinson Chapel	9,524.00	5,000.00	52.50% +
Rock Springs	2,576.00	1,288.00	50.00% +
Ruhamah	6,874.00	6,874.00	100.00%
Salem	11,509.00	11,509.00	100.00%
Sandy Springs	2,327.00	2,327.00	100.00%
Sharon/Abbeville	5,873.00	4,404.75	75.00%
Shiloh/Abbeville	3,659.00	3,659.00	100.00%
Shiloh/Piedmont	21,304.00	21,304.00	100.00% +
Smyrna	7,460.00	7,460.00	100.00%
St Andrew	36,898.00	36,898.00	100.00%
St James/Belton	580.00	—	0.00%
St John's	90,044.00	28,354.00	31.49%
St Luke/Walhalla	28,244.00	28,244.00	100.00%
St Mark	94,694.00	94,694.00	100.00%
St Paul	5,163.00	5,163.00	100.00%
Starr	3,088.00	3,132.00	101.42% +
Tabor	6,031.00	6,031.00	100.00%
Thompson Centennial	6,265.00	6,265.00	100.00%
Toxaway	4,286.00	4,286.00	100.00%
Trinity/Anderson	93,806.00	93,806.00	100.00% +
Trinity/Honea Path	20,898.00	18,808.20	90.00%
Union Grove	15,080.00	15,080.00	100.00%
Westminster	6,297.00	6,297.16	100.00% +
Zion/Anderson	24,365.00	24,365.00	100.00%
Zion/Easley	3,304.00	3,304.00	100.00% +
(CL) Zion/Walhalla	2,404.00	—	0.00%
Anderson District Total	1,150,626	988,184	85.88%

Charleston District 62 out of 75 Churches Contributed 100% 94.27% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid
Aldersgate	34,532.00	34,630.41	100.28% +
Asbury-St James	25,177.00	25,223.43	100.18% +
Bethany/Charleston	20,432.00	20,432.00	100.00%
Bethany/Summerville	173,964.00	173,964.00	100.00%
Bethel/Charleston	94,511.00	94,511.00	100.00%
Bethel/St Stephen	12,018.00	12,018.00	100.00%
Bethlehem-St James	11,704.00	11,704.00	100.00%
Boone Hill	23,466.00	9,851.04	41.98% +
Cainhoy (DBA Two Rivers Cainhoy)	—	1,000.00	
Centenary/Charleston	5,769.00	5,769.00	100.00%
Centenary/Moncks Corner	6,092.00	6,092.00	100.00%
Charleston Korean	20,372.00	20,372.00	100.00%
Cherokee Place	19,858.00	19,858.00	100.00% +
Cokesbury	38,141.00	38,141.00	100.00%
Cordesville	5,422.00	5,422.00	100.00% +

Ebenezer	4,343.00	4,343.01	100.00% +
Eccles	2,886.00	2,886.00	100.00%
Edisto Island	15,482.00	15,482.00	100.00%
Enoch Chapel	2,833.00	2,833.00	100.00%
Epworth	16,712.00	10,027.20	60.00% +
First/Isle of Palms	77,078.00	77,078.00	100.00%
Folly Beach	14,374.00	14,374.00	100.00%
Friendship	8,126.00	3,000.00	36.92% +
Goose Creek	24,474.00	24,474.00	100.00%
Grace	68,062.00	68,062.00	100.00%
Greater St Paul	7,237.00	7,237.00	100.00%
Grove Hall	2,818.00	2,818.00	100.00%
Hibben	91,332.00	91,332.00	100.00%
Hood's Chapel	4,676.00	100.00	2.14%
Jehovah	4,796.00	4,796.00	100.00%
Jerusalem	7,260.00	7,260.00	100.00%
John Wesley	133,145.00	133,228.00	100.06% +
Joshua	16,309.00	16,309.00	100.00%
Knightsville	25,653.00	25,653.00	100.00%
Lebanon	6,163.00	6,163.00	100.00%
McClellanville	4,357.00	4,357.00	100.00%
Midland Park	15,430.00	15,430.00	100.00%
Moncks Corner	49,339.00	49,339.00	100.00%
Mount Carmel	18,145.00	18,145.00	100.00%
Mount Nebo	4,818.00	4,818.00	100.00%
Mount Zion	2,110.00	1,100.00	52.13% +
Murray	11,892.00	11,892.00	100.00%
New Francis Brown	18,818.00	18,818.00	100.00% +
New Hope/Jamestown	2,239.00	2,239.00	100.00%
New Hope/St Thomas	9,441.00	9,441.00	100.00%
New Hope/Summerville	8,277.00	8,277.00	100.00%
New Light	4,389.00	4,389.00	100.00%
New Webster	11,000.00	11,000.00	100.00%
North Charleston	44,729.00	44,729.00	100.00% +
Ocean Grove	5,730.00	5,730.00	100.00% +
Old Bethel	12,801.00	7,765.00	60.66%
Pinopolis	26,913.00	5,309.81	19.73% +
Point Hope	30,663.00	30,663.00	100.00%
Ravenel	2,077.00	2,077.00	100.00%
Rehoboth	2,056.00	2,056.00	100.00%
Smyrna	8,609.00	8,609.00	100.00%
Spring Hill	3,213.00	3,213.00	100.00%
St Andrews Parish	41,853.00	41,853.00	100.00%
St James/Goose Creek	21,421.00	21,421.00	100.00%
St James/Jamestown	3,121.00	1,650.00	52.87% +
St Mark	32,783.00	21,205.00	64.68% +
St Stephen	3,571.00	3,571.00	100.00%
Stallsville	26,620.00	26,620.00	100.00% +
Steward Chapel	12,847.00	10,000.00	77.84% +
Trinity	23,979.00	24,079.59	100.42% +
Washington	10,026.00	10,026.00	100.00%
Wesley Memorial	16,399.00	16,399.00	100.00%
Wesley/Charleston	17,911.00	11,808.00	65.93% +
Wesley/Johns Island	22,546.00	22,546.00	100.00%
Wesley/Ladson	20,903.00	20,903.00	100.00%
Wesley/Pinopolis	13,440.00	13,440.00	100.00%
Wesley/Summerville	8,161.00	4,125.00	50.55%
Wesley/Yonges Island	19,083.00	7,382.78	38.69%
Wren's Chapel	793.00	793.00	100.00%
Zion/Cross	15,610.00	15,610.00	100.00%
Zion/St Thomas	7,693.00	7,736.00	100.56% +
Charleston District Total	1,641,023	1,547,008	94.27%

Columbia District 55 out of 63 Churches Contributed 100% 96.89% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid
Asbury Memorial	42,664.00	42,664.00	100.00%
Ashland	68,456.00	68,456.00	100.00%
Bethel/Columbia	41,025.00	16,030.00	39.07% +
Bethel/Winnsboro	7,873.00	7,873.00	100.00%
Beulah/Blythewood	8,657.00	8,657.00	100.00%
Beulah/Gilbert	39,930.00	39,930.00	100.00%
Bluff Road	13,677.00	13,677.00	100.00%
Boiling Springs	24,686.00	24,686.00	100.00%
Brookland	16,000.00	5,000.00	31.25% +
Cayce	40,681.00	40,681.00	100.00%
Chapin	229,354.00	229,354.00	100.00%
College Place	19,977.00	19,235.00	96.29%
Columbia Korean	12,913.00	12,913.00	100.00%
Ebenezer	2,019.00	2,019.00	100.00% +
Epworth Memorial	386.00	386.00	100.00%
Fair Lawn	23,062.00	23,062.00	100.00%
Faith	18,753.00	18,753.00	100.00%
First/Winnsboro	18,409.00	18,409.00	100.00% +
Francis Burns	70,477.00	70,477.00	100.00%
Gilbert	17,714.00	17,714.00	100.00%
Gordon Memorial	10,908.00	10,908.00	100.00% +
Grace	35,607.00	35,607.00	100.00%
Greenbrier	4,580.00	4,580.00	100.00%
Greene Street	11,110.00	11,110.00	100.00%
Heyward Street	13,544.00	13,544.00	100.00%
I DeQuincey Newman	15,199.00	15,207.00	100.05% +
Journey	60,450.00	60,450.00	100.00%
Lebanon	21,865.00	21,865.00	100.00%
Lexington	73,278.00	73,278.00	100.00%
Main Street	23,384.00	23,384.00	100.00%
McLeod	3,751.00	3,751.00	100.00% +
Mill Creek	7,003.00	7,003.00	100.00%
Monticello	4,901.00	4,901.00	100.00%
Mount Hebron	94,321.00	94,321.00	100.00%
Mount Horeb	472,377.00	472,377.00	100.00%
Mount Pleasant	5,090.00	5,090.00	100.00%

Northeast	49,688.00	24,250.68	48.81% +
Oak Grove	3,450.00	—	0.00%
Platt Springs	32,725.00	32,725.00	100.00%
Pond Branch	28,067.00	28,067.00	100.00%
Red Bank	34,877.00	34,877.00	100.00% +
Rehoboth/Columbia	20,889.00	20,889.00	100.00%
Rehoboth/Gilbert	11,730.00	11,730.00	100.00%
Salem/Elgin	6,737.00	6,737.00	100.00%
Salem/Irmo	60,956.00	60,956.00	100.00% +
Shady Grove	23,252.00	23,252.00	100.00%
Shandon	300,927.00	300,927.00	100.00%
Shiloh	16,404.00	16,404.00	100.00%
Shiloh/West Columbia	3,487.00	3,487.00	100.00%
Smyrna	3,444.00	3,444.00	100.00%
St John	3,133.00	600.00	19.15% +
St Mark	11,329.00	11,329.00	100.00%
Suber Marshall	7,398.00	5,784.96	78.20% +
Trenholm Road	159,175.00	159,175.00	100.00%
Trinity/Blythewood	83,499.00	83,499.00	100.00%
Trinity/West Columbia	24,291.00	24,291.00	100.00%
Union	167,212.00	167,212.00	100.00%
Virginia Wingard	54,357.00	54,357.00	100.00%
Washington Street	94,461.00	75,727.88	80.17%
Wesley	29,090.00	29,090.00	100.00%
Whaley Street	9,634.00	9,634.00	100.00%
Windsor	29,237.00	29,237.00	100.00%
Zion	1,510.00	1,510.00	100.00%
Columbia District Total	2,845,040	2,756,545	96.89%

Florence District 77 out of 93 Churches Contributed 100% 95.17% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid
Andrews Chapel	1,271.00	1,271.00	100.00%
Asbury/Kingstree East	6,279.00	6,279.00	100.00%
Asbury/Shiloh	12,675.00	12,700.00	100.20% +
Bethel/Kingstree	11,762.00	11,762.00	100.00% +
Bethesda/Kingstree	18,872.00	18,872.00	100.00%
Bethlehem/Jordan	6,511.00	6,511.00	100.00%
Bethlehem/Pamplico	12,315.00	12,315.00	

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Includes churches like St Luke/Lynchburg, St Luke/Timmons, St Mary, St Michael, etc.

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Includes churches like Butler, Cambridge, Capers Chapel/Langley, etc.

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Includes churches like Good Hope Wesley Chapel, Hebron/Bishopville, Hebron/McBee Charge, etc.

Greenville District

41 out of 62 Churches Contributed 100%
88.29% of District Apportionment Contributed

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Lists 62 churches in the Greenville District.

Greenwood District

62 out of 78 Churches Contributed 100%
88.86% of District Apportionment Contributed

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Lists 78 churches in the Greenwood District.

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Lists 62 churches in the Hartsville District.

Hartsville District

75 out of 101 Churches Contributed 100%
84.8% of District Apportionment Contributed

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Lists 101 churches in the Hartsville District.

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Lists 91 churches in the Marion District.

Marion District

63 out of 91 Churches Contributed 100%
85.8% of District Apportionment Contributed

Table with 4 columns: Church Name, Apportionment, Contributed, % Paid. Lists 91 churches in the Marion District.

Duncan Memorial	51,053.00	51,197.88	100.28%	+
Ebenezer/Bennettsville Cr	4,215.00	4,215.00	100.00%	
Ebenezer/Loris Charge	3,711.00	3,711.00	100.00%	
Ebenezer/Marlboro Charge	4,532.00	4,532.00	100.00%	
Ebenezer/Tatum	4,718.00	2,076.42	44.01%	
First/Bennettsville	26,695.00	26,695.00	100.00%	
First/Conway	68,157.00	32,176.83	47.21%	
First/Loris	13,942.00	13,942.00	100.00%	+
First/Marion	46,725.00	11,691.24	25.02%	
First/Myrtle Beach	155,035.00	155,035.00	100.00%	
Heaven Gate	3,526.00	1,060.88	30.09%	
Hebron/Tatum Charge	2,421.00	2,421.00	100.00%	
Herbert Memorial	24,487.00	24,487.00	100.00%	
Hopewell/Mullins	2,442.00	2,442.00	100.00%	
Joseph B Bethea	5,201.00	5,201.00	100.00%	
Lake View	4,379.00	4,379.00	100.00%	
Latta	25,454.00	3,306.69	12.99%	
Level Green	4,136.00	4,136.00	100.00%	
Little River	70,090.00	70,090.00	100.00%	
Macedonia	33,438.00	33,438.00	100.00%	
Main Street/Dillon	38,004.00	38,004.00	100.00%	
Main Street/McColl	9,063.00	2,287.00	25.23%	
Manning Chapel	2,250.00	2,250.00	100.00%	
McCoy Chapel	4,438.00	4,438.00	100.00%	
Mount Andrew	3,956.00	3,956.00	100.00%	
New El Bethel	3,972.00	3,972.00	100.00%	
New Holly	2,195.00	2,195.00	100.00%	
New Hope	1,634.00	1,634.00	100.00%	
Nichols	4,596.00	2,632.00	57.27%	+
Oak Grove/Georgetown	1,806.00	1,806.00	100.00%	
Oak Grove/Wallace	3,159.00	2,293.84	72.61%	
Oakland	4,608.00	—	0.00%	
Old Clio	1,718.00	2,001.60	116.51%	+
Parnassus	4,527.00	4,427.00	97.79%	
Pine Grove	4,464.00	2,232.00	50.00%	+
Pisgah	14,466.00	14,466.00	100.00%	
Pleasant Grove	2,107.00	2,107.00	100.00%	
Pleasant Hill/Mullins	2,554.00	2,554.00	100.00%	
Pleasant Hill/Wallace	3,070.00	3,070.00	100.00%	
Poplar	5,326.00	889.35	16.70%	+
Rehoboth	8,767.00	—	0.00%	
Salem	7,621.00	120.55	1.58%	+
Sampit	2,216.00	2,216.00	100.00%	
Shiloh/Bennettsville P	3,814.00	3,814.00	100.00%	+
Shiloh/Bennettsville	3,676.00	800.00	21.76%	+
Shiloh/Marion	10,446.00	10,446.00	100.00%	
Shiloh/Mullins Charge	2,643.00	800.00	30.27%	+
Smyrna/Bennettsville C	4,027.00	3,488.00	86.62%	+
Smyrna/Bennettsville P	4,182.00	4,182.00	100.00%	
Socastee	73,336.00	73,336.00	100.00%	+
Springville	2,223.00	2,223.00	100.00%	
St James	6,347.00	3,504.00	55.21%	
St Luke	2,402.00	2,402.00	100.00%	
St Michael	3,096.00	964.49	31.15%	+
St Paul's Waccamaw	44,384.00	44,384.00	100.00%	
St Phillip	6,640.00	6,640.00	100.00%	
St Stephen	4,188.00	1,307.00	31.21%	
Surfside	81,683.00	46,513.17	56.94%	+
Tranquil	4,360.00	4,360.00	100.00%	
Trinity Bennettsville	11,406.00	11,406.00	100.00%	
Trinity/Andrews	29,997.00	29,997.00	100.00%	
Trinity/Clio	13,079.00	5,000.00	38.23%	+
Trinity/Conway	64,077.00	64,077.00	100.00%	
Trinity/N Myrtle Bch	61,675.00	61,675.00	100.00%	
Union/Conway	22,642.00	22,642.00	100.00%	+
Union/Lake View	2,529.00	1,353.87	53.53%	
Wampee	3,079.00	3,079.00	100.00%	
Wayne	15,718.00	4,050.00	25.77%	+
Zoan	4,188.00	4,188.00	100.00%	
Marion District Total	1,552,711	1,332,297	85.80%	

Orangeburg District

85 out of 90 Churches Contributed 100%
98.03% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Andrew Chapel	7,434.00	500.00	6.73%	+
Barnwell	17,542.00	17,542.00	100.00%	
Bethel at Peachtree Rock	9,571.00	9,571.00	100.00%	
Bethel Park	18,738.00	18,738.00	100.00%	
Bethel/Bamberg	6,327.00	6,327.00	100.00%	
Bethel/Jackson	10,687.00	10,687.00	100.00%	
Bethel/Rowesville	3,387.00	3,387.00	100.00%	
Bethlehem	4,513.00	4,513.00	100.00%	
Beulah/ Sandy Run	18,388.00	18,388.00	100.00%	
Blackville	1,785.00	1,785.00	100.00%	
Branchville	8,418.00	8,418.00	100.00%	
Calvary/Swansea	7,998.00	7,998.00	100.00%	
Canaan/Cope	4,984.00	4,984.00	100.00%	
Cattle Creek	2,184.00	2,184.00	100.00%	
Cedar Grove	3,986.00	3,986.00	100.00%	
Clafin	2,995.00	2,995.00	100.00%	
Clinton	10,640.00	10,640.00	100.00%	
East Bethel	2,086.00	2,086.00	100.00%	
Ebenezer/Bowman	8,654.00	8,654.00	100.00%	
Ebenezer/Orange Cir	6,063.00	6,063.00	100.00%	
Edisto Fork	19,096.00	19,096.00	100.00%	
Ellore	8,720.00	8,720.00	100.00%	
Eutawville	5,859.00	5,859.00	100.00%	
Forest Chapel	3,391.00	3,391.00	100.00%	
Franklin	11,350.00	11,350.00	100.00%	
Gerizim	2,482.00	2,482.00	100.00%	
Holly Hill	24,872.00	24,872.00	100.00%	
Jericho	7,459.00	7,459.00	100.00%	
Jerusalem	9,884.00	9,884.00	100.00%	

Kearse	861.00	315.25	36.61%	
Lebanon	9,146.00	9,146.00	100.00%	
Limestone	4,037.00	2,868.00	71.04%	+
Livingston	7,630.00	7,630.00	100.00%	
Main Street/Bamberg	4,094.00	4,094.00	100.00%	
Mays Chapel	2,498.00	2,498.00	100.00%	
Mizpah	1,884.00	1,884.00	100.00%	
Mount Carmel	6,900.00	6,900.00	100.00%	
Mount Nebo	3,339.00	3,339.00	100.00%	
Mount Zion/Bamberg Cir	9,294.00	9,294.00	100.00%	
Mount Zion/Sandy Run	8,067.00	8,067.00	100.00%	
Neeses	2,945.00	2,945.00	100.00%	
New Covenant	18,718.00	11,500.00	61.44%	+
New Hope	3,875.00	3,875.00	100.00%	
New Light	16,069.00	16,069.00	100.00%	
North	10,322.00	10,322.00	100.00%	
North Orangeburg	23,807.00	23,807.00	100.00%	
Norway New Beginning	6,491.00	6,491.00	100.00%	
Oak Grove	1,816.00	1,816.00	100.00%	
Orange Grove	8,488.00	8,488.00	100.00%	
Pelion	6,411.00	6,411.00	100.00%	
Pine Hill	6,133.00	6,133.00	100.00%	
Pineville	5,349.00	5,349.00	100.00%	+
Pleasant Hill	5,016.00	5,016.00	100.00%	
Prospect	4,580.00	4,580.00	100.00%	
Providence/Providence	19,635.00	19,635.00	100.00%	
Salem	1,013.00	1,013.00	100.00%	
Salley	2,134.00	2,134.00	100.00%	
Shady Grove	5,052.00	5,052.00	100.00%	
Sharon/Pelion	4,686.00	4,686.00	100.00%	
Silas	6,167.00	6,167.00	100.00%	
Siloam	2,171.00	2,171.00	100.00%	
Springfield	5,937.00	5,937.00	100.00%	
St Andrews	38,925.00	38,925.00	100.00%	
St John/Aiken	229,589.00	229,589.00	100.00%	
St John/Norway	8,927.00	8,927.00	100.00%	
St John/Orange Cir	2,159.00	2,159.00	100.00%	
St John/Orangeburg	4,709.00	4,709.00	100.00%	
St John/Orangeburg Cr	3,474.00	3,474.00	100.00%	
St Mark	19,784.00	19,784.00	100.00%	
St Paul/New Ellenton	14,919.00	14,919.00	100.00%	
St Paul/Orangeburg	29,596.00	29,596.00	100.00%	+
St Paul/St Matthews	15,872.00	11,050.00	69.62%	+
St Stephen/Bowman	6,894.00	6,894.00	100.00%	
St Stephen/Orangeburg	20,484.00	20,484.00	100.00%	
Swansea	8,475.00	8,475.00	100.00%	+
Target	7,470.00	7,470.00	100.00%	+
Trinity/Aiken	38,451.00	38,451.00	100.00%	
Trinity/Bamberg	29,303.00	29,303.00	100.00%	
Trinity/North	1,166.00	1,166.00	100.00%	
Trinity/Orangeburg	33,886.00	33,886.00	100.00%	
Union	9,610.00	9,610.00	100.00%	
Wagener	8,652.00	8,652.00	100.00%	
Wesley	4,320.00	4,320.00	100.00%	
Wesley Chapel/Calhoun	6,466.00	6,466.00	100.00%	
Wesley Chapel/Jackson	6,368.00	6,368.00	100.00%	
Wesley Grove	5,749.00	5,749.00	100.00%	
West Bethel	5,346.00	5,346.00	100.00%	
White House	5,448.00	5,448.00	100.00%	
Wightman	6,222.00	6,222.00	100.00%	
Williston	4,995.00	4,995.00	100.00%	
Orangeburg District Total	1,051,317	1,030,628	98.03%	

Rock Hill District

63 out of 69 Churches Contributed 100%
87.64% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	
Adnah	22,985.00	22,985.00	100.00%	
Aldersgate	24,377.00	24,377.00	100.00%	
Antioch	14,675.00	14,675.00	100.00%	
Armenia	4,875.00	4,875.00	100.00%	
Belair	15,497.00	15,497.00	100.00%	
Bethel/Chester	17,731.00	17,731.00	100.00%	+
Bethel/Lancaster	3,251.00	3,251.00	100.00%	
Bethel/Rock Hill	19,128.00	19,128.00	100.00%	
Bethel/Rock Hill South	3,810.00	3,8		

Trinity/Enoree	4,555.00	4,555.00	100.00%	First/Harleyville	12,937.00	12,937.00	100.00%	Salem/Hendersonville	4,957.00	4,957.00	100.00%
Trinity/Gaffney	5,063.00	5,063.00	100.00%	Fisher Chapel	5,649.00	5,649.00	100.00%	Sand Hill	14,587.00	14,587.00	100.00%
Trinity/Spartanburg	69,402.00	69,402.00	100.00%	Friendship	3,725.00	3,725.00	100.00%	Sandy Dam	2,379.00	2,379.00	100.00%
Unity	3,974.00	3,974.00	100.00%	Furman	1,890.00	1,890.00	100.00%	Shady Grove	12,442.00	12,442.00	100.00%
Walnut Grove	19,475.00	19,475.00	100.00%	Gillette	822.00	822.00	100.00%	Simpson	5,686.00	5,686.00	100.00%
Wesley Chapel	8,544.00	8,544.00	100.00%	Green Pond	2,234.00	2,234.00	100.00%	Springtown	10,054.00	10,054.00	100.00%
White Stone	3,189.00	3,189.00	100.00%	Grover	7,683.00	7,683.00	100.00%	St Andrew By-the-Sea	181,268.00	181,268.00	100.00%
Whitmire	4,369.00	4,369.00	100.00%	Hampton	18,420.00	18,420.00	100.00%	St Daniel	5,391.00	5,391.00	100.00%
Spartanburg District Total	1,207,983	1,152,128	95.38%	Hardeeville	5,521.00	5,521.00	100.00%	St George	30,112.00	30,112.00	100.00%

Walterboro District

83 out of 93 Churches Contributed 100%
96.98% of District Apportionment Contributed

Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid	Church Name	Apportionment	Contributed	% Paid
Adnah	4,545.00	4,545.00	100.00%	Lodge	1,787.00	1,787.00	100.00%	St Paul/ Ridgeville	5,383.00	5,383.00	100.00%
Bellinger Chapel	4,397.00	3,309.00	75.26%	Macedonia	3,878.00	3,878.00	100.00%	St Paul/Ridgeland	21,672.00	21,672.00	100.00%
Bethel/Green Pond	1,109.00	1,109.00	100.00%	Morris Chapel	4,838.00	4,838.00	100.00%	St Stephen	1,799.00	1,799.00	100.00%
Bethel/Harleyville	5,611.00	5,611.00	100.00%	Mount Carmel/Estill	3,002.00	3,002.00	100.00%	Swallow Savannah	4,182.00	2,149.00	51.39%
Bethel/Ruffin	12,479.00	12,479.00	100.00%	Mount Pleasant	717.00	717.00	100.00%	Sykes Savannah	2,571.00	2,571.00	100.00%
Bethel/Smoaks	8,686.00	8,686.00	100.00%	Mount Tabor	3,449.00	3,449.00	100.00%	Tabor	3,348.00	3,348.00	100.00%
Bethel/Walterboro	51,286.00	51,286.00	100.00%	New Grace	15,469.00	15,469.00	100.00%	Tillman	3,951.00	3,951.00	100.00%
Bluffton	55,488.00	55,488.00	100.00%	New Hope/Allendale	4,174.00	4,174.00	100.00%	Tobys Bluff	2,808.00	—	0.00%
Brunson	4,153.00	4,153.00	100.00%	New Hope/Ridgeville	4,462.00	4,462.00	100.00%	Trinity/Greenpond	721.00	721.00	100.00%
Buckhead	3,741.00	3,741.00	100.00%	New Life	15,970.00	15,970.00	100.00%	Trinity/Ridgeville	7,795.00	7,795.00	100.00%
Canaan	15,305.00	15,305.00	100.00%	Oak Grove/Ridgeville	2,500.00	2,500.00	100.00%	Trinity/Smoaks	554.00	402.00	72.56%
Carteret Street	59,589.00	59,589.00	100.00%	Peniel	1,801.00	200.00	11.10%	Trinity/St George	3,519.00	3,519.00	100.00%
Church of the Palms	48,764.00	48,764.00	100.00%	Port Royal	16,674.00	16,674.00	100.00%	Union	4,943.00	502.00	10.16%
Cottageville	5,366.00	5,366.00	100.00%	Providence	2,039.00	2,039.00	100.00%	Varnville	5,134.00	5,134.00	100.00%
Cumberland	4,370.00	4,370.00	100.00%	Red Bank	3,002.00	3,002.00	100.00%	Wesley Chapel	2,072.00	2,072.00	100.00%
Cypress	6,070.00	6,070.00	100.00%	Red Root	2,820.00	2,820.00	100.00%	Wesley Grove	4,179.00	2,425.00	58.03%
Duncan Chapel	4,677.00	4,677.00	100.00%	Rehoboth	6,494.00	6,494.00	100.00%	Wesley/Beaufort	16,631.00	16,631.00	100.00%
Ebenezer/Ehrhardt	3,302.00	3,302.00	100.00%	Rizers Chapel	3,308.00	1,448.75	43.80%	Williams	3,719.00	3,719.00	100.00%
Ebenezer/Ritter	3,502.00	3,502.00	100.00%	Salem/Dorchester	5,821.00	5,821.00	100.00%	Zion/Dorchester	5,446.00	5,446.00	100.00%
Ebenezer/Yemassee	3,282.00	3,282.00	100.00%					Zion/Ehrhardt	425.00	425.00	100.00%
Estill	2,957.00	2,957.00	100.00%					Walterboro District Total	919,899	892,111	96.98%
								Conference Total	17,250,816	15,814,220	91.67%

CHURCHES PAYING 100% OF ALL APPORTIONED FUNDS SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE - 2019 through 2021

DISTRICT	2019			2020			2021		
	Paying 100%	Total Churches	Percent	Paying 100%	Total Churches	Percent	Paying 100%	Total Churches	Percent
Anderson	51	72	70.8%	46	72	64%	55	72	76%
Charleston	63	75	84.0%	55	75	73%	62	75	83%
Columbia	53	64	82.8%	52	63	83%	55	63	87%
Florence	71	94	75.5%	64	94	68%	77	93	83%
Greenville	43	65	66.2%	43	64	67%	41	62	66%
Greenwood	60	80	75.0%	58	77	75%	62	78	79%
Hartsville	74	103	71.8%	66	101	65%	75	101	74%
Marion	67	92	72.8%	63	92	68%	63	91	69%
Orangeburg	79	90	87.8%	81	90	90%	85	90	94%
Rock Hill	65	69	94.2%	63	69	91%	63	69	91%
Spartanburg	58	74	78.4%	53	74	72%	60	74	81%
Walterboro	86	93	92.5%	80	93	86%	83	93	89%
TOTALS	770	971	79.3%	724	964	75.0%	781	961	81%

2021 Budget Receipts on Apportioned Funds

Conference apportionments	2021 Budgeted	2021 Paid	% Paid
Conference Benevolences	2,458,709	2,266,153	92.17
Retiree Health	1,400,000	1,290,674	92.19
District Superintendent's Salary	1,236,000	1,148,576	92.93
Equitable Compensation	565,000	523,502	92.66
District Administration	819,000	761,190	92.94
Conference Administration	1,614,348	1,473,011	91.24
Congregational Development	946,184	861,253	91.02
Campus Ministry	650,595	597,234	91.80
Senior College Scholarship Fund	1,000,000	900,946	90.09
Spartanburg Methodist College	618,967	565,167	91.31
Methodist Homes Residents' Assistance	400,000	368,261	92.07
Camps & Retreat Ministries	319,800	292,811	91.56
District Parsonage/Office	780,000	711,848	91.26
Subtotal on Conference apportionments	12,808,603	11,760,626	91.82
General & Jurisdictional apportionments			
World Service	2,268,426	2,067,321	91.13
Episcopal Fund	671,773	612,362	91.16
General Conference Administration	269,357	249,435	92.60
Ministerial Education	766,169	694,139	90.60
Interdenominational Cooperation	59,920	55,682	92.93
Black College Fund	305,618	279,895	91.58
Africa University Fund	68,396	64,449	94.23
Jurisdictional Mission & Ministry	32,554	30,310	93.11
Subtotal on General & Jurisdictional	4,442,213	4,053,593	91.25
APPORTIONMENT TOTAL	17,250,816	15,814,219	91.67
Extra Mile for Colleges/Homes	625,000	278,951	44.63
APPORTIONMENT + EXTRA MILE	17,875,816	16,093,170	90.03

2021 Budget Receipts on Funds by District

District	Total Apportioned	Total Paid	Percent Paid	Special Giving
Anderson	1,150,626	988,184	85.88%	74,930
Charleston	1,641,023	1,547,008	94.27%	74,020
Columbia	2,845,040	2,756,545	96.89%	234,346
Florence	1,220,504	1,161,505	95.17%	37,950
Greenville	2,005,156	1,770,400	88.29%	72,063
Greenwood	1,188,692	1,056,234	88.86%	123,375
Hartsville	1,254,809	1,064,078	84.80%	61,660
Marion	1,552,711	1,332,297	85.80%	103,228
Orangeburg	1,051,317	1,030,628	98.03%	94,935
Rock Hill	1,213,056	1,063,101	87.64%	60,953
Spartanburg	1,207,983	1,152,128	95.38%	97,091
Walterboro	919,899	892,111	96.98%	97,956
Totals	17,250,816	15,814,219	91.67%	1,132,207

How Apportionments are Calculated

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

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

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



Did You Know?

The Advocate offers a free one-year subscription to anyone who joins a United Methodist Church in South Carolina. Send us your new members' names and addresses and the name of your church and we'll get them started on becoming more informed about our conference and our church.

Rev. Larry Allen Barnes

OCALA, Fla.—The Rev. Larry Allen Barnes, a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Feb. 21, 2022.

Prior to his retirement in 1989, Rev. Barnes served the Aiken-St. John's Associate, Laurel Bay, Myrtle Beach-First Associate, Belin Memorial, Nichols Charge, Springfield-Williston, Bluffton, Olanta-Coward, Lee Road Associate and Limestone Street charges.

No services were scheduled at press time.



Barnes

Tommy Ray Bigham

CLEVELAND, Tenn.—Tommy Ray Bigham, father of Aimee Efird, died Feb. 14, 2022. Mrs. Efird is the wife of the Rev. Scott Efird, pastor of Ashland United Methodist Church, Columbia.

Services were held Feb. 20 at Grace Community Church, with burial in Lee Cemetery, McDonald, Tennessee.

Memorials may be sent to Grace Community Church, 4745 Mouse Creek Road NW, Cleveland, TN 37312; or to the Cleveland Emmaus Community, P.O. Box 5754, Cleveland, TN 37320-5754.

Mr. Bigham is survived by his wife, Gayle Bigham, and two daughters.

Peggy Jean Granger Floyd

GREENVILLE—Peggy Jean Granger Floyd, widow of the Rev. Duncan Floyd, died Feb. 28, 2022.

Funeral services were held March 7 at Thomas McAfee Funeral Home with burial in Woodlawn Memorial Park.

Memorials may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Fl.

17, Chicago, IL 60601.

Mrs. Floyd is survived by her brother.

Kay Elizabeth Timms Gambrell

PIEDMONT—Kay Elizabeth Timms Gambrell, mother of the Rev. Joey Gambrell, died March 16, 2022. Rev. Gambrell is the associate pastor of St. Mark United Methodist Church, Greenwood.

A graveside service was held at Woodlawn Memorial Park, Greenville.

Mrs. Gambrell is survived by her husband, David, and two sons.

Ruth Joan Schroeder Gonlag

CENTRAL—Ruth Joan Schroeder Gonlag, mother of the Rev. Mari Gonlag, died March 14, 2022. Rev. Gonlag is the pastor of New Hope United Methodist Church, Anderson.

A memorial service was held March 23 at ALIVE Wesleyan Church. A second memorial and interment will be held at a later date in Wisconsin.

Memorials may be made to ALIVE Wesleyan Church's senior adult ministries, 136 Chastain Road, Central, SC 29630; World Mission Press Inc., P.O. Box 120, New Paris, IN 46553-0120; or to World Hope International, P.O. Box 743794, Atlanta, GA 30374-3794.

Mrs. Gonlag is survived by her son and daughter.

Patricia Ann Quick Graham

BENNETTSVILLE—Patricia Ann Quick Graham, mother of the Rev. Martin Quick, died Feb. 13, 2022. Rev. Quick is the associate pastor of Journey United Methodist Church, Columbia.

Funeral services were held Feb. 19 at Berea Convention Center with burial at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Dovesville.

Mrs. Graham is survived by her five sons,

Obituary Policy

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 S.C. Conference of The United Methodist Church.

daughter and mother.

Olin James

FLORENCE—Olin James, father of Stephanie Ashley, died March 2, 2022. Mrs. Ashley is the wife of the Rev. Louis Ashley, pastor of Bethel United Methodist Church, Kingstree.

Funeral services were held March 6 at Pentecostal United Church of Christ, Apostolic Convention Center.

Dr. Charles Luther Johnson Sr.

GREENVILLE—Dr. Charles Luther Johnson Sr., a retired elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Feb. 24, 2022.

Prior to his retirement in 2021, Dr. Johnson served the Greer Circuit, Clover, Kingstree-Mount Zion and Clemson charges. He served the Bethel-St. Paul Charge as a retired elder. He also served on the staff of Claflin College, Rock Hill District superintendent, Director of the Conference Council on Ministries and as the Greenville District superintendent.

Funeral services were held March 2 at Buncombe Street UMC with burial in Graceland East Memorial Park.

Memorials may be made to the Charles



Johnson

L. Johnson Sr. Memorial Fund, John Wesley UMC, P.O. Box 64, Greenville, SC 29602.

Dr. Johnson is survived by his wife, Deloris Johnson, son and two daughters.

David Sanders Sr.

DENMARK—David Sanders Sr., father of Gloria McCutcheon, died Feb. 26, 2022. Dr. McCutcheon is the wife of the Rev. Larry McCutcheon, a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Graveside services were held March 4 at Honey Ford Baptist Church.

Mr. Sanders is survived by his daughter and son.

Betty Crocker Shuler

HOLLY HILL—Betty Crocker Shuler died Feb. 20, 2022. Mrs. Shuler served as a district officer of United Methodist Women for 12 years, was a delegate to the South Carolina Annual Conference and was the chair of the annual conference's Older Adult Council.

Funeral services were held Feb. 23 at Providence United Methodist Church.

Memorials may be made to Providence UMC, 4833 Old State Road, Holly Hill, SC 29059; or to Epworth Children's Home, P.O. Box 50466, Columbia, SC 29250.

Mrs. Shuler is survived by three sons and one daughter.

Barbara Jean Bennett Walker

GRIFFIN, Ga.—Minister Barbara Jean Bennett Walker, sister of the Rev. Velma Haywood, died Feb. 16, 2022. Rev. Haywood is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Feb. 23 at Eighth Street Baptist Church with burial in Griffin Memorial Gardens.

Min. Walker is survived by her two sons and two stepsons.

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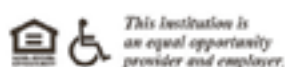
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From the Archives

by Dr. Phillip Stone

War and unity

As winter turned to spring 80 years ago, South Carolina Methodists were witnessing one of the great crises in world affairs. The Allied powers were defending against Axis attacks in Europe, Africa and the Pacific. While we now know the war's outcome, the situation in early 1942 was not good for the Allies.

The *Advocate* ran an article in April 1942 by Rev. E. R. Mason, who noted the dire situation and also talked about how transportation and communications had made the world much smaller.

"Perhaps one of the most costly errors (of Americans) been that here in the States we have thought and believed that the world was too large for nations of other hemispheres to affect us. We had the Atlantic on the east, the Pacific on the west; these gave an impregnable barrier, and with the north and south inhabited by our friends and allies, what matters the conditions that existed in other parts of the world?"

However, Mason noted that even with all of the wealth and power amassed by the United States, the shrinking globe had brought peril to the country.

As he wrote, "The farthest missionary today is closer to his home church or conference than Bishop Asbury was from his northernmost conference to his conference at Charleston. There is not a city on our long coastline but can be cannonaded by an enemy sub any night nor an inland city but is open to a raid by the enemy planes any day. No, the world is no longer a big world, it is a very very small world."

He concluded, "But the Allies must and will win this war. Everything that makes for civilization is at stake. Even Christianity will be set back 1,000 years if the Nazis win. Nor can the people of Germany, Italy or Japan afford for the Allies not to win; even these lands and people would be caught in the backwash of their own crime."

Another series of articles in April 1942 by the Rev. J. Claude Evans talked about the need for South Carolina Methodists to merge their annual conferences. In 1915, the White conference split into two conferences for the Upstate and Lowcountry, and in 1948 the two conferences would merge back together.

Evans believed merger was necessary because, in his mind, the state wasn't large enough to have two sets of conference institutions and the state had a good highway system that made it easier to get around the state. In the next issue, Evans continued making his arguments, suggesting the two separate conferences had too many districts and too much bureaucracy. Evans thought the united conference could do its rural mission work better and also could support its colleges better. A merged conference could speak with a unified voice to the concerns of the state, particularly the growing secularism that Evans noted.

In a fourth article, Evans answered the critics who wanted to retain two conferences, suggesting that a merged South Carolina Conference with 330 active clergy members would not be too unwieldy. He said that several cities in the state were large enough to host the conference meeting. He also suggested that the concerns of rural church ministers being appointed to textile community churches were unfounded, as the bishop and cabinet would not make appointments where someone wasn't interested or fitted to serve.

The merger of the two conferences in 1948 was an early step in bringing together all Methodists into one body, though it would take another 24 years. Only in 1972, 50 years ago, did the state's United Methodists become united in one conference.

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



In memory of Clayton Easter

While in Nashville recently, S.C. United Methodist Men President Marvin Horton (right) had the opportunity to present a \$500 check from South Carolina Men N Ministry to National Prayer Advocate Wallace Neal. The check was in honor and memory of Clayton Easter, who served as prayer advocate in South Carolina for many years. Easter died Dec. 30. The money will go to Upper Room Living Prayer Center, a ministry Easter loved and served for three decades. "Clayton Easter will be missed by so many of us in South Carolina and beyond," Horton said. "What a servant of God."



Conference Historical Society

by Joyce Plyler

Enthusiasm

I love enthusiasm, don't you? To be in the presence of a person who is enthusiastic and optimistic for a good cause is positively infectious. The word just feels happy, which is apropos because I am sure many of you are familiar with the saying "get happy" in relation to exuberant shouts or expressions in worship.

Our world is being so battered by tribulations that I think it would help us all to "get happy" and find again the source for enthusiasm.

A bit of etymology is in order. Today's common use of the word enthusiasm is quite different from its usage in the 1730s when the Anglican Commissary of Charleston decried in horror as "enthusiasts!" of an embryonic Methodism invaded his territory, mostly in the form of George Whitefield.

Whitefield, though he eventually parted ways theologically with Wesley over questions of predestination, was one of the original Oxford Methodists and remained closely associated with the movement, so much so that his name appears frequently in genealogical lineages of Methodists today, such as my own paternal great-grandfather, George Whitefield Plyler. His father, Coonrod, was a Methodist preacher and church founder during the 1800s, who named another of his sons John Wesley Plyler.

Wesley and Whitefield are excellent examples of two sides of Methodism: one is studious and rational, the other is emotional and outwardly expressive. They each have a place in our world, in our worship, in our very personalities. Some of us are blessed with more of one than the other, and the early Methodists were no different. Wesley was dubious of too much enthusiasm, questioning its authenticity. But why would Wesley be so skeptical of what seems like a good thing?

To research the historical meaning of enthusiasm, I went to a very large dictionary that once belonged to my maternal grandfather, the Rev. William Glenn Smith, also a Methodist minister in South Carolina, during the 1920s-1960s. (Yes, I have a Methodist lineage on both sides; now you know why I study Methodist history.)

Here is the wonderfully robust definition of enthusiasm, complete with usages, from the 1923 edition of Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language:

Enthusiasm [From the Greek] "to be inspired or possessed by the god."

1. Inspiration as if by a divine or superhuman power; ecstasy; divine possession or frenzy;

Enthusiasm is founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rises from the conceits of a warmed or overweening imagination.—Locke

2. A state of impassioned emotion; transport; elevation of fancy; exaltation of soul.

Resolutions adopted in enthusiasm are often repented of when excitement has been succeeded by the wearing duties of hard everyday routine.—Froude

3. Strong excitement of feeling on behalf of a cause or a subject; ardent and imagina-

tive zeal or interest; fervor; as he engaged in his profession with enthusiasm.

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. —Emerson"

And there we have three examples of the evolution of the word enthusiasm, from its Greek meaning, to be inspired or even possessed by a god; to the impressions of philosopher John Locke (he died the year after Wesley was born) who proclaimed that enthusiasm was not divine but imaginary; to Ralph Waldo Emerson who believed that enthusiasm, whatever its source, was a prerequisite for greatness.

They are all correct because meaning depends on context and individual circumstance. One person's enthusiasm may be from the hand of our triune God, another's may be completely secular and another's may be, sadly, a mental delusion or in its unholy form, the influence of evil. So it is easy to see why Wesley was a bit skeptical of too much enthusiasm, although Methodist historians note that Wesley considered himself a "reasonable enthusiast."

Nevertheless, early Methodists were known to worship enthusiastically. In Chester county in the early 1800s, a Covenanter (a branch of Calvinism) refused to sell some of his land to Methodists who wanted to build a church and hold camp meetings. The Rev. A.D. Betts writes, "The old man rejected their request explaining that he had helped his father to drive the wolves out of this country many years ago, and that he was not going to assist in bringing the howling back. Not that he disliked the Methodists so much, but the Covenanters did dislike the Methodist way of shouting."

An affinity with enthusiasm is one of the reasons Methodism grew so quickly in South Carolina and elsewhere, as historian John Wigger explained in his aptly titled book, "Taking Heaven by Storm." African Americans in particular were attracted to the emotionalism and experiential worship that Methodism not only tolerated but embraced. In fact, enthusiasm helped to bring the races together, and the embrace of enthusiasm was sometimes literal. A prominent Delaware lawyer recalled his wife at a camp meeting on the Delmarva peninsula in 1805, "When Mrs. Bassett was shouting, full of the love of God, as she often was, she would as soon embrace a pious dusky daughter of Africa, in her rejoicing, as a white sister. Methodism had not as yet, put on brocade slippers and gold spectacles."

Enthusiasm can be a "heart strangely warmed," a forceful "Amen!" or a full embrace of the indwelling love of God. It may be quiet and invisible or loud and demonstrative.

With faith, piety and discipline, as Wesley taught, may we all find in our own lives the original meaning of enthusiasm: possessed and inspired by God.

Plyler is president of the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference. She welcomes comments or inquiries at joyce@charlotte.twcbc.com or 704-847-6096.

Global Ministries offers ways to assist the Ukrainian people

General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church announced that United Methodists and others wishing to provide humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian people in the wake of the Russian invasion of their country may contribute to Advance #982450, UMCOR International Disaster Response and Recovery.

This fund will provide direct assistance to those in Ukraine as well as assistance to Ukrainians fleeing to neighboring countries.

Gifts to support the people of Ukraine can be made in the following ways:

- Online at <https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/982450>
- By toll free telephone: 888-252-6174
- By check with "Advance #982450-Ukraine" written on the memo line, either mailed and addressed to Global Ministries/UMCOR, GPO, P.O. Box 9068, New York, NY, 10087-9068 or given at or through any United Methodist church

One hundred percent of all Advance contributions go to the designated cause.

The United Methodist community in Ukraine, though quite small, is actively engaged in assisting neighbors in need.

Global Ministries is in touch with the church's leadership as well as with church leaders in countries welcoming those who are fleeing from violence in Ukraine.

March

March 31—Deadline for Global Mission Fellows US-2 applications. <https://umcmission.org/become-a-fellow/>

April

Columbia Bethlehem Community Center Special Emphasis Month

April 1—Nominations due for Annual Conference Awards

April 2—LSM School (Orangeburg District), St. Andrews UMC, Orangeburg, 8:30-5 p.m. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Orangeburg-District-Lay-School-April-2022-final.pdf>

April 2—LSM School (Greenville District), Zoom, 8:30-11 a.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenville-Spring-2022-LSM-School.pdf>

April 3—LSM School (Orangeburg District), St. Andrews UMC, Orangeburg, 3-7 p.m. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Orangeburg-District-Lay-School-April-2022-final.pdf>

April 3—Open House, Asbury Hills, Cleveland, 1-5 p.m. <https://asburyhills.org/open-house/>

April 5—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

April 7—LSM School (Greenville District), Zoom, 7-8 p.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenville-Spring-2022-LSM-School.pdf>

April 8-9—"The Week that Changed the Whole World," An Easter Drive-Thru Drama, 7-8:30 p.m. at Rehoboth UMC, 6911 Two Notch Rd., Columbia. office@rumcsc.com or 803-788-2220

April 9—LSM School (Greenville District),



Photo courtesy of Rev. Willie Clark

Rejoice!

Wesley UMC, Aiken, recently celebrated Black History Month with an Afrocentric Day, a time of rejoicing, celebrating and thanking African-American people for providing hope and life lessons.

Zoom, 8:30-11 a.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenville-Spring-2022-LSM-School.pdf>

April 9—LSM School (Greenville District), Covenant UMC, Greer, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenville-Spring-2022-LSM-School.pdf>

April 9—LSM School (Greenville District), Zoom, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$35. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Greenville-Spring-2022-LSM-School.pdf>

April 14—"In the Upper Room: The Story of the Last Supper," Washington Street UMC, Columbia, 7 p.m.

April 15—Good Friday, UM Center closed.

April 17—Easter

April 20—Mental Health Program, Main Street UMC, Greenwood. Dinner, 5:30-6 p.m.; Program, 6 p.m. Register: <https://mainstreetgreenwood.org/>

April 21—Coffee and Conversation in person or virtually with Justin Nickel, Price House Living Room, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University, 12:45-1:45 p.m. <https://calendar.lr.edu/coffee-and-conversation>.

April 23—"Surrounded by Prayer," United Women in Faith Spiritual Growth Event (virtual), 10 a.m. Carman Wannamaker Amos, 864-270-1065 or wannamakeramos@msn.com. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/4rfphv53>

April 23—UMW Legacy Fund Day of Giving

April 23—Conference Historial Society meeting, 10 a.m., Wofford Archives, Spratanburg. <https://www.umcsc.org/historical-society/>

April 23-24—LSM School (Marion District), Trinity UMC, Bennettsville or Zoom, <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Marion-District-Lay-Servant-Schools-for-2021.pdf>

April 24—LSM School (Greenwood District) Session I, 2-6 p.m.

April 24—LSM School (Greenwood), St. Mark UMC, Greenwood, 2-7 p.m. \$30.

April 28—Grand Opening, Veterans Coffee House, Mountain View UMC, Taylors, 8:30-10 a.m.

April 30—Deadline for Afghan Refugee Resettlement reimbursement grants. <https://umcmission.org/umcor/afghan-refugee-resettlement-reimbursement-program/>

April 30—LSM School (Rock Hill District), St. John's UMC, Rock Hill, 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. <https://www.umcsc.org/lay-servant-training-spring-2022/>

April 30-May 1—LSM School (Marion District), Trinity UMC, Bennettsville or Zoom, <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Marion-District-Lay-Servant-Schools-for-2021.pdf>

May

May 1—LSM School (Greenwood District) Session II, St Mark UMC, Greenwood, 2-7:30 p.m. \$30.

May 1—LSM School (Rock Hill District), St. John's UMC, Rock Hill, 2-5 p.m.



Photos courtesy of Joy Preveaux

Four priorities

South Carolina Conference Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston spoke to the Marion District Feb. 12 about the church's four priorities. Macedonia UMC, Mullins, hosted the event. Above are the Rev. Brian Preveaux of Macedonia UMC (left), Holston (center) and the Rev. Tim Rogers, Marion District superintendent.



Ashes for Lent

A joint service was held at Manning UMC, Manning, on Ash Wednesday, March 2, that included the Historic Trinity AME Church. The Rev. Dominic Grate and the Rev. David McManus are pictured.



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by the Rev. Steve King

Stay awake! Stay alert!

April 3

Right on Time

Lesson Scripture: Mark 13:5-8, 28-37

Background Scripture: Mark 13:5-37

Key Verse: Mark 13:32-33, "But nobody knows when that day or hour will come, not the angels in heaven and not the Son. Only the Father knows. Watch out! Stay alert! You don't know when the time is coming."

Just prior to our Scripture lesson, Peter, James, John and Andrew ask Jesus, "When will these things happen? What sign will show that all these things are about to come to an end?" (Mark 13:4). This is the question that our entire Scripture passage sets out to answer.

Our Scripture passage begins with Jesus saying, "Watch out that no one deceives you." He is referring to the end times, or as some call it, the "Judgment Day." Our Scripture passage ends with our key verse, "But nobody knows when that day or hour will come. ... Watch out! Stay alert! You don't know when the time is coming."

Jesus has clearly indicated that the end will come. The disciples are frustrated because Jesus does not give any clear specifics. Mark has underscored the certainty of Jesus' word: the end times are coming. But the disciples should not concern themselves with apocalyptic speculation and predictions. Our job, in the meantime, is to clearly and widely proclaim the good news of the gospel. We are not to worry about the judgment of others, especially those who oppose us.

Living some two millennia after these words were spoken, many of us today assume the word about watchfulness has no significance for us. But we all know that life is fleeting. We all know of occasions of sudden death when the loved ones wish their last words with the individual had been more pleasant and loving. On a personal level, such stories remind us that we should be watchful as Christians. Being a faithful Christian does not just "happen" like crabgrass popping up in the lawn. It requires the care, attention and cultivation of an expert gardener.

How are you living your Christian life? Are you being watchful and alert?

April 10 (Palm Sunday)

Off Target

Lesson Scripture: Mark 14:27-42

Background Scripture: Same

Key Verse: Mark 14:38, "Stay alert and pray so that you won't give in to temptation. The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak."

We are all familiar with the story.

Following the Last Supper, Jesus goes to Gethsemane to pray before the upcoming crucifixion and resurrection. All the disciples go with him, and he instructs them to "sit here while I pray." He then takes Peter, James and John on a little farther. He tells these three, "I'm very sad. It's as if I'm dying. Stay here and keep alert." Jesus goes off and prays that "this cup of suffering" would be taken away. "However—not what I want but what you want."

After an hour, he checks on the three disciples and finds them all asleep. Jesus address Peter, calling him Simon, "Couldn't you stay alert for one hour? Stay alert and pray so that you don't give in to temptation. The spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak." Jesus goes off to pray again and returns two more times to the same scene: all three are sound asleep. After the third hour, he announces, "Get up! Let's go! Look, here comes my betrayer."

How many times have I settled down to pray and simply fallen asleep after just a few minutes? How about you? It is too often true that "the spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak." Paul had a similar problem that he describes in Romans 7:21, "So I find that, as a rule, when I want to do what is good, evil is right there with me." The amazing thing is that God was able to use these sleepy disciples in powerful roles in the early church. And Paul, despite his shortcomings, was used in a spectacular way in his ministry to the Gentile world.

God's amazing grace is bestowed upon us even when we make promises we cannot keep and when we fail to "stay alert."

April 17 (Easter Sunday)

Stirring Up Emotions

Lesson Scripture: Mark 16:1-8

Background Scripture: Mark 16

Key Verse: Mark 16:8, "Overcome with terror and dread, they fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid."

We come to the end of our study of Mark's Gospel by focusing on his Resurrection story. It is a story packed with emotion. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome (where were the men?) go to the tomb "very early on the first day of the week." While on the way, they were worried about who would roll away the stone from the tomb. "And it was a very large stone!"

But when they got to the tomb, their worries were put to rest as they found the stone already rolled away. In the tomb they saw "a young man in a white robe seated on the right side." The other Gospels describe him as an angel. He must have startled the

women, because his first words were, "Don't be alarmed!" The young man instructs the women to "Go, tell his disciples, especially Peter."

But as our key verse indicates, the women were "overcome with terror and dread." They flee from the tomb and "said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid."

Worry, surprise, alarm, terror, dread, fear. Mark paints a picture filled with negative emotions. No wonder the other gospel writers wrote longer and more satisfying versions of Easter morning. Being a concerned and obedient Christian does not protect us from our emotions. Since we know the "rest of the story," we cannot say how we would have reacted that early Sunday morning. But we can readily admit that we have emotional reactions to situations that arise while serving our Lord and Savior.

How often have you let your emotions keep you from fulfilling your Christian obligations as happened to these women? Isn't it great to know that the risen Lord forgives and restores all who have fallen short because of their emotions? He is with us!

April 24

Creation Meditation and Creator Worship

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 104

Background Scripture: same

Key Verse: Psalm 104:24, "Lord, you have done so many things! You made them all so wisely! The earth is full of your creations!"

We begin a new unit of study this week. The introduction to the unit states, "Caring for creation as its stewards is part of our discipleship. The lessons in Unit 2 address not only creation care but other forms of stewardship as well. The lessons link ecology, creation and generosity. We could say that as creation addresses the matter of

origins, then ecology speaks to how we preserve creation, while generosity is a conduit to share creation with others" (Adult Bible Studies Teacher).

This week we look at Psalm 104, one of the several creation stories in the Bible. This psalm is primarily a psalm of praise, reminding us that we are not to worship creation but the Creator. The theology in the psalm constantly hails the divine Creator. The psalm invites the faithful to revel in God's creation and to appreciate nature.

One of the resources given in the teacher's materials is the Center for Spirituality in Nature (centerforspiritualityinnature.org). Beth Norcross, the founder of the center, says, "Every person I've encountered has a story of finding God in the natural world."


Whether at the beach at sunrise, the mountain streams and waterfalls, or just walks through the woods, I have often encountered God in a personal and powerful way in nature. The website has wonderful resources on how to have spiritually moving moments in nature.

They have nine helpful hints for encouraging a regular spirituality in nature that include: 1) Remember it's a "get-to" not a "got-to"; 3) Consider and be honest about obstacles; 4) Keep it simple.; 6) Develop a rhythm; 7) Stay close to home; 8) Grab some friends; and 9) Be open and awake.


They also offer a book titled "Inside Out" that includes 50 nature-based spiritual practices.

Enjoy your time in nature and your encounters with God there.

King serves as secretary of Conference Connectional Ministries and as secretary of the Greenville District Committee on Ordained Ministry. He also serves as pastor of the North Easley Charge (Antioch and Dacusville) in the Greenville District.



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Travelers Rest UMC expresses our highest appreciation for our Office and Financial Administrator, Jan Paxton.

We are so grateful that Jan has served our church faithfully for more than 20 years with her top-notch financial knowledge and organizational skill.

Thank you, Jan, for exemplifying stewardship and keeping our financial house in good order!

Broad Street United Methodist Church would like to thank

Sherry Snipes and Betty Copeland

for their outstanding work.

We love you and appreciate all that you do for the church. Thank you from the Pastor, staff, and members of Broad Street.

*The Pastor, Church Council
and the rest of the Silver Hill Church Family
Celebrate the Gift and Blessing
that is our Administrative Assistant,
Ms. Tamara Davis.
We Love and Appreciate You.*

EASTER STORY: Sharing the 'most important week in eternity'

From Page 1

the drama coordinator. "There's the Garden of Gethsemane, then Simon carrying the cross with Jesus with the guards pushing them, then Golgotha, and then make a sharp right, and you turn that corner and see the empty tomb and it's nothing but new life."

Rehoboth is a small church, with what Smith estimates are 35 active members, so the production is a churchwide affair. Almost everyone helps, whether acting in the scenes, helping to direct traffic, providing refreshments or handing out robes and other costumes.

"It sounds like a cliché but it's really the week that changed the world, the most im-

portant week in eternity, and this is a way to commemorate and remember it," said Dave Petty, a member of Rehoboth who is participating in the trial scene.

Forrest Horn, a Rehoboth member who is part of the Last Supper scene, said he's amazed year after year at what they all manage to put together. But what is even more exciting is the message itself, the entirety of the Gospel.

"What people maybe don't really think about is that at each stage of the drive-thru, Jesus is there," Horn said. "It's Jesus at the Last Supper, in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the denial. You get to see personally every facet of Jesus's life."

That's what hits volunteer Sherry Smoak so powerfully—the fact that they are bringing

the direct message of Easter and the meaning of salvation directly to the people, many of whom don't always know the full story.

"After seeing and hearing the people come through, it honestly just shook me to my core because so many of them had never heard of Jesus. It's just heart wrenching," Smoak said.

One little boy who saw the actors taunting Jesus asked why they were doing something so mean to another person, and Smoak said they took a moment with the little boy and taught him the story, about how it was a bad thing that turned into a very good thing.

"So many people come through that don't know or haven't heard the complete story or don't understand it was for them," Smoak said. "It's just amazing."

Some cars drive through once, then turn and come back through again and again to see and understand.

Smith said several other churches help each year, some sending one or two people and some sending many. Windsor UMC participates, as does Bethel UMC, and usually Wesley and a couple from Washington Street. A small group from Northside Baptist is helping this year. Every year more people seem to want to be involved.

The pandemic forced them to cancel last year, and Smith and the others are excited to get out there this year. Their pastor, the Rev. Meegian Gossard, is new this year and hasn't yet seen the drama, but she's heard plenty and can't wait to see the fruits of her congregation's labor.

"I'm really proud of them. This is something they're so passionate about," Gossard said.

Want to go?

"The Week that Changed the Whole World," An Easter Drive-Thru Drama, will be held April 8 and 9 from 7-8:30 p.m. at Rehoboth UMC, 6911 Two Notch Rd., Columbia. All are welcome to drive through the event. Enter from Two Notch Rd. heading south. For more information, email office@rumcsc.com or call 803-788-2220.

Smith said one of the nicest things besides the evangelism aspect is knowing it's one thing everyone in the church plays a part in, whether they are praying about the event or there onsite.

"It's not professionally done, but when you leave you know the story," Smith said.

Petty agreed.

"At the exit you're always running across people who don't know the story and it's just really opened their eyes," Petty said. "You never know, but all you can do is plant the seed and leave it up to the Holy Spirit to do the work."

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Members of Rehoboth and other local churches reenact the trial scene as one of the eight scenes in the drama.

Sunday, May 8th 2022

Epworth's Annual Mother's Day Offering

Next meeting of the Conference Historical Society is April 23

The Historical Society will meet on April 23 at 10 a.m. at the Wofford Archives.

The program will include a brief presentation by Dr. Phillip Stone on the early history of the Conference Historical Society.

In observance of the 50th anniversary of the merger of the two South Carolina Conferences (1785 and 1866), Dr. A. V. Huff Jr., conference historian, will discuss steps in the process leading to the historic merger in 1972.

Stone will then lead tours and describe the new renovated archives, which serves both the South Carolina Conference and Wofford College.

To learn more about the society and to join, visit <https://www.umcsc.org/historical-society>