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July 2023/Annual Conference

113 churches leave UMCSC

By Jessica Brodie
 FLORENCE, S.C.—In a solemn and historical moment of holy conferencing, the South Carolina Annual Conference has approved 113 churches across the state who have chosen to separate from The United Methodist Church over sexuality and other concerns.

The 113 churches comprise almost 12 percent of the 958 total churches in the South Carolina Conference of the UMC and represent every one of the 12 districts in the conference.

The vote occurred June 6 just before 3 p.m. on Day Three of the 52nd session of Annual Conference.

The 113 churches had gone through a conference-authorized Local Church Discernment Process this winter and spring. The process enabled churches to pray, discern and then hold a church-wide vote about leaving the UMC if their members believed the denomination has not upheld its stated doctrine on issues of human sexuality, which is that homosexuality is “incompatible with Christian teaching,” though the church “implores families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends.”

The names of the churches intending to separate, as well as the number, had been kept confidential until the vote to “preserve the integrity of the voting process,” according to Dan O’Mara, communications coordinator.

Two hours before the vote, the names of the churches and the resolution itself were provided to voting members of Annual Conference—clergy and lay members elected as delegates from their local congregations—but no one else, including attendees, guests and media.

See “113 Leave,” Page 11

Hope, despite difficulty

Annual Conference closes after approving budget, new clergy, two resolutions and more than 100 separating churches



Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe, representing the retiring class, passes the mantle to Rev. Joseph Daniel Kovas, among the newly ordained.



The body stands in a solemn approval vote that allowed 113 United Methodist churches to separate from the South Carolina Conference. The vote occurred Tuesday afternoon during Annual Conference.



Discussion from the floor occurred throughout the four-day event.



South Carolina Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston leads business during the session, asking a question during proceedings.

By Jessica Brodie
 FLORENCE—With a tone sometimes solemn and sometimes exuberant, the 52nd session of the South Carolina Annual Conference was a historic one in many regards. From grief over the separation of 113 South Carolina churches who chose to leave The United Methodist Church to the joy so many experienced at the opportunity to be together in person for the first time in four years, emotions ran the gamut.

But by the time business ended June 7, more than 2,000 United Methodists wrapped up a four-day Annual Conference that ordained or commissioned 22 people, celebrated 38 retirees, passed two resolutions, honored the lives of 49 clergy and spouses who died over the past year, approved a \$13.2 million budget for 2024, approved three church closings, changed 36 charge lines and allowed the separation of 113 churches across the state who have chosen to leave the UMC (see article, this page).

As South Carolina Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston said in his closing sermon, just like when Jesus called the disciples to rise above their own limitations when it came to feeding the 5,000 in Matthew 14, today we United Methodists must also do the same. We must set aside a “scarcity mindset” and instead be willing to push aside boundaries when it comes to God’s limitless possibilities.

“We are called to be God’s people, and God is calling us to be the

people that would accept the challenge of seeking out the community in our midst who need the word, who may need to see the word in action, who may need to experience the word,” Holston said.

Just as the disciples realized when they were able to feed thousands with five loaves and two fish, we are far more blessed than we have ever thought, he said. And because of Jesus, we are far more capable than we give ourselves credit for. “We have an opportunity to be who God calls us to be if don’t allow our eyes to be fixed on our surroundings but allow our eyes to be focused on God,” Holston said.

Day One: Welcome, all

Day One of Annual Conference—Sunday, June 4—reflected a change from years past. After the clergy session and laity orientation, Annual Conference kicked off with an evening Service of Commissioning, Ordination, Recognition of Orders and Retirement presided over by Holston with guest preacher Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, resident bishop of the West Virginia Conference.

Steiner Ball emphasized the transformative hope of God in a service celebrating 22 new clergy and honoring 38 retirees, including the symbolic passing of the mantle, conducted by the Rev. Susan Thurston Henry-Crowe, representing the retiring class, and the Rev. Joseph Daniel Kovas, representing the newly ordained. (See article, Page 6.)

See “Annual Conference,” Page x

Photos by Matt Brodie

Hours/Location

Open Monday through Friday
 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
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 Center
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 Columbia, SC 29203
 Deadlines: 10th of each month.

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Subscriptions

The *Advocate* is delivered to mailboxes via U.S. mail every month prior to the first Sunday of the month. Subscriptions are \$20/year for the print and online version, and \$10/year for the online-only edition. Church plans are available for as low as \$1/member (online version) or \$10/member (print version with 6+ subscribers per church). To start your subscription, visit www.advocatesc.org, call with credit card 803-726-6743 or 803-786-9486, ext. 335, or send a check to Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203.

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AC passes resolutions opposing death penalty, gun violence

By Jessica Brodie

FLORENCE—South Carolina United Methodists passed resolutions opposing the death penalty and committing to address the problem of gun violence during this year's Annual Conference.

Four other resolutions slated for consideration by the body were deemed out of order because they were submitted by an unofficial conference group and not by an individual.

On the first day of business, June 5, the Rev. Steve Simoneaux offered recommendations from the Committee on Resolutions and Appeals, noting his committee recommended support for both the Resolution to Unequivocally Oppose the Death Penalty and a Resolution on Gun Violence as they generally reflect denominational principles.

'Opposing death penalty' resolution passes

The body addressed the death penalty resolution first, and it passed without debate or amendment.

Proposed by Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, Lake City, and the Rev. Amiri Hooker, the resolution called for South Carolina United Methodists to unequivocally oppose the death penalty by holding vigils when an execution occurs, connecting with anti-death penalty efforts, advocating with elected officials and writing letters to people on death row, as well as calling for the bishop to write to the South Carolina governor asking for the death penalty to be abolished.

Gun violence resolution passes

The second resolution, proposed by Conference Connectional Ministries Advocacy Committee Chair the Rev. Bernie Mazyck and Hooker as South Carolina Board of Church and Society chair, prompted some debate, including an amendment that passed to strike a phrase regarding militarization of police and military equipment granted to law enforcement agencies.

"We need the cooperation of the police and military to help curb violence," said Mark Cochran, laity from the Simpsonville Charge, who proposed the amendment.

While debate ensued about whether or not military equipment used by police is a threat to democracy, the amendment ultimately passed.

Another amendment, proposed by Bob Abbott, lay member of St. Luke UMC in the Hartsville District, proposed striking language that United Methodists advocate for the ban of large-capacity ammunition magazines and weapons designed to fire multiple rounds each time the trigger is pulled. He said the term "large capacity" was ambiguous and could apply to all guns.

Debate ensued about the reasoning and the way bullets and capacity works in different types of guns when they are fired, and the second amendment ultimately failed.

The gun violence resolution, which passed, encouraged United Methodists to address the



Rev. Steve Simoneaux offers recommendations from the Committee on Resolutions.

epidemic of gun violence and to prayerfully address gun violence in their local context. Some of these ways include making gun violence a regular part of church conversation, assisting those affected by gun violence, making sure to safely and securely store guns and practice gun safety, hosting public prayer at sites of gun violence, partnering with police and community groups to address mass shootings, and advocating for laws that prevent or reduce gun violence, such as universal background checks.

Four resolutions from South Carolina Reconciling Ministries Network out of order

Much discussion ensued Monday about why four resolutions were ruled out of order. The four were all proposed by South Carolina Reconciling Ministries Network, an unofficial caucus of the UMC that works for full affirmation of all of God's children, including LGBTQ+ persons, in the church and the world. The resolutions were to 1) Support removing all discriminatory policies and harmful language related to sexual orientation from the *Book of Discipline*; 2) Support the establishment of the government necessary to allow each region to design ministry for its particular contexts and be more effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world; 3) Support and amplify the LGBTQIA+ delegates' call to justice and empowerment for the LGBTQIA+ community and for responsibility as United Methodists to do good, do no harm and stay in love with God; and 4) Express respect and gratitude for those who have voluntarily stepped away from positions of leadership as they journey away from membership in the UMC.

Holston explained that the resolutions were signed only as submitted by the SCRNM, which is why they were out of order. While there were calls from the floor to set aside Standing Rule 70, Holston said that motion would be out of order because the body cannot suspend a rule to consider resolutions not already properly before them. He further clarified the process—that per amended standing rules, all resolutions must be submitted by March 15 to be considered at Annual Conference.

Ellen Davis, lay member from Bethel UMC, Charleston, spoke from the floor seeking clarity.



Mike Cochran proposes an amendment to the gun violence resolution.

She said that when she received her Annual Conference packet she diligently sat and studied all the resolutions, fully expecting to vote on it.

"It's in there," Davis said. "Why is it not before us? I don't understand."

Holston explained that everyone has the right to propose a resolution, but the Committee on Resolutions and Appeals must then discern whether those resolution are able to properly go before the body.

He added that the resolutions can go before the 2024 Annual Conference if revised, and the submitters also have an opportunity to submit them to General Conference through that process.

Anne Walker, Alston Wilkes Society director and lay member of Trinity UMC, Sumter, asked why the submitters were not told when they submitted the resolution that they were out of order, as they could have revised and resubmitted it if they had known.

"The group met the deadline, so it feels very sneaky for this not to have been handled," Walker said. "We know there's disagreement, but for it to be pushed aside is just unconscionable, and I don't understand why the folks receiving this ... did not say, 'This needs to come from an individual.' Why did they not do that?"

She expressed a desire that the committee do this in the future.

The Rev. Paul Wood made motions to appeal the bishop's and the committee's decisions, but the motions were not permissible under current church law. With that, business moved on.

The next day, Dr. Roger Gramling, retired elder, proposed a motion to ask the Standing Rules Committee to consider amending Standing Rule 70 before Annual Conference 2024 authorizing the conference secretary and parliamentarian to review all submitted resolutions to determine if they are properly before the annual conference for consideration. If not, Gramling motioned, they would advise the resolution submitters that the deadline for the resubmission of corrected versions would be extended to March 25. The committee would report their consideration of this amendment to the 2024 session.

After a second, Gramling's motion passed overwhelmingly with a hand vote.

Pension and Health Benefits reports only slight changes ahead for 2024

By Allison Trussell

FLORENCE—Those covered by conference health and pension plans will see only slight changes next year. That's according to Valerie Brooks-Madden, chair of the Board of Pensions, and Rev. Chris Lollis, conference benefits officer, who presented the report of Pension and Health Benefits on June 6.

Brooks-Madden began her report saying they helped about 35 people enter retirement this year. The board continues to seek new ways to serve those who serve.

In an effort to continue streamlining processes and being good stewards, the office will shift to paperless billing in 2024. Statements will be emailed to the pastor and treasurer, although additional emails may be added upon request.

The board recommends a past



Valerie Brooks-Madden, chair of the Board of Pensions, and the Rev. Chris Lollis, Conference Benefits officer, present their report.

service rate of \$881 per service year as the rate for annuity payments to retired ministers. This is a 2 percent increase from 2023.

Brooks-Madden encouraged churches to enroll in ACH bank draft. By enrolling, churches receive a \$15 per month discount, which is an increase from \$10 per month. ACH bank draft is not a requirement at this time, she said,



though it may become so in the future. Lollis said about half the churches were currently enrolled to use it.

Newly incapacitated ministers receiving CPP Incapacity Benefits, surviving spouses of ministers, participants in the Voluntary Transition Program or newly retired pastors may receive a one-time moving expense grant not to

exceed \$2,000. This is an increase from \$1,800.

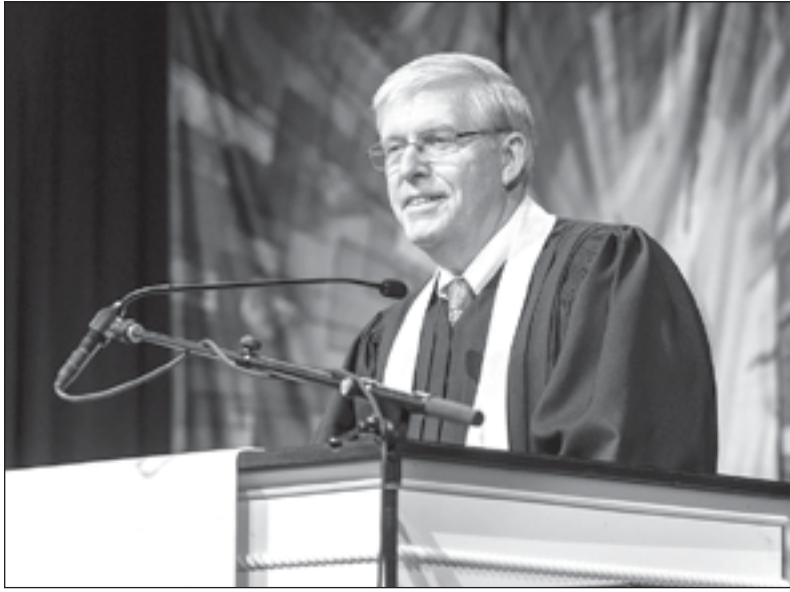
Lollis said there will be slight changes to the medical plans in 2024, in part because of anticipated IRS changes. He reminded pastors and delegates that the annual election period is a time to evaluate your current medical plan and to see if another plan would fit better.

The Health Benefit Fee for churches/churches with an eligible clergy/lay participant will increase \$135 per month or \$1,620 per year from 2023. However, the board will offer a Health Fee Subsidy in 2024 in the amount of \$135 per month to offset the cost.

Both Brooks-Madden and Lollis encouraged the conference to read the full reports in their registration packets. The report was approved with no discussion.



Trinity Chamber Orchestra, Trinity UMC, North Myrtle Beach, performs during the service.



The Rev. Tim Rogers lifts up the critical need and vast responsibility it is to preach and be sent so that all can call on the Lord and be saved.



The names of the honored dead are read as a bell is rung in remembrance for each.

Photos by Matt Brodie

‘They Were Sent—And It Was Beautiful’ Conference remembers 49 clergy and spouses who passed away since last AC

By Jessica Brodie

FLORENCE—When it comes to the life of a pastor, there is pain, struggle and sacrifice. But more than anything, there is a great and holy beauty that surpasses anything we can imagine.

That was the word from the Rev. Tim Rogers, recently retired Marion District superintendent, who brought a message of deep honor and remembrance as South Carolina United Methodists celebrated the lives of 49 clergy and spouses who died in the last year.

The service began as the Rev. David Washington offered a call to worship, inviting all to celebrate these “servants who fought the good fight, finished the race and kept the faith.”

After the processional hymns, “Sing with All the Saints of Glory” and “For All the Saints.”

The Rev. Kyu-Seok Shin offered the opening prayer, lifting up the grief we experience at their loss but our joy that they now live and reign with the everliving God, alive evermore.

The anthem, “And Can It Be?” followed.

Rogers began by lifting up the words of Romans 10:13-15, about the critical need and vast responsibility it is to preach and be sent so that all have the opportunity to call on the Lord and be saved.

In his sermon, titled “They Were Sent—And It Was Beautiful,” Rogers joked that the Apostle Paul probably understood the modern-day Methodist itineracy system, and the concept of being “sent,” as well as the great sacrifices involved.

“The DNA of our structure is like a missionary sending agency,” Rogers said, and pastors and their families must

go to places unknown and do tasks they sometimes never imagined. “They are committing to a life both wonderful and terrible.”

The work United Methodist preachers and their families do is not easy. They are called to be ambassadors of Christ and to share in his work and his sacrifice. Sometimes that sacrifice can mean sacrificing family meals and time together. Sometimes it’s so much a person has moments when they are ready to quit, for the burden feels like too much.

Rogers shared how he always thought he did a pretty good job of balancing work and family— until one day his then-teenaged daughter described a dream where her father said he had to do church meeting before he’d be available to attend her wedding.

“I will let the therapists and counselors unpack that,” Rogers said.

But while so much in the lives of clergy and their family involves sacrifice, it’s critical to remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 16:25, that whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for Christ will find it.

“In the end, clergy are sent to bring people to faith,” Rogers said—there to listen to confession of sin, to visit the lonely, to sit with the grieving, to spend weekends in prison, to pray for and with those who desperately need God’s intervention.

“There is so much beauty woven into the fabric of life,” he said. “Rejoice and be glad, for their reward in heaven is great. Rejoice and be glad, because God has wiped every tear from their eyes and for them there is no more sorrow or pain.

“And remember as every name called that they were sent, and it was beautiful.”

Rogers’ message closed with the recitation of the affirmation of faith. Then all stood for a silent processional as the memorial banner carried in.

Then Bishop L. Jonathan Holston read the names of the honored dead as a bell was rung in remembrance for each.

Here are those who were remembered at this year’s Annual Conference:

Active Ministers: Jerold Dekover McKnight and William McClary Wrighten.

Retired Ministers: Clyde Major Aiken, Barrett Thomas Alewine, Mary Susan Ashworth, Theodore Edward Blackwell, Leonard Hobson Buff Jr., Kenneth Campbell Burr Sr., Frank Bundy Bynum Jr., Gary Bruce Byrd, James Charles Campbell, Hansford John Cribb Jr., Joseph Lynn Curtis, Harry Kyle Gindhart Jr., Mack Goff Jr., Roger Charles Goupil, Hoyt Graham Jr., Fladger Levon Hucks, Bishop Marshall L. “Jack” Meadors Jr., Edward Lee McWilliams, George Franklin Manigo Jr., Grady Watson Mills II, Donald Russell O’Dell, Jerry Leroy Phillips Sr., John Russell Rumford, John Terrell Rush, Herbert Stephens Jr., Roy McMillan Stockman, Walter Tart, James Bert Watson and Reginald Darlington Wilson Jr.

Spouses: Spencer Reid Anderson, Matthew David Baird, Deborah F. Mason, Michael R. Meder and Essie McCants Shaw.

Surviving Spouses: Virginia Shockley Abercrombie, Floride Milner Calvert, Mary Poole Cunningham, Katherine Geraldine Graham, Joyce Johnson Hanna Foxworth, Valma Corne Mewborn, Grace Prater Minick, Ann Christopher Nicholson, Donald C. Phipps, Carolinda McClimon Robison, Marilyn Hope Sheridan, Patricia Lou Thompson and Betty Wilson McQuay Tysinger.

Nelson Smith brings word on strength, unity for African-American Clergywomen

By Allison Trussell

FLORENCE—The African-American Clergywomen held their Annual Conference Luncheon on June 6.

Following lunch, the Rev. Millie Nelson Smith stepped up to deliver a rousing devotion based on Numbers 14 and the Israelites rebellion against God.

“I’m fascinated by this text,” the director of Connectional Ministries said. “There are so many unimportant people in the Bible that God chooses to use. So it is with Caleb.”

Twelve spies, including Caleb, were sent out to the land and were to report back what the land was like—arid or fertile, what the people were like—hostile or friendly, what the towns were like—fortified or unwallled. They go out and come back with reports of giants and suggest that they should look elsewhere for the promised land.

This bad report made the people lose hope and wail that God had once again abandoned them. Caleb and Joshua protested the report and said, “Let’s go, God is with us.”

Smith noted God didn’t send the spies to ask for permission or to offer an opinion. Fear of the unknown made the Israelites insult God and forget God overcomes giants.

“Today’s giants—racism, poverty, violence, disease, mental illness—cause us to



Nelson Smith

fear, but if we believe God, not IN God, we can go forward with a different spirit.”

That different spirit, Smith said, is the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit that met in the Upper Room, the spirit that moved John Wesley, the spirit that dwells inside of us but shows up on the outside.

She recalled being at church one Sunday and seeing a pack of dogs moving toward her young nephew and some other boys. Without thinking, she began to run toward the dogs. The lead dog saw her and stopped, which stopped the pack.

“Sometimes you have to run forward.”

The United Methodist Church is at a crossroads, she said, but we are convinced God has brought us together for a reason despite our differences. If we come together, we can be a force to be reckoned with.

“The table is set,” Smith said. “Stop circling, take receipt of the table and we can drive out the giants!”

The clergywomen recognized two of their members who retired at this year’s conference: the Rev. Lillie Davis and the Rev. Lindora James. Also recognized were three members who participated in Sunday’s ordination service: The Rev. Shirley Gordon was ordained elder, the Rev. Kim Bryant was ordained deacon and the Rev. Darlene

Richardson was commissioned as a provisional elder. Howard Parnell, band director

at Keenan High School, Columbia, and Rose Sweeney Williams provided special music.

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Viewpoints



Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

Our differences make us better

If it weren't for my sister, I'm not sure I ever would have spoken. At least that's what my mom says. I was a painfully shy child, my nose in a book and hiding from the boisterous world, content to play with my imaginary friends and host tea parties with my dolls. But then along came my little sister, fun-loving and relationship savvy from birth, and that did the trick. Slowly, I began to emerge from my shell. Today, most people are surprised to learn that deep down, I can be rather shy. Outwardly, I seem friendly, outgoing and extroverted. Thanks to my sister, I am better.

It's same way with my husband. He's fun and spontaneous and always ready for adventure. Because of him, my sometimes too-serious, organized, planning-focused existence is a lot more carefree, enjoyable and people-oriented.

My mind is on this after our church has just gone through a historic and, to me, upsetting division. Of the 958 United Methodist churches in the South Carolina Conference, 113 have now separated from the denomination (see article, Page 1). That's 12 percent of us. I grieve these churches even as I bless them on their way. I am happy for them and wish them well, because I know we all must do what the Lord calls us to do, and if they are called to separate, this is what they should do. God will work it out.

But their absence is palpable. To me, one of the best things about the UMC is how strong we are because of our opposing and differing perspectives. From the super-conservative to the extremely liberal, we are a denomination who claims both George Bush and Hillary Clinton as members. Think about that a moment.

I have long believed I am a better person because of the very different people in my life. These people have made me stronger and challenged me. I claim true and deep friends among the youth and the elderly, among all different race and genders and theological and political perspectives. And I like it that way.

I think our church is better because of the differences among us that help us discern God's will and keep us from dangerous tunnel vision in the midst of everything. I think it makes us stronger and more adaptable people as well.

I love what the Rev. Ken Nelson said at annual conference this year, how "we don't have time to play small or to be petty. We don't have time to be bitter when we can be better."

I agree.

I know more churches might wish to separate from the UMC next year. That's OK. But for those of us who choose to remain, let's celebrate our differences. Let's understand that perhaps those differences are what make us a better church and a better representation of God's vision in the world.

Together, we are God's mighty church, the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in a broken world. And together we are beautiful.

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The S.C. United Methodist Advocate (ISSN 1078-8166) continues the Southern Christian Advocate, authorized by the General Conference of 1836. Publication began Annual Conference-July 24, 1837. The paper is published monthly by the S.C. United Methodist Advocate Trustees. We cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. Please direct all inquiries regarding commentary submissions to the editor, 4908 Colonial Drive, Suite 207, Columbia, SC 29203-6070. 803-786-9486. Periodicals postage paid at Columbia, S.C.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: S.C. United Methodist Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Suite 207, Columbia, SC 29203.



Bishop's Corner

by Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

More than enough

"Jesus replied [to the disciples], 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' 'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' the disciples answered. 'Bring them here to me,' he said. And Jesus directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.'"—Matthew 14:16-19 (NIV)

We have now concluded the 2023 session of the South Carolina Annual Conference. Our first session together in four years outdid any expectations we may have had. Reuniting with sisters and brothers in Christ, celebrating all that God is doing in and through the faithful across our state and praising God through worship were all highlights of our time together.

The mighty, rushing wind of the Holy Spirit swirled through our midst as lay and clergy members of the annual conference shared stories and memories, asked questions and sought understanding in this season. Our time together truly embodied what it means to seek a more excellent way.

No matter what each member of the annual conference had on their minds when they arrived or which concerns or anxiety they brought with them, what we all found in our gathering together was the abundance of life in Christ. In the passage from the Gospel of Matthew, the disciples brought their concerns about feeding the multitudes to Jesus. The disciples were responding out of the perceived scarcity rather than out of their abundance. Telling Jesus that there was "only" a small amount of food indicated their focus not on what they had, but on what they didn't have. As the disciples saw it, there was simply not enough.

When coming face to face with our limitations, we sometimes choose to lose our focus. We begin to let doubt creep in. But, if you give yourself an opportunity, choose to put on the eyes of Christ, you can think creatively. You can find the will and the way.

The South Carolina Conference is filled with faithful, talented and generous disciples, many of whom worked diligently to cultivate the spirit-filled environment in which we gathered and praised God. To the Rev. Ken Nelson, conference secretary, the Rev. Mel Arant, assistant conference secretary, the Committee on the Annual Conference, the secretarial staff, the worship

team and all who worked behind the scenes to plan and prepare for our time together, we owe you a great debt of gratitude.

To the Rev. Terry Fleming, the clergy and laity of the Florence District, the Rev. Susan Maddox and the good people of Highland Park United Methodist Church, thank you for welcoming us so warmly to your community and for ensuring that we were comfortable during our stay.

To the countless volunteers, tellers, ushers, musicians, song leaders and all who enhanced our time together during both worship and business, we are grateful for your willingness to serve.

To all who serve in district and conference leadership and on committees and boards that work throughout the year to imagine and enable ministry and mission to happen—we see you, we celebrate your commitment, and we thank you for sharing your gifts, talents and aptitudes for the furtherance of God's kingdom.

The strength of the South Carolina Conference is found in the multitudes of clergy and laity that are committed to ministry and mission for the sake of Christ. Each of you who have heard God's call and answered affirmatively, taking time away from home to be present at The Florence Center or following along on the livestream—you are the hope hewn when we breathe and believe, seeking a more excellent way. Your commitment both to Christ and to the church is a testimony to faithfulness. You can be counted on through your prayers and your presence, whether in the pulpit or the pew, at meetings and missions, during worship—even in the waiting.

The people called United Methodist in South Carolina know ministry is not a one-way street. You may think you don't have much, but when you start putting all that you have together, it's more than you ever thought. We are far more capable than we give ourselves credit for. Instead of thinking of what we are not, what if we say what we ARE. The disciples were feeling more crisis than opportunity. But Jesus saw something different. Don't allow your eyes to get fixed on your surroundings, but instead focus on God. God has something just for you.

So what is God birthing in your spirit right now that you never thought you could do? The right gifts, coupled with the right people—when all those elements come together, God's grace becomes sufficient. You go and do it. Be it. And in the midst of it all, God's grace comes alive.

Correction

In our articles about Annual Conference and resolutions (May and June *Advocates*), we mistakenly noted that resolutions can be proposed from the floor of Annual Conference. However, that was incorrect. Standing Rule 70 changed in 2017, and now resolutions must be submitted by March 15 for proper consideration at Annual Conference.

We apologize for this error and, as always, strive to set the record straight.

Letters to the Editor

A poem: Witness

a book of flesh
chapters of singing
paragraphs of weeping
torn pages from being tossed about



Guest Commentary

by Sarah-Kate Gravelly

Real conversations

Fifty-four years ago the rebellion and riots of hundreds of gay people at Stonewall Inn in New York City marked the first action of what is now pride month. The following year, LGBTQ people took to the streets to march in solidarity of those who were jailed and beaten because of their sexuality and to mark the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots.

This month, delegates of the South Carolina United Methodist Church met for Annual Conference and on June 6 voted to release 113 charges as those congregations went through the disaffiliation process and no longer wish to remain part of the UMC. It's possible that some of these congregations found the Wesleyan tradition incompatible with their own beliefs, but it seems the overwhelming reason for their decision to leave was the possibility of inclusion. The conversation, or lack thereof, around equality for LGBTQ individuals in the UMC appeared to be the deciding factor for their exit.

As one of the only gay youth leaders in my area, I find it incumbent upon me to call our attention to the significance of this vote upon the backdrop of Pride Month. Pride Month, similar to Black History Month and Women's History Month, is the opportunity for LGBTQ individuals to be accepted as well as communities to recognize the long history of rejection and honor those LGBTQ persons who worked for equality and awareness. At a time when LGBTQ people are still being killed because of their sexuality, the effort to provide a period of open engagement between people who are different from one another is still important.

During this year's Annual Conference, the South Carolina Reconciling Ministries Network put four resolutions in front of the delegates with the hope of open conversation between delegates. (Reconciling Ministries Network began as a faith-based response to institutionalized homophobia braided into the fabric of The United Methodist Church. RMN works to advance justice and inclusion for all LGBTQ+ people in The United Methodist Church and beyond.)

The resolutions were calling for the support of the leadership of the UMC, for a restructuring of the conference to provide less biased voting, for the affirmation of LGBTQ people and for the conference's support in removing the harmful language against LGBTQ individuals within the *Book of Discipline*.

Those who aren't in connection with gay

people didn't receive the opportunity to hear or understand or engage with the "other" because we weren't able to discuss these resolutions. The possibility of open engagement with one another didn't happen because there was a mistake with how these four resolutions came before the body that was not corrected prior to their submission. With which side the mistake lies, the Reconciling Ministries Team or with the Committee on Resolutions, is a valid question but unimportant to the point of this article. Regardless of the blame, delegates from across the state were forced to talk about the resolutions over lunch with people mostly likely in their own churches or similar circles.

During Pride month, we recognize that the opportunity for conversation brings about connection. When conversation is stifled, young people don't feel safe to talk about depression or anxiety. When conversation is muted, older adults are pushed into silent spaces alone. The conversation around the harmful language in the UMC *Book of Discipline* has been hushed and shushed for years, and the inability for leaders in the UMC to openly discuss the human beings who are affected by these resolutions is a disservice to the very slogan of open hearts, open minds, open doors. The brackets following that motto should be (closed conversations).

Alternatively, in a time of recognition, each charge leaving the South Carolina UMC was read aloud one by one before the entire body to give each of those congregations a moment to say goodbye.

I encourage pastors, leaders and committees in churches around South Carolina and the U.S. to begin having real conversations about the impact of the upcoming vote at the 2024 General Conference. Disregarding creates division. Ignoring begets ignorance.

If you are pushing this conversation to the back burner, you are part of the problem. Please research the opportunity you have to make a difference prior to next year. Encourage your pastors and district superintendents to lead meetings and host Q&As. Even if you disagree with the equality of LGBTQ persons, all of our voices should have an opportunity to speak and all of our hearts should have an opportunity to listen.

To all the young people who are questioning if you are loved, God loves you. Happy Pride Month.

Gravelly is director of Christian education for Virginia Wingard Memorial UMC, Columbia.

A poetic reflection: Not home yet

It might be a good thing for church folks never to forget:

"We may be on the right road now, but we're not in heaven yet!"

The Christian life is an uphill continuous journey,

requiring constant improvements or finding ourselves on a gurney.

There are curves, potholes, hills, valley and lots of unknown,

that sometimes will cause us to, even in a crowd, feel all alone.

No matter how determined we are in our travel or the greatness of our skill,

we may be like the turtle or the hare, be forewarned; there's no time to kill.

There will be mis-turns, rough roads and unexpected detours

on the road home, and that includes mine and yours.

Readjusting, and admitting that we have lost our way, we will all have to do,

Put pride in the back seat, give faith the wheel,

And we will surely make it through.

Keep moving on up the hill, but do not pass a brother/sister with fuel low

for it is also home where they have been trying and hoping to go.

The time spent in helping others to ascend life's treacherous hill

could just be your future help, for it may be in God's will.

The predictable thing about this journey is that it is unpredictable

and whenever, and whatever the failings, God's gracefulness is insatiable.

All have, are and will come short of God's glory;

It is just the reality of needing God to help us rewrite daily our salvation story.

And if faithfully, we acknowledge that need, we might just make it home someday

Hang in there; we are not there yet, but we are well on our way.

—By the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr.

LETTERS: Readers sound off

From Page 4

bent corners revisited
dingey and worn
adored and cherished

beauty reflected in a mirror
what to see
wrinkles deep with memories
hands to be held
eyes to be seen

who will behold them
who will see them deeply
If not you?
won't you cherish

when they are seen eternal
eyes pierce the heart
embrace holds the pain
gaze opens the soul

words fall wasted down
arguments tie in knots
love peels open dusty pages
grace writes another word
*Rev. Matthew Alexander, pastor
Grace-Lynnwood UMC, Lancaster*

Thoughts about faith

Every human being has to deal with the known and the unknown. From an infant wailing about who knows what to the senior distressed about being distressed, faith is the power that heals and saves. It equips us to deal with both the known and the unknown.

Maturity of life and faith involves much more than the passing of time. It means growing in our capacity to grapple with the mysteries of the known and unknown. Though we grow the unknown also grows and expands. Thus, we can never "catch up" with the unknown. So long as we remember that truth we can continue searching, understanding that our reward is in the search!

Dealing with the known and the unknown is not a choice we make but a circumstance forced upon us by fate: a death in the family, a calamity of nature, unresolved issues of history and countless other unsettling events. At such times, "dealing with" may mean simply to accept a situation and move on to nature's continuing revelations, to life's unfolding mysteries.

The thing we dread most is not knowing, yet the more we know, the more the realm of the unknown expands! We can never know enough to avoid all of life's surprises.

In faith we trust that we are not alone in our response to what lies ahead.

*Rev. Mickey Fisher, retired
Spartanburg*

'My Farewell for You'

As a pastor who is moving charges this year, I have spent the past few weeks reflecting upon my final words. Attached are those words:

A pastor is a servant of the Lord by sharing his grace and his word.

A pastor continues to serve even when they are rejected and ridiculed, because a pastor loves.

A pastor always builds others up and never tears down, even when they're the punchline at a party or, for some, the punching bag at the church.

A pastor will one day be held accountable for everything they say and also for what they don't say.

A pastor looks different from the world and their heart is saddened because they know the "Great News" that people don't have to perish, but the mass still rejects and still chokes to live in despair.

A pastor prays for all by name and especially for those who reject them, not out of spite but out of love and compassion.

A pastor's life is not an easy life, but you would never know it as you look into their eyes and see the smile upon their face, because a pastor sees the possibilities for you.

A pastor shares the love of Christ because a pastor cares about where you will spend eternity.

A pastor's prayer is that you will fully know the love of Christ, give your heart completely to him and spend eternity living in the light of his glory with an unimaginable peace in your heart and a beautiful everlasting smile upon your face.

May the blessing of Almighty God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—be upon you.

It has truly been an honor to of been your pastor.

Your humble servant in his service, Pastor Mike Maston.

*Rev. Michael Maston, pastor
St. Mark and Monaghan UMCs, Greenville*

My body, my temple

A leading holistic medical doctor, in one of his recent books, shares this real-life story about Janice, one of his patients. She no longer felt "sexy," and when we share her medical report with you it won't be hard to figure out why.

Janice was 66, severely obese, suffering from clogged arteries that needed stints, heart failure, high blood pressure, fatty liver, failing kidneys and with Type 2 diabetes on insulin. Her blood tests were scary, and she was on her way to a heart and kidney transplant. She was on a pile of medications for which her co-pay was \$20,000 a year.

Within three days of joining the medical group program, by changing her diet from a lifetime of junk food to using food as medicine, consuming a very low-glycemic, high-fiber, good fat, phytonutrient-rich, plant-rich diet, and following a simple vitamin regimen (multivitamin, fish oil, and vitamin D), she was able to get off her insulin. Within three months, she was off all her medication and her numbers were all normal (heart failure gone, kidneys and liver normalized and blood pressure and blood sugar normal). After a year, she lost 116 pounds and was able to fully return to a vibrant, active life as a leader in her community.

Janice's body was able to repair, renew and regenerate after six decades of abuse and neglect.

The body has within it instructions for repair. We simply must provide the right conditions to activate the body's innate healing systems.

What about your body (temple)? Is your roof leaking? Are some windows broken out? Is the carpet soiled and worn? In 1 Corinthians 6:19, God says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?"

If the Janice story has hit your "hot button" then make that commitment right now to convert your body to a disease-free, beautiful, God-designed body that will become biologically younger and will allow you to live at home, not the nursing home.

*Hugh McCown, member
Shiloh UMC*

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Let God's blessing shine

Steiner Ball emphasizes the transformative hope of God in service celebrating new clergy, retirees

By Jessica Brodie

FLORENCE—South Carolina gathered in-person June 4 for the first time since before the pandemic to commission or ordain 22 new clergypersons and honor 38 retirees—a time for great joy and celebration.

“It’s a celebration of God, of believers and the church gathered together praising God and having the goodwill of all people in our hearts, said Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, resident bishop of West Virginia, who gave the evening’s sermon, “Original Blessing; Hewing Hope.”

But it is also a gathering that calls God’s people to remembrance.

For retirees, Steiner Ball said, it’s a time perhaps of remembering their ordination, their first appointments, their first time presiding at the communion table, as well as remembering those things they never taught in seminary, such as how to fix the air conditioning or how to navigate arguments about the color of the carpet.

“But it’s also a deeper remembrance, as we’re all called to remember where we came from, where we are going and to whom we belong,” she said.

After all, Steiner Ball said, everything began with God’s original blessing.

“The real message of Genesis is that God breathed, and God breathed life,” she said. “God made the plants and trees and vegetation, and God in God’s breath said ‘This is good.’”

Indeed, God said all of it was good, from the light and the stars to the sea and all the creatures upon the earth. But when it came to God’s special creation, humankind, God said it was not just good but “very good.”

God created a creature made in God’s image, one who could write poetry and masterpieces, who could care for people and all God’s creatures with medicine and with faith, and in doing so, God blessed us all.

“It’s a blessing that is yours and mine today, a blessing that has never ended, a blessing deeper than any human accomplishment, as deep as creation and old as the universe,” she said.

The struggle is that most Christian churches don’t start with our blessing, God’s breath of life. They start with Genesis 3 and the fall.

This focus on original sin is harmful and oppressive, Steiner Ball said. While it is important to talk about sin, what is far more important is focusing on the blessings of God and the good God has in store for us.

“Hear this, leaders of the church: The old advertisements really are true. We are what we eat. We are what we take in physically and spiritually. We become what we take in, what we allow to swirl and dwell inside of us,” she said.

She posed the question to all gathered: What are you taking in? What have you truly come to believe? And what are the words coming out of your mouths?

“Do they breathe life or something else? Where do your words reveal where you spend your time existing—in the realm of God’s original blessing, the blessing that hews hope, that enables both us and other persons to come face to face with Christ? Or are you so focused on sin ... that you are slowly allowing the life to be sucked out of you?”

Focusing on original blessing over original sin puts the emphasis on God’s “more excellent way,” Steiner Ball said.

“God’s blessing is the foundation of trans-



Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, left, resident bishop of South Carolina conducts the service, left.



Right, Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, resident bishop of West Virginia, preaches of hope and transformation.



The Rev. John Clarence Elmore Jr. receives recognition of orders in the UMC.

formed life, the avenue through which hope is hewn and through which we are made one in Christ,” she said.

It is the hope in a hopeless world.

“You were born to make manifest, to hew, to kindle, to spark the glory of God within each person,” she said.

This spark of God is in each one of us, not just some.

“The world is not our project. Is it our God-given opportunity,” Steiner Ball concluded. “So let God’s blessing shine. When we do so we give others permission to do the same.”

First service of Annual Conference

The evening service was the first at Annual Conference, held June 4-7 at the Florence Center. It began at 7 p.m. as incoming provisional and full elders and deacons joined their counterparts processing into the arena.

Led by Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, resident bishop, clergy entered singing “Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven” and “O God, Our Help in Ages Past.”

Holston led the greeting and prayer, then reaffirmed the baptism and common call to ministry of all gathered.

Next, those to be commissioned and ordained were presented to the body by Barbara Ware, conference lay leader; the Rev. Morris Waymer, chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry; the Rev. Mary Johnson, chair of the Order of Elders; the Rev. Meg Jiunnies, chair of the Order of Deacons; and the Rev. Leatha Brown, BOM registrar.

Holston then conducted the general examination, confirming their calling and reminding them of the task before them.

“Remember you were called to serve rather than to be served, to proclaim the faith of the church and no other, to look after the concerns of God above all,” Holston said.

The candidates collectively affirmed their beliefs and accepted the covenant before all.

After the anthem, “Here I Am, Lord,” by the choir from Central United Methodist Church in Florence, provisional elder candidate Darlene Moore Richardson led the body in the Apostles’ Creed. Full elder candidate Louis Randolph Ashley led the first reading, from Genesis 1:26-31. Woongchul Daniel Ra, full elder candidate, read the Gospel, Matthew 5:1-12, in Korean.

Next, Holston introduced Steiner Ball, on “Original Blessing; Hewing Hope.”

22 commissioned or ordained

The service continued with the commissioning of provisional members—five preparing for ordained ministry as elders and two as deacons—including the prayer of commissioning and laying on of hands.

Next, the sole candidate to be ordained as deacon stood and faced Bishop Holston, who examined her for ordination, then offered prayer, a laying on of hands and their stole.

Next, the 13 candidates to be ordained as elders stood and faced Holston, who examined them for ordination as elder and offered a prayer. “As these persons are ordained by God and the church for the office and work of elders to which we believe them to be called by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for them,” Holston said.

Then came the laying on of hands. Each new elder also received his or her stole.

Lastly, Holston recognized the orders of one elder as he transferred from another denomination.

“After due examination of your call and ministry in another part of Christ’s holy church, we now welcome you to this communion, Holston said. “You have given assurance of your faith and Christian experience. You have renewed the vows of your ordination and embraced our own, committing yourself to accept and uphold faithfully the doctrine, liturgy and discipline of The United

Methodist Church. We rejoice that you have been called to serve among us, and pray that God may guide your ministry.”

The 13 presented for ordination as elder were: Louis Randolph Ashley, Peter Kent Berntson, James Thornton Brown II, Carsten Aubrey Bryant, Mason Heyward Cantey, Scott Stephen Gilmer, Shirley Peterson Gordon, Alisha Christine Hansen, Joseph Daniel Kovas, Cameron Thomas Levi, Woongchul Daniel Ra, Amanda Geddings Richardson and Cynthia Anne Rumsey.

The one presented for ordination as deacon was Margaret Rosa Cantey.

The five presented for commissioning as provisional elders were Arthur Lindburg Gamble, Darlene Moore Richardson, Leo Wesley Roy, Billy Keith Stewart and Steven Matthew Turner.

The two presented as provisional deacons were Kim Moultrie Bryant and Laura McCoy Geloni.

And presented for recognition of orders in The United Methodist Church from another denomination: John Clarence Elmore Jr.

Honoring 38 retirees

Next, Annual Conference recognized the 38 clergy who retired in 2023. The Rev. Melton Arant read the names of the retirees as their photos displayed onscreen.

Holston offered a word of encouragement for the retirees, as well as a prayer for the ministry they lived.

“We give thanks for the ministry of these women and men, and for the ways in which you have ministered to us through them,” Holston prayed over them.”

The retirement class of 2023 is as follows: Emmanuel Bruce Adams, Debra Ann Armstrong, Joe Lee Blackwelder, Isiah Brown, Wallace Michael Burgess, Jimmy Lee Burks, Daniel Walker Chamblee, Raymond Frank Cook Jr., Lillie Kerns Davis, John Dicks, Frances Debra Dowdle, Elizabeth Burgess Drennen, Rebecca Lewis Forrest, Benjamin Graham, Susan Thurston Henry-Crowe, Ronald Alan Hoeksema, Lindora Flemming James, Sandra Smith King, Steven Michael King, Joe Nichols Long Jr., Susan Biggert Maddox, Robert Lee Malachi, Neal Alexander McDonald Jr., Daniel Gilbert O’Connor, Burton Lee Ott, Scott Wayne Petry, William Grover Putnam, Karen Jean Richmond, Timothy Julian Rogers, Deborah Luther Teagan, Charles Eugene Teal, Cheryl Dyke Toothe, Arthur Desport Vick Jr., John Henry Vickers III, James Timothy Whited, Charles Lionel Wilbanks, Michael Leonard Written and Ralph Conrad Young.

Beacons of light

The evening ended with the ceremonial “passing of the mantle,” in which a representative of the retiring class passes a stole, or mantle, from their shoulders to those of new class of ordinands. The Rev. Susan Thurston Henry-Crowe represented the retiring class, and the Rev. Joseph Daniel Kovas represented the newly ordained class.

Holston asked the retirees to gather around the ordinands as the Rev. Joe Long, representing the retiring class, prayed for the new class. “And now Lord we ask your blessing to be upon those who follow after us, those who will continue the race we have run, just as we continued the race ran by those who came before us,” Long prayed. “May their lives be beacons in a dark, dangerous and harsh world.”

In his sending forth, Holston expressed deep gratitude for what he called “a high and mighty time tonight,” as well as for the excellence of the Central UMC Choir.

The offering of the evening was collected for the South Carolina Seminary Students Scholarship, established in 1991. The scholarship fund gave two \$6,000 scholarships this past year—to Christopher Charles Key and Elizabeth Scott Loughran.

Leave A Legacy To Change Lives

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Trust God, love people

Daily Praise and Prayer services keep AC2023 on track spiritually



The Rev. Kim Moultrie Bryant brings a word Monday.



The Rev. Cameron Thomas Levi lifts up Mark 4:35-41.



The Rev. Tae Suk Park speaks about love in church.

Photos by Matt Brodie

By Allison Trussell

FLORENCE—Daily Praise and Prayer services led by young pastors asked delegates to trust God and love people despite obstacles and troubles.

Annual Conference held “Praise and Prayer” services each day of business this year, plus two early morning communion services.

Monday’s Praise and Prayer service was held at the end of the day and was led by the Rev. Kim Moultrie Bryant, a 2023 provisional deacon from the Charleston District.

With Philippians 4:1-7 as the Scripture, Bryant asked delegates what they do when things get difficult. During a trip to the emergency room with her father, Bryant was asked to step out and wait to make room for equipment.

“I replied sure and walked out trusting God would guide them in what needed to be done.” But as soon as she got to the waiting room, she began to worry: “Should I have asked more questions? Asked for more explanations?”

Nevertheless, she told herself not to worry and placed it in God’s hands.

“Our world introduces worries and anxiety, but Paul’s letter reminds us to stand firm in the Lord,” Bryant said. “I want us to be reminded that when things get tough, we can rejoice. ... We thank God when we rejoice ... we rejoice in knowing God is right there and stronger than our weaknesses. God has designed us to need him moment by moment.”

Bryant reminded delegates that Paul was incarcerated when he wrote this letter, but he still encourages the reader to trust and rejoice.

In these troubling times, she said, “We will rejoice for the chance to trust God.”

On Tuesday morning’s Praise and Prayer, the Rev. Cameron Thomas Levi, a 2023 ordained elder and pastor of Liberty Chapel-Friendship Charge in the Florence District, offered delegates a different way of reading Scripture. Lectio

Divina offers listeners three chances to hear, listen and question a passage. Levi offered Mark 4:35-41 three times to the delegates.

“I’ve always believed I would fit right in with Jesus’ disciples,” he began.

As a middle child, he is good at pointing out injustice and at righteous complaining. In this passage, Jesus tells the disciples that they’re going to go to the other side. A storm comes up and the disciples are frightened.

“What draws me into this passage is the very real way that while I might not be in the boat, I stand here and storms are all around me swamping my boat. Their words become my words: “Do you not care that we are perishing?”

He reminded delegates of the camp song, “Going on a bear hunt,” with its refrain of “Gotta go through it.” Our great desire is to avoid danger, all hindrance. But, following Jesus means getting in that boat, going through the storms. “Hope happens not by avoiding the cross, but by seeing it through to the other side.”

Where are you this morning? Levi asked. Are you still standing on the shore looking for better weather or are you on the boat in the midst of a storm wondering if Jesus will wake up and do something?

The next verse, Levi noted, was “‘They came to the other side.’ Jesus makes a way where we see none, and with the disciples, we will ask, ‘Who is this that the wind and sea obey?’”

Wednesday morning’s Praise and Prayer service was led by the Rev. Tae Suk Park, a 2022 ordained elder and associate pastor at Surfside UMC, Marion District.

Park celebrated the week it had been, noting that this was his first Annual Conference as an ordained elder, and he had the honor of leading a morning devotion and took part of approving the separation of his home church—the same church who affirmed his calling and supported him through the process.

Last month, he took a vacation and visited an out-of-state, non-UMC Korean church as a guest. His friend offered to be his “guide,” but he scoffed that he was an ordained elder and among his people!

However, the church was huge with multiple buildings, and he soon found himself lost. Despite there being so many people and it being obvious that he was lost, no one stopped and asked if he needed help.

“I missed my family at Surfside,” he said, laughing.

As a pastor in a cross-cultural appointment, he is used to being lost and out of place, but here he was in a service with his culture, his language and his people.

“Never in my life have I felt so alone and out of place. But I learned that my sense of belonging doesn’t come from a culture, but from the community who loves me, the people who love me. The only place I truly felt I belonged [growing up] was the church, where I was loved.”

Paul tells the Thessalonians to love each other, to hold people up and to rejoice always, to pray without ceasing. This is the will of God for you (Thessalonians 5:15-18).

How do we do this? Park asked the delegates. He smiled and said, “If you see a lost Korean boy, help him!”

The church, the community of believers, should care enough about people to listen, acknowledge them, love them so they feel the love, he said.

“The tenet of our faith is this: To know God, to do good, to love. Where God exists, love exists. God is love. And by our love, others will know we are God’s disciples.”

Annual Conference also hosted two early-morning communion services. One, led by preacher Claire Van Der Berg with the Rev. Norma Bartelle as liturgist, the Rev. Louis Ashley as celebrant and Kendrick Huggins as musician, was Tuesday, June 6. The other, led by preacher the Rev. Gerald Clinkscales with the Rev. Margaret Wilkes as liturgist, the Rev. John Elmore as celebrant and the Rev. William Altman as musician, was Wednesday, June 7.

AC: COE recommends 6 percent raise for clergy

By Allison Trussell

FLORENCE—Annual Conference has approved a 6 percent cost of living increase for South Carolina clergy next year.

During the Tuesday morning business session of Annual Conference, Cassie Watson, vice chairman of the Commission for Equitable Compensation, presented that commission’s report, which recommended the raises.

The commission recommended a 6 percent cost of living increase to the minimum salary beginning Jan. 1, 2024. That raises the minimum salary for full-time clergy appointments in the local church for the following: members in full connection, elders and deacons, from \$49,350 to \$52,311; provisional, commissioned and associate members from \$44,862 to \$47,554; and for licensed local pastors from \$41,619 to \$44,116.

Watson noted the increase is in part because of the national economy and would allow the conference to offer competitive salaries. The written report said the Social Security costs of living in 2023 is 8.7 percent.

The commission requested a line item apportionment of \$565,000 to fund the operational budget. Watson said this was the same amount requested in 2022 and 2023. He assured the delegates that the commission will make best use of the funds provided.

“Those funds allow pastors to be placed in churches that otherwise would be unable to afford them. Your generosity has not been taken lightly by this commission,” he said.

He ended the report by encouraging



Photo by Matt Brodie

Cassie Watson, vice chairman of the Commission for Equitable Compensation, presented the commission’s report.

delegates and churches to make sure their pastors take their due vacations and time off in order to serve their congregations and communities to their fullest.

The report was received and approved with no discussion.



Photo by Matt Brodie

31 new local pastors

On Monday afternoon, June 4, the Board of Ordained Ministry celebrated in a brief service 31 men and women who recently completed the Licensing School of Pastoral Ministry. Barbara Ware, the Rev. Morris Waymer and the Rev. Brenda Washington presented the candidates, who were examined by the bishop and then authorized for licensing. Licensed were Christopher Jason Allen, George Judson Barnes, Robert Leonard Brock, William Joel Campbell, Jeffrey Paul Cila, Athena Nesmith Dickey-Cathcart, James Pearlie Creel Jr., Darlene Dellinger, Henry James Dixon Jr., Mark Edward English, Gary Wade Finch, Rachel Elizabeth Headden, Janice Hayes Holliday, Karen Lail Jones, Steven Robert Lapham, Gary Wayne Light, Gary Newton Lowe, Thomas Marvin McCoy, Sean Michael O’Neil, Frankie Dean Owens, Jeremy Nathaniel Phipps, Ruth Anne Pitt, John Sterling Poole, Richard Arnold Powell, James Weldon Pressley, James Keith Sellers, Jason Edward Taylor, Marvin Taylor Jr., Patrick John Taylor, Brenda Lee Toms and Nelson Keith Yates. Above are those licensed.

Annual Conference closes three churches, changes 36 charge lines

By Allison Trussell

FLORENCE—In one of the more somber events of this year's Annual Conference, the body closed three churches and changed 36 charge lines.

The Rev. Fran Elrod, secretary of the Cabinet, presented three United Methodist churches for closure during the Wednesday morning business session, June 7.

"This decision is both solemn and celebratory," Elrod said. "We mourn the closure, but celebrate the faithfulness of the congregations."

Lockhart UMC, Union, in the Spartanburg District will close June 18 according to the resolution presented.

Samuel Webber, delegate from Lockhart-Wesley Chapel Charge, asked for a moment of personal privilege and offered a brief history of the church. His grandfather was chairman of the trustees when the church was opened, and his name, Samuel Pinckney Webber III, will be on the closing paperwork.

"It's been an honor to represent the church," he said.

Unity UMC, Union, in the Spartanburg District, is also closing. Its pastor, the Rev. Mary Nichols, commended the people who have paid 100 percent apportionments despite their small numbers and continue to be active in the conference and the district.

The last church was Bowers Chapel UMC, Florence, in the Florence District, whose resolution was approved in September 2022 and confirmed by the conference.

Members and friends of the three churches were invited to stand as the Bishop Jonathan Holston offered a prayer: "Gracious Lord, we recognize the legacy of your grace and mercy goes far beyond what we can imagine. ... We celebrate the legacy of these churches and what they represent as part of the fabric of our Christian faith. As we consider what we are doing, we honor the pastors and laity who made these churches whole."



The Rev. Fran Elrod, secretary of the Cabinet, presented three United Methodist churches for closure.

36 charge line changes

Elrod also presented multiple charge line changes to Annual Conference delegates.

Those changes were approved during the Wednesday morning business session with no discussion or debate.

In the Anderson District, the Chiquola-Donalds Charge was dissolved. Chiquola became a station church, and Donalds was attached to Trinity, Honea Path, to form the Trinity-Honea Path Charge.

The Florence District had the most changes with 11.

The Elijah-St. Luke Charge was dissolved, with both churches becoming station churches.

The Liberty-Friendship Charge was dissolved; both churches became station churches.

The Pamplico-Prospect Charge was dissolved, with both churches becoming station churches.

The Cades-Cameron Charge was dissolved, with both churches becoming station



Samuel Webber, delegate from Lockhart-Wesley Chapel Charge, offered a brief history of the church.

churches.

The Ebenezer-First Charge was dissolved; both churches became station churches.

The Kingstree Circuit was dissolved, making Cedar Swamp and Millwood station churches.

The New Zion Charge was dissolved. New Zion and Trinity became station churches.

The Pine Grove-Salem Charge was dissolved with both churches become station churches.

The Trio Charge was dissolved. Trio, Earle and Sutton became station churches.

The Turbeville Charge was dissolved. Pine Grove and Shiloh became station churches.

Bowers Chapel was closed ad interim Sept. 15, 2022.

The Greenville District had two changes. The Bramlett Charge was dissolved, making Bramlett and Gray Court station churches; and the St. John-McBee Charge was dissolved, making both churches station churches.

In the Hartsville District, four charge line changes were approved.

The Kellybell-Sandy Bluff Charge was dissolved, making both churches station churches.

The Mount Beulah-New Hope Charge was dissolved, making both churches station churches.

The Oswego Circuit was dissolved. Clark became a station church, and Mount Moriah and St. Mark will continue as the Oswego Circuit.

The New Market-Tabernacle Charge was dissolved. Tabernacle was removed from the Darlington Cooperative Parish and made a station church, and New Market was made a station church.

In the Marion District, three changes oc-

curred.

The Bethel-Ebenezer Charge was dissolved, making both churches station churches.

The Shiloh-Smyrna Charge was dissolved, making both churches station churches.

The Marlboro Circuit was dissolved, with New Hope and Oak Grove becoming station churches.

Three changes were approved in the Orangeburg District.

The Orange Circuit was dissolved. Ebenezer becomes a station church, and North was attached to Trinity to form the North Circuit.

The Trinity-Limestone Charge was dissolved. Limestone became a station church, and Trinity was attached to North to form the North Circuit.

The Rowesville Charge was dissolved, making Cattle Creek and Bethel station churches.

Five changes were approved in the Rock Hill District.

The Bethel-Armenia Charge was dissolved; both churches become station churches.

The Chester Circuit was dissolved; Capers Chapel, New Hope and Wesley Memorial were made station churches.

The Hickory Grove Charge was dissolved; Canaan and Mount Vernon become station churches.

The Tabernacle and Bethel Charge was dissolved with both churches becoming station churches.

The Catawba-El Bethel Charge was dissolved with both churches becoming station churches.

Spartanburg District had four changes.

The Ben Avon-Roebuck Charge was dissolved; both churches were made station churches.

The Whitmire-Carlisle Charge was dissolved with both churches becoming station churches.

The Lockhart-Wesley Charge was dissolved. Lockhart was closed effective June 18, 2023, and Wesley Chapel becomes a station church.

Unity was closed.

In the Walterboro District, three changes were approved.

The Cottageville Charge was dissolved, making Rehoboth and Cottageville station churches.

The St. Paul-Tillman Charge was dissolved, making both churches station churches.

The Ridgeville Charge was dissolved, making Mount Tabor, Trinity and Cypress station churches.

'No time to play small'

South Carolina's episcopal nominee, the Rev. Ken Nelson, took a moment onstage Tuesday at Annual Conference to thank the body for their tremendous support. Nelson, who is both conference secretary and Orangeburg District superintendent, was the first-elected clergyman in 2019 and the unanimous nominee of the delegation for the episcopacy, a nomination also approved by the full Annual Conference. While Nelson was not elected at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference in November, he said the experience was heartening and he is filled with gratitude at the support he received. Nelson especially thanked a few people: Bishop Holston, the delegation, his brother Lewis and Bishop James Swanson. "There is work to be done in our church that we are to be the body," Nelson said to a standing ovation. "We don't have time to play small or to be petty. We don't have time to be bitter when we can be better. So let me be clear: We are one body. We will not be divided by small issues or small mindedness."

Photo by Matt Brodie



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Native American Ministries

Powwows: Native American social gatherings

By LaShella Kirkland

Social gatherings, ceremonies and rituals are an integral and spiritual component of our very beings as Native Americans/First Nations Peoples. They are a celebration of our interconnectedness with the Creator and with all things and with all creations.

Many of our ceremonial gatherings have provided us with the strength to deal with life's difficulties as well as honoring major milestones in life, such as birth, puberty, marriage and even death. Often these gatherings may only include family members, while others may include neighboring tribal communities.

Also, there are gatherings to celebrate the arrival of the coming seasons. The Green Corn ceremonies are held at the end of the late summer and coincide with the ripening of the corn crops. It was practiced by the Eastern Woodlands peoples and by the Southeastern tribes: Creek, Cherokee, Seminole, Yuchi, Iroquois and others. The ceremony usually lasts for three days, and even though specific activities vary from tribe to tribe, the common belief is that the corn is not to be eaten until the Great Spirit is given thanks. Thanks is given for the corn, the rain, the sun and for a good harvest. Green Corn ceremonies are still held today.

But the most familiar social gathering is the powwow. In fact, it was where I was first re-introduced to my own heritage.

As a child, I experienced a lot of bullying from the other kids in school because of my appearance. I often went to Grandma Mary for answers. I was such a curious child she nicknamed me "Why and How Come." Of course, I went to her with all of my questions about race because, like all grandparents, she would have the answers. So she sat me down and told me about our racial background, which included Cherokee, African-American and Irish ancestries. The conversations were as endless and fascinating as was her knowledge.

One day I made a promise that I would "continue our line." She replied, "I know."

The opportunity to honor my promise presented itself in October 1993 while I was living in Wilmington, North Carolina. I moved there after graduating from East Carolina University to work in the movie industry.

One day, while working on the movie set for the Matlock series, I was approached by a young woman. She asked me the annoying eye-rolling question, "What are you?" Before I could snap on her, she started laughing. There was an issue with some of the camera equipment, so she and I began to share our experiences, both good and bad, because we were of the same racial background, except she was Waccamaw-Siouan, a tribe I had never heard of. She invited me to go with her to her tribe's powwow that weekend in Buckhead. I said yes and then asked, "What's a powwow?"

That weekend was to be the first of hundreds of these events for me.

What is a powwow? The word itself is a modern term, from the Narragansett word "pow waw," which means spiritual leader. As to how these gatherings started, some believe



Kirkland

powwows originated with the War Dance Societies of the Ponca and other Southern Plains Tribes. Another theory is that when Indian tribes were forced by the government onto reservations, they were sometimes made to have dances for the public to "come and see." Before each dance, they were led through town in a parade that became known as the Grand Entry, which is still used today.

Dancing, singing and drumming have all been very important aspects of Native American life and culture and have served as ways of healing and connecting us to our past, present and future. These gatherings may be specific to a certain tribe or intertribal; however, it is a way for us to fellowship with other Native peoples and non-Native peoples. Some of the songs that are sung today are sung in traditional Native languages.

The powwow begins with the Grand Entry into the arena, either outside or inside. Everyone is asked to stand as the flags are brought in, which include the U.S. Flag, tribal flags, POW Flag, and the Eagle Staffs of the various participating tribes. The flags are carried by veterans. The U.S. flag is still held in honor despite the horrible past treatment of Native Peoples for two reasons: One, it is to honor all of the ancestors who fought against this country, and two, it is to honor those who have fought for this country, which includes millions of Indians.

Following the veterans are the tribal chiefs, princesses, elders and event organizers. Next, the male dancers, and all of the male dance categories, followed by the women and all of the women's categories. Once everyone is in the arena, and in the circle, the song ends, and an honor song is sung to honor the flags and the veterans.

After the honor song, a prayer is said, and after the prayer, the dancing continues. Powwows can last for hours or for days. Sometimes there are dance and drum competitions. Even though the styles of dancing and clothing regalia may have changed, the meaning and importance of these gatherings have not. It's all about healing, connecting and sharing through our songs and dance.

We are not a stagnant culture but a vibrant and thriving culture.

Kirkland is the Native American representative trainer for the Native American Committee of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. She is a member of Littleton Street UMC, Camden.



United Women in Faith

by Vanessa Key

Mission u explores the good news of the kin-dom

Join us at Mission u from July 20-22 at Spartanburg Methodist College as we explore the good news and what it means for our lives.

Jesus' teachings in the Gospels proclaim the good news of the kin-dom, or reign (*basileia*), of God. In fact, Jesus mentions the kin-dom 90 times in the Synoptic Gospels.

What does the Bible tell us about God's basileia and why do we call it the kin-dom? For Jesus, the kin-dom was not simply something to talk about but something we could live and experience. From the Lord's Prayer to the beatitudes to the parables, this good news is at the heart of Jesus' preaching, teaching and ministry.

Come! Let's explore together the heart of Jesus' good news and what fresh vision it offers us as we seek to be in mission today.

Our 2023 Mission u will offer the following curriculum available at <https://uwfaith.org/resources>:

org/resources:

"Living the Kin-dom: Exploring the Lord's Prayer as a Spiritual Practice for Social Transformation," by Riva Tabela (Adult)

"Seek and You Shall Find: Living in the Kin-dom," by Rachel Mosher (Youth)

Please see the June Mission Echo, available at <https://www.umcsc.org/women>, for registration information. This event is not limited to United Women in Faith. Bring friends, pastors and United Methodist Men. There are scholarships available for first timers or attendees younger than age 40.

Contact me at 803-917-4803 or van-gekey1@aol.com with any questions or for scholarship information.

Continuing education is 0.8 credits. There is training available to take this study to your church or other small groups.

Key is dean of Mission u.

Epworth Children's Home

It is mostly about our brains

Neuroimaging technologies such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) provide increased insight about how the human brain develops and how early experiences affect that development. One area that continues to receive increasing research attention involves the effects of abuse and neglect on the developing brain, especially during infancy and early childhood. Much of this research is providing biological explanations for what practitioners have long been describing in psychological, emotional and related behavioral terms.

Scientific evidence now points to altered brain functioning as a result of early abuse and neglect. This growing body of knowledge has many implications for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect as well as the treatment of children, youth and adults who continue to suffer complications from early trauma (maltreatment).

Epworth Children's Home has been a trauma informed center for 17 years. This means that all of the programs, treatments and activities are conducted while applying a "trauma lens" to the model of care at Epworth. To continue to improve the lives of all who enter Epworth's umbrella of care, Epworth's staff members commit to understand how childhood stress impacts children and how to employ the most effective trauma informed evidence-based practices to achieve these desired outcomes. This model of care also seeks to address the potential impact of adult traumatic stress on children in their care as well as how to help mitigate the impact of trauma by promoting factors related to child and family resilience after trauma.

Part of this work involves an understanding of human brain development. Brain development, or learning, is the process of creating, strengthening and discarding con-

nections among neurons (brain cells). These connections are called synapses. Synapses organize the brain by forming pathways that connect the parts of the brain that govern everything we do, from breathing and sleeping to thinking and feeling. The development of synapses occurs at an astounding rate during a child's early years in response to a particular experience. At its peak, the cerebral cortex of the brain of a healthy toddler may create 2 million synapses per second. By the age of 2, a child's brain will have approximately 100 trillion synapses, many more than is needed.

Depending on a child's experiences, some synapses are strengthened, and some are gradually discarded (pruned). By adolescence about half of a child's synapses have been discarded, leaving the approximate number the child will have for the remainder of his life.

Childhood abuse, neglect or other forms of trauma may impair the synapses forming and strengthening process. This, in turn, may result in the ability for the brain to fully develop which, in turn, may impair emotional and behavioral regulation, learning and school performance, self-concept and social development. Other negative conditions may include the inability to respond to nurturing and kindness, a reduced ability to respond to positive stimuli and a reduced ability to interact with others in a positive way which, in turn, may result in complicated social interactions.

Epworth continues to be a leader in recognizing and employing targeted interventions that bring the latest scientific understanding of human development, plus the gift of compassion to create an environment of hope and healing for individuals who have been wounded by life.

Tabernacle women support Backdoor Buddies

United Women in Faith of Tabernacle UMC Lancaster sponsored a churchwide mission project to collect items for Backdoor Buddies, a local mission at Ray's Flowers in Lancaster. Tabernacle collected 32 bags of food items and 15 personal care bags.



Photo courtesy of Jodie Plyler, Tabernacle UWF President

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 'We are called to be God's people'

From Page 1

Day Two: Two new resolutions, 31 new local pastors

Day Two—Monday, June 5—began with a rousing opening worship service preached by Holston that emphasized letting God have God's way in God's own perfect time.

"We're living in the midst of unresolved tension, that tension of who we are, who we say we are and who we want to be. In the midst of our fast food, drive-thru, one-day-Amazon-delivery world, we recognize patience is hard," Holston said.

God wants us to pause, even though it can be so difficult to cultivate that kind of patience. Sometimes the chaos threatens, and we can't seem to see past it.

"Like an unrelenting, unwavering, unyielding storm that seems like it will never end, it seems like everything goes on and on and on, and we try to make sense of it, try to take control of it, but the more we try, it seems to escape us even more," Holston said.

But today, and for this Annual Conference session, let's all try to breathe and believe, Holston said, and let God hew a stone of hope in each one of us.

After opening worship, Holston called the business session to order, then recognized Conference Secretary the Rev. Ken Nelson, who offered organizational motions.

Florence District Superintendent Terry Fleming brought warm welcomes on behalf of the churches and people in his district, noting how great it feels to gather again in person as thousands lift their voices together in song.

"Most are aware this Annual Conference will be difficult, and none of us knows what our connection will look like when we are through," Fleming said. "But, my friends, when we are through we will all, every one of us, still be a blessed and beloved child of God."

Nelson introduced the consent calendar, and the Rev. Michael Hood brought the report from the Committee on Standing Rules, noting their report was so short he didn't even bring his harmonica on stage like he normally does. The only change was the removal of all references to The Methodist Oaks because it was sold several years ago.

Ed Roper, of Bethel UMC, Spartanburg, asked from the floor if the conference would provide a list of the churches wishing to separate, and Holston explained it would be provided the next day when the business was slated to be included as the report of the Conference Board of Trustees.

After a lunch break, Joseph James introduced the slate of names for various boards and agencies from the Committee on Nominations, which would be voted upon on the final day of Annual Conference.

Then, the Rev. Mitch Houston, chair of the Conference Council of Finance and Administration, presented the budget for 2024, recommended at \$13.2 million. That number is a \$2.4 million cut in the budget, 15 percent down from the \$15.6 million 2023 budget, based on an anticipated financial shortfall because of the number of churches wishing to separate from the denomination.

Next, the Rev. Steve Simoneaux brought the report from the Committee on Resolutions and Appeals. Of the six resolutions in the pre-Annual Conference packet, only two were valid, Simoneaux said. Four—the ones from South Carolina Reconciling Ministries Network—were ruled out of order because they were proposed by an unofficial conference group and not an individual.

The other two—a Resolution to Unambiguously Oppose the Death Penalty and a Resolution on Gun Violence—the committee recommended support as they generally reflect UMC principles. The death penalty resolution passed as-is and the gun violence resolution passed with an amendment after debate. However, there was much discussion and dismay expressed when the body learned



Photo by Matt Brodie

AC passes reduced budget

After some debate, Annual Conference passed a significantly reduced budget for 2024—\$13.2 million, down 15 percent (\$2.4 million) from the \$15.6 million 2023 budget, based on an anticipated financial shortfall because of the number of churches separating from the denomination. Here, the Rev. Mitch Houston, chair of the Conference Council of Finance and Administration, presents the budget Monday for the first reading; the body approved it on the last day of conference. "CF&A decided we did not think it would be right, fair or equitable for the churches who were not separating to have to make up the apportionments of the churches who are separating," Houston said. He said their goal is to keep apportionments as level as they can for the next few years. "This is a process, folks," Houston said. "It's not going to be easy. Y'all pray for us."

four resolutions before them had been ruled out of order. (See article, Page 2.)

After a break, the body heard from the new president of Claflin University, Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack, and the new director of Epworth Children's Home, Beth Williams.

The Rev. Stephen Love then brought the report of the Cabinet.

"We're in this together," Love said, lifting up the work of the Extended Cabinet behind the scenes to do God's mission in South Carolina.

He said that in spite of all that is happening, from separating churches to any other obstacles, we're all on the same team and we all have the same leader—our episcopal leader and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Next, Barbara Ware brought the Lay Leadership report, introducing the new executive team: Lisa Fusco, Cassie Watson and Jeff Fogle.

The Board of Ordained Ministry celebrated in a brief service 31 men and women who recently completed the Licensing School of Pastoral Ministry (see article, Page 7), and Jim Salley gave an update on Africa University, what he called "a United Methodist dream come true" on the cusp of hosting its 29th graduation ceremony.

The day ended with a Service of Praise and Prayer led by the Rev. Kim Bryant.

Day Three: 'We are one body'

After a service of communion and a morning Praise and Prayer service, Day Three, June 6, began with a report from the Commission on Equitable Compensation. On their recommendation, clergy will see a 6 percent cost of living increase in 2024 because of the large amount of inflation recently.

The Rev. Chris Lollis and Dr. Valerie Brooks-Madden shared changes from the Board of Pension and Health Benefits next (see article, Page 2).

Next, Nelson shared results of the two offerings held at Annual Conference. The collection Sunday night raised \$6,680 for the South Carolina Seminary Students Scholarship, and the collection Monday morning raised \$8,465 for The Bishop Joseph B. Bethea Scholarship.

The Rev. Millie Nelson Smith and the Rev. Ross Chellis gave the report of Conference Connectional Ministries, detailing the wide variety of things all who are part of the group do to be stewards of the vision of the annual conference.

Next came the report of South Carolina's elected delegation to General and Jurisdictional conferences. Delegation Chair the Hon. Jackie Jenkins informed the body of their work at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, electing three new bishops

including South Carolina pastor Dr. Robin Dease, now appointed as bishop of the North Georgia Conference of the UMC.

South Carolina is represented by 32 people elected in 2019—half clergy, half laity—who represented the conference at SEJ; 16 (half clergy, half laity) will also represent South Carolina at General Conference, scheduled for April 23-May 3, 2024 in Charlotte.

Jenkins also lifted up South Carolina's episcopal nominee, Nelson, who was not elected as bishop at SEJ.

Nelson, who is both conference secretary and Orangeburg District superintendent, expressed profound appreciation for the tremendous support he received from South Carolina United Methodists. He especially thanked a few people: Bishop Holston, the delegation, Jim Salley, Martha and Dave Braddon, his brother Lewis, and Bishop James Swanson.

"There is work to be done in our church that we are to be the body," Nelson said to a standing ovation. "We don't have time to play small or to be petty. We don't have time to be bitter when we can be better. So let me be clear: We are one body. We will not be divided by small issues or small mindedness. We will be defined by who we are as baptized Christians living into the fullness of our faith."

Next, Dr. Roger Gramling, retired elder, proposed a motion from the floor that would ask the Standing Rules Committee to consider amending Standing Rule 70 given the difficulty Monday over the rejection of four out-of-order resolutions, in spite of the fact that they were submitted before deadline.

Prior to Annual Conference 2024, Gramling moved, the Standing Rules Committee would consider an amendment to SR70 that would authorize the conference secretary, in consultation with the conference parliamentarian, to review all resolutions submitted under the provisions of SR70 to determine if such resolutions are properly before the annual conference for consideration. If not, Gramling motioned, they would advise the resolution submitters that the deadline for the resubmission of corrected versions would be extended to March 25. The committee would report their consideration of this amendment to the 2024 session.

After a second, Gramling's motion passed overwhelmingly with a hand vote.

Body allows 113 churches to separate

At 2 p.m. Tuesday, annual conference reconvened for perhaps the most anticipated part of this year's session: a vote on the churches who wished to separate from the UMC over sexuality and other concerns.

These churches, whose name and total

number were kept confidential until that day, had gone through the Local Church Discernment Process earlier this year and voted with a two-thirds majority to separate from the denomination. The process was open to congregations who believed the denomination has not upheld its stated doctrine on issues of human sexuality, which is that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching," though the church "implores families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends."

After both dialogue and deep prayer, the body approved the separation of the 113 churches, which represent almost 12 percent of the 958 South Carolina UMCs.

(See article, Page 1.)

AC remembers 49 souls

Day Three concluded Tuesday with a poignant memorial service conducted by the Rev. Tim Rogers, recently retired Marion District superintendent, who brought a message of deep honor and remembrance as South Carolina United Methodists celebrated the lives of 49 clergy and spouses who died in last year.

His sermon was titled "They Were Sent—And It Was Beautiful." (See article, Page 3.)

Final day: Budget approved and appointments fixed

After a communion service and a morning Praise and Prayer, the fourth and final day of Annual Conference 2023 began at 9:30 a.m. with the adoption of the consent calendar, followed by three non-separation-oriented church closings (Lockhart UMC, Union; Bowers Chapel, Florence; and Unity UMC, Union) and the changing of 36 charge lines. (See article, Page 8.)

Next the body approved the CF&A's proposed budget for 2024 of \$13.2 million.

In his report, CF&A Chair Houston celebrated the achievement of 89.2 percent of apportionments paid by churches in 2022, as well as recognized the district who achieved the largest percentage point increase (Hartsville District, with a 3.83 percent increase over the year prior) and the district with the highest percentage of apportionments paid (Orangeburg District, at 98.23 percent).

Houston said CF&A doesn't have exact numbers, but they believe approximately \$2.3 million will be lost in apportionment dollars because of the 113 separating churches who have left the South Carolina conference.

However, Houston noted, these churches were required to pay an additional year of apportionments as a condition of the separation, which will help offset the loss as they work to adjust and respond financially.

Various people spoke from the floor asking that local churches consider additional support of advance special ministries, campus ministries and Epworth Children's Home, including Anne Walker, director of the Alston-Wilkes Society.

The Rev. Bob Huggins made a motion that the conference trustees set aside funds for Epworth given the loss he suspects they will incur because of the separating churches, but the motion was ruled out of order because the annual conference is not permitted to direct the Board of Trustees in this way.

Andy Morris, lay member, made a motion that, given the anticipated financial shortfall, the conference eliminate two districts of the 12 across South Carolina. Discussion ensued, and Houston and Holston explained dialogue about this is already in the works but that it will take some time over this next year to assess properly which districts, whether this is the best option and how this can be implemented effectively without negatively impacting current ministry.

Morris said he would withdraw his motion if he could get assurance that a report will be given next year on such a reduction.

While the motion could not be withdrawn

Continued, next page

113 CHURCHES LEAVE: 'God's grace will cover this situation'

From Page 1



Photo by Matt Brodie

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston wipes his eyes during an emotional prayer just before the closure vote.

Churches approved to separate

The churches that have closed in separation are as follows (organized by district):

- | | |
|---|--|
| St. Andrew (Anderson District/Easley) | McLeod Chapel (Hartsville/Rembert) |
| Chiquola (Anderson/Honea Path) | St. John/Rembert (Hartsville/Rembert) |
| Bells (Anderson/Abbeville) | St. John/Sumter (Hartsville/Sumter) |
| Salem (Anderson/Salem) | St. Mark's/Sumter (Broad Street) (Hartsville/Sumter) |
| Aldersgate (Charleston District/N Charleston) | St. Matthew/Bishopville (Hartsville/Bishopville) |
| Charleston Korean (Charleston/N Charleston) | Beulah (Hartsville/Camden) |
| Friendship (Charleston/Cross) | Trinity/Andrews (Marion District/Andrews) |
| Pinopolis (Charleston/Pinopolis) | Wayne (Marion/Georgetown) |
| Point Hope (Charleston/Mount Pleasant) | Bethel/Georgetown (Marion/Andrews) |
| Columbia Korean (Columbia District/Columbia) | Aynor (Marion/Aynor) |
| Rehoboth/Leesville (Columbia/Batesburg Leesville) | Rehoboth/Aynor (Marion/Galivants Ferry) |
| Chapin (Columbia/Chapin) | First/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) |
| Lebanon (Columbia/Eastover) | Zoan (Marion/Loris) |
| Mount Horeb (Columbia/Lexington) | Antioch/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) |
| Pond Branch (Columbia/Gilbert) | Christ/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) |
| Cades (Florence District/Cades) | Pisgah (Marion/Aynor) |
| Cameron (Florence/Lake City) | Boykin (Marion/Bennettsville) |
| First/Hemingway (Florence/Hemingway) | Trinity/Clio (Marion/Clio) |
| St. Paul/Coward (Florence/Coward) | Pine Grove (Marion/McColl) |
| Ebenezer (Florence/Hemingway) | Smyrna/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) |
| Old Johnsonville (Florence/Johnsonville) | Berea (Marion/McColl) |
| Mount Vernon (Florence/Greeleyville) | Main Street/Dillon (Marion/Dillon) |
| Prospect (Florence/Pamplico) | First/Loris (Marion/Loris) |
| Lane (Florence/Lane) | Main Street/McColl (Marion/McColl) |
| Liberty Chapel (Florence/Florence) | Brown Swamp (Marion/Conway) |
| New Zion (Florence/New Zion) | Oak Grove/Wallace (Marion/Wallace) |
| Pine Grove/Timmonsville (Florence/Timmonsville) | Pleasant Hill/Wallace (Marion/Wallace) |
| Pisgah (Florence/Florence) | Center (Marion/Mullins) |
| Cedar Swamp (Florence/Kingstree) | Tranquil (Marion/Mullins) |
| Millwood (Florence/Kingstree) | Limestone (Orangeburg District/Orangeburg) |
| Tabernacle (Florence/Pamplico) | Ebenezer/Orange Cir (Orangeburg/North) |
| Shiloh/Turbeville (Florence/Lynchburg) | Cattle Creek (Orangeburg/Rowesville) |
| Trinity/New Zion (Florence/Alcolu) | Grace Community (Rock Hill District/Fort Mill) |
| Trio (Florence/Salters) | Capers Chapel (Rock Hill/Chester) |
| Pine Grove/Turbeville (Florence/Turbeville) | Catawba (Rock Hill/Catawba) |
| Salem/Timmonsville (Florence/Timmonsville) | New Hope/Chester (Rock Hill/Chester) |
| Earle (Florence/Andrews) | Armenia (Rock Hill/Chester) |
| Suttons (Florence/Andrews) | Mount Vernon (Rock Hill/Hickory Grove) |
| Good Hope (Florence/Hemingway) | Bethel/Lancaster (Rock Hill/Lancaster) |
| St. Luke/Kingstree (Florence/Salters) | Wesley Chapel (Spartanburg District/Union) |
| Dials (Greenville District/Gray Court) | Liberty/Campobello (Spartanburg/Landrum) |
| Shiloh (Greenville/Gray Court) | Buffalo (Spartanburg/Buffalo) |
| Buncombe Street (Greenville/Greenville) | Campobello (Spartanburg/Campobello) |
| Covenant (Greenville/Greer) | Carlisle (Spartanburg/Carlisle) |
| Sharon/Greer (Greenville/Greer) | Bethlehem/Jonesville (Spartanburg/Union) |
| Zoar/Greer (Greenville/Greer) | Sardis/Union (Spartanburg/Union) |
| Mauldin (Greenville/Mauldin) | Fosters Chapel (Spartanburg/Jonesville) |
| Mountain View (Greenville/Taylor) | Lyman (Spartanburg/Lyman) |
| Hodges (Greenwood District/Hodges) | Roebuck (Spartanburg/Roebuck) |
| Shiloh (Greenwood/Saluda) | Reidville Road (Spartanburg/Moore) |
| Butler (Greenwood/Saluda) | Walnut Grove (Spartanburg/Roebuck) |
| McCormick (Greenwood/McCormick) | Tillman (Walterboro District/Tillman) |
| Concord (Hartsville District/Bishopville) | Cottageville (Walterboro/Cottageville) |
| Dalzell (Hartsville/Dalzell) | Cypress (Walterboro/Ridgeville) |
| Lewis Chapel (Hartsville/Sumter) | Mount Tabor (Walterboro/Ridgeville) |
| Bethel/Oswego (Hartsville/Sumter) | Trinity/Ridgeville (Walterboro/Ridgeville) |
| | St. Paul/Ridgeland (Walterboro/Ridgeland) |

Continued from previous page

because it was already properly before the body, Holston offered that assurance, noting, "I appreciate the tenor of your request because it is important in this season, and please know that this is what we will be doing."

The motion to immediately reduce the districts was defeated.

Holston noted that in addition to apportionment payments, it is imperative all South Carolina United Methodists "check our own selves" to make sure we are not only tithing but going above and beyond when possible.

"We all took the same vow: to renounce the evil forces of wickedness, accept Jesus Christ as lord and savior and to support the church with our time, our talents, our gifts, our service and our witness," Holston said to

applause. "Let's be true to what God's called us to do. We're all still in this together."

The business session closed as Nelson announced the date and location of Annual Conference 2024, set for June 9-12, 2024, at the TD Center in Greenville.

After a closing sending forth worship service, Holston and the 12 district superintendents fixed the appointments, noting they are correct with exception of the 113 churches that separated during this session of Annual Conference and a few editorial changes.

(See appointments, Page 14-18.)

More on AC2023 next month.

For photos from Annual Conference, visit <https://www.flickr.com/umcsc>.

For the full packet, agenda and other conference materials, visit <https://www.umcsc.org/ac2023>.

When the session resumed at 2 p.m. after a lunch break, conference chancellor Kay Crowe spoke from the podium, explaining the terms of the separation agreement. As she shared, to be eligible to have their church vote go before conference this June, churches had to be in full communication with their district superintendent; complete an intentional, 30-day discernment process; satisfy financial obligations, including all unpaid apportionment giving and unpaid salary and benefits due to clergy; and satisfy or transfer of debts and other legal liabilities of the local church. Then, a churchwide vote had to be taken before March 1 that indicated two-thirds of professing church members present agreed to formally declare the church can no longer continue to function as a UMC.

Following Crowe's presentation to the body, Dean of the Cabinet Dr. Stephen Love affirmed that district superintendents had indeed properly given oversight to the churches in the discernment process and that the names of the churches listed on the resolution were accurate and reflective of the wishes of the congregation.

Next the Rev. Mike Wood, chair of the Conference Board of Trustees, stepped to the podium, stating his board recommended the ratification of the closure and separation of the 113 churches on the list.

The Rev. Carol Rexroad Cannon spoke from the floor, asking that Wood read aloud the names of the churches separating so the conference could honor them properly.

"These 113 churches represent congregations we have served with, that we have loved with and that we have celebrated with for many, many years," Cannon said. "Therefore, out of respect for them, I would like for us to have each name read before the vote that we may honor each one of these congregations as we bless and release them to the new ministry to which they are called."

Wood did so, and it was the first fully

public revelation of the churches' names.

Others also spoke from the floor, including the Rev. Kim Strong, retired elder serving as a local church supply pastor, who wished the churches grace and love as they depart.

"And to churches not leaving—and mine is not—God is still in charge," he said. "God's grace will cover this situation for all who are involved."

A tearful Bishop L. Jonathan Holston led the body in an emotional prayer before the vote, asking that God guide all in holy wisdom.

"Regardless of what we do in this time, help us to bless each other," Holston prayed. "Help us to see your grace and your mercy for what it truly can be. And as we make the decision in this place and space, help us not to do it with a heart of anger. Help us to truly seek to be helpful to one another."

The vote required a simple majority. Holston called for a standing vote, and the resolution to approve the closures passed overwhelmingly.

"My friends, this report is approved," Holston said. "These churches are approved to close in separation from The United Methodist Church."

Silence filled the room for a time. Then Holston offered another prayer: for God's church, for the annual conference and for the churches who have chosen a different journey.

Several spoke from the floor, thanking Holston for his leadership in the process. The session broke for the afternoon, with a planned return at 5 p.m. for the conference's memorial service. Business concluded June 7, the final day of conference.

The district closure breakdown is as follows: Anderson District, 4; Charleston, 5; Columbia, 6; Florence, 25; Greenville, 8; Greenwood, 4; Hartsville, 10; Marion, 23; Orangeburg, 3; Rock Hill, 7; Spartanburg, 12; and Walterboro, 6.

Full text of the resolution approved:

Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church to ratify and approve the closure of the below listed churches.

Whereas, the South Carolina Conference has used Para. 2549 of *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (2016) to close churches. Many of these churches were closed on an ad-interim basis because of exigent circumstances.

Whereas, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in 2019 had before the body changes to *The Book of Discipline* addressing human sexuality. There were no changes made at this conference to any provision addressing human sexuality.

Whereas, the very clear language of Para. 2553 of *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church, adopted by the General Conference of The United Methodist Church held in 2019, allows a church to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of *The Book of Discipline* related to the practice of homosexuality, the ordination of self-avowed, practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference, or the actions or inactions of the annual conference of that particular local church, related to these issues which followed the 2019 General Conference. Giving these words their ordinary meaning, a local church in South Carolina cannot disaffiliate using Para. 2553 of *The Book of Discipline* because of actions or inaction in other annual conferences.

Whereas, Bishop Holston and the South Carolina Conference have not made any statements contrary to *The Book of Discipline* on these issues. The South Carolina Conference has affirmed its commitment to the language and positions set forth in *The Book of Discipline* with consistency.

Whereas, it is clear a number of United Methodist churches in South Carolina find themselves unable to serve the purpose for which they were organized, in that they cannot accept the actions taken in other Conferences of The United Methodist Church and cannot support the possible future actions of future General Conferences as binding on them on the issues of human sexuality. The issues of human sexuality have prevented them in their mission to make disciples for the transformation of the world.

Whereas, the Board of Trustees, with understanding of the difficulties of owning, insuring, and maintaining closed church properties, with prayer, consultation, and reflection, guided by input of the Cabinet and conference leadership, and with the framework of the Agreement format for disaffiliation, developed and refined a Separation Agreement.

Whereas, this Separation Agreement required the local church to participate in a discernment process, and once that was completed allowed for a Church Conference vote on separation from The United Methodist Church.

Whereas, the following churches have followed this process, and by votes of at least 2/3 majority have voted to separate from The United Methodist Church. They have signed a Separation Agreement, and have placed their payments for separation in escrow.

Whereas, these churches are now before this body for approval of their closure, pursuant to the terms of the Separation Agreement.

Whereas, it is the belief of the Board of Trustees that these closures are the best pathway to allow the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church to follow *The Book of Discipline* and to allow these churches desiring to depart to do so with grace.

Therefore, be it resolved, that pursuant to the authority granted to the Board of Trustees and to this body under Para. 2549.3(b) of *The Book of Discipline*, as confirmed by the District Superintendents of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, the Cabinet and Bishop Holston, and authorized by vote of this body, be it here approved that the Separation Agreements duly executed by the following churches shall govern the disposition of the property of the below listed churches. The recorded deeds shall be valid to transfer the title to the real property and this document shall be approved by this body as binding on the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Be it here approved that the following United Methodist churches will be closed effective June 30, 2023.

Gramling receives Ministry of Memory Award from UMC Historical Society

Dr. Roger M. Gramling, a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, has been named the 2023 recipient of the "Ministry of Memory" Award.

The award, which recognizes and encourages excellence in archival and historical work, is presented by the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church with the support of the General Commission on Archives and History.

The announcement was made during the annual meeting of the UMC Historical Society, May 15-18, in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Gramling's nomination was based on his more than 50 years involvement in historical research and preservation at the local church, conference and jurisdictional level. His involvement in historical research began with the preservation and promotion of the history of his home church while he was a teenager.

He was nominated for the Ministry of Memory award by Joyce E. Plyler, a former president of the Conference Historical Society.

Gramling is the author of five books related to Methodist history and was the general editor of the 2001 edition of *United Methodist Ministers in South Carolina*. He currently serves as president of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society, secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Conference Historical Society and a member of the SEJ Commission on Archives and History.

In her nomination, Plyler lifted up Gramling's work to preserve the Burdine Lodge. Gramling spearheaded a project to raise funds for the restoration of this 1790s-era log cabin, which was a lodging place for Francis Asbury (as documented in his *Journal*) and in which an early Methodist society was formed. Under Dr. Gramling's leadership, more than \$30,000 was raised on behalf of the South Carolina Conference Historical Society of the UMC. In coordination with county and local leaders, the lodge was restored and located at the Hagood Mill Historic Site in Pickens County, where it will serve to educate current and future generations about the influence of Methodism in



Photo by Matt Brodie

Dr. Roger Gramling, retired elder and recipient of the Ministry of Memory Award, is also very much active in current conference affairs. Here, Gramling proposes a motion from the floor at the recent South Carolina Annual Conference that would ask the Standing Rules Committee to consider amending Standing Rule 70 given the difficulty Monday over the rejection of four out-of-order resolutions, despite their being submitted before deadline. Prior to Annual Conference 2024, Gramling moved, the Standing Rules Committee would consider an amendment to SR70 that would authorize the conference secretary, in consultation with the conference parliamentarian, to review all resolutions submitted under the provisions of SR70 to determine if such resolutions are properly before the annual conference for consideration. If not, Gramling motioned, they would advise the resolution submitters that the deadline for the resubmission of corrected versions would be extended to March 25. Gramling's motion passed overwhelmingly.

early America.

Plyler also noted that Gramling has played critical roles in the South Carolina Conference Historical Society for many years.

"In this capacity, he is without peer, doing the work of yeoman, wise counselor and conscientious leader," she wrote in her nomination.

Much of his work of historical preservation has been behind the scenes, she noted. For example, he created and maintained a database of the founding dates of all United Methodist Churches in the South Carolina Conference. Over the years, he diligently worked with churches to help determine their founding date and to keep the database

current. This was no easy task because the South Carolina Conference is one of the six original Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America and has many churches dating to the late 1700s and early 1800s, for which records are scant. Though now maintained by others, this database remains the "go to" document for this important information. In addition, Dr. Gramling's extensive personal files and memory have provided assistance countless times for

individuals seeking more information about their Methodist ancestors or their church.

Along with Dr. A.V. Huff and others, Gramling was responsible for reviving the society and ensuring that it would be a vibrant participant in keeping Methodist history alive within the South Carolina Conference.

Plyler also noted how, at the close of 2018, Gramling retired as president of the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, for which he had been the chief executive since 1985. Through this foundation, he and his wife, Marilyn, created a restricted endowment fund for the benefit of the historic White House UMC, Orangeburg. Gramling filed the documentation leading to placement of this c. 1850 primitive structure on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 and wrote a history of the church in 1981. It is the oldest congregation in Orangeburg County, dating to 1788, and one of the oldest in the state.

His counsel has helped many others to establish funds that keep alive the memory of ministers, lay leaders and churches that have made significant contributions to Methodism in South Carolina.

"Perhaps what is most remarkable is that Dr. Gramling's work has been conducted almost exclusively as a volunteer and in addition to his full-time work as an ordained minister and foundation executive, not to mention his various assignments with the South Carolina Conference, including conference secretary, parliamentarian, counsel for the church, secretary and registrar of the Board of Ordained Ministry and secretary of the trial court," Plyler wrote. "Throughout his long and illustrious career, history has remained his passion. For this, and for his God-given skills as a meticulous and detailed record-keeper, we and future generations can be truly thankful."

Learn more about the award at <https://umchistory.org>.

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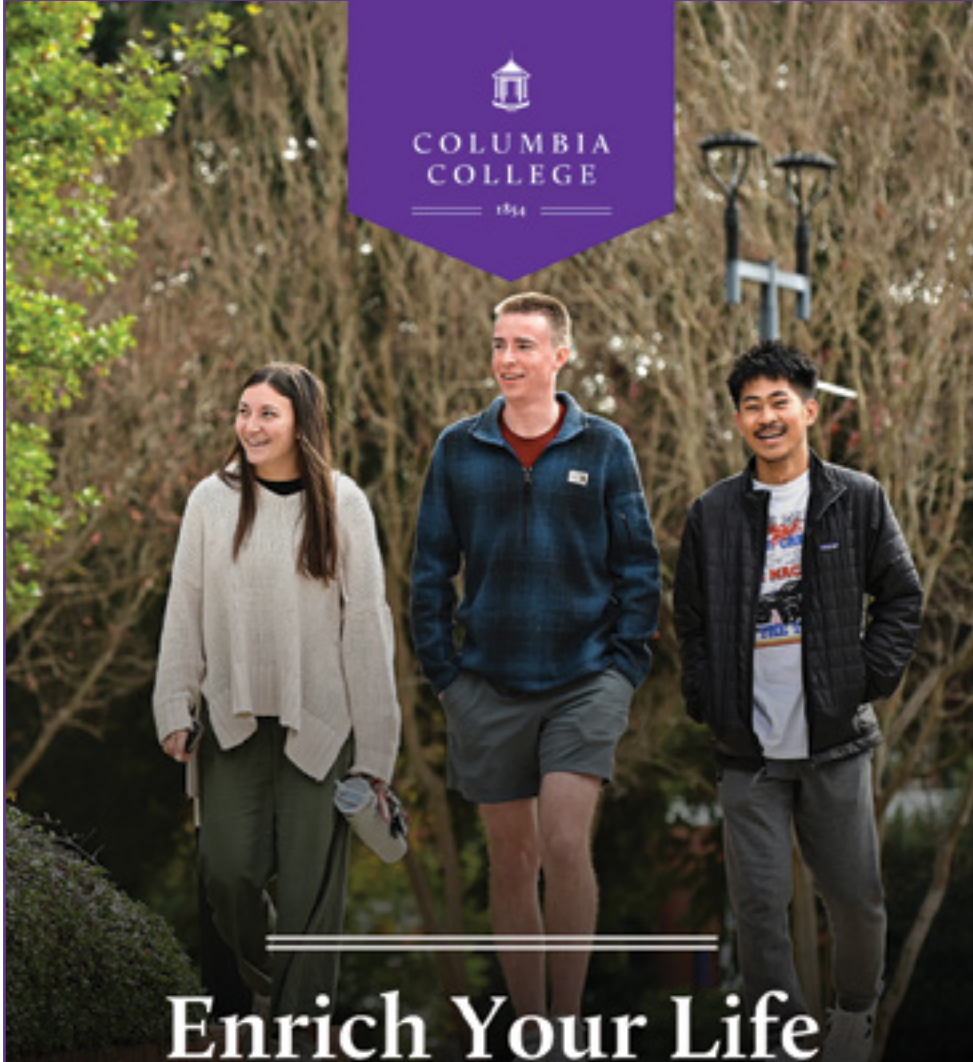
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INITIATIVE ADVISORS**

DR. DAWN MCQUISTON
professor of psychology

DR. DAVID ALVIS
associate professor
of government and
international affairs

NEELEY WILSON
Class of 2023, government and psychology
major from Knoxville, Tennessee

Wilson, first president of the Wofford Law, Justice and Innocence Initiative, attended the Innocence Project annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, with McQuiston in the spring. Wilson graduated in three years and is working in the legal field and applying to law school.


“Dr. Alvis and Dr. McQuiston are not just mentors, they’re friends. They’ve been with me when I was freaking out about grades and when I wanted to talk about my career options. They’ve been here for me every time!”

Where
thought
leads. **To social justice.**

These are the appointments that were made at Annual Conference and include any changes announced at conference. However, for those churches whose votes to separate from the UMC were approved at conference, these churches appear as a strike-though. The Advocate will reprint the perfected appointments in the August issue.

SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENTS

By authority of *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church, I hereby fix these appointments for the South Carolina Annual Conference for the 2023-2024 conference year. As commissioned, licensed, consecrated, or ordained members of the covenant of ministry, let us offer ourselves without reserve to the responsibilities and opportunities of these appointments.



L. Jonathan Holston Resident Bishop
South Carolina Annual Conference
June 6, 2023

STATUS KEY

AL Administrative Location (¶ 359)	HL Honorable Location\Honorable Location Retired (¶¶ 358.1, 358.3)	PE Provisional Elder (¶¶ 324, 325)
AM Associate Member (¶¶ 322, 369.1, 635.2h)	LM Certified Lay Minister (¶ 268)	PL Part-time Local Pastor (¶ 318.2)
AF Affiliate Member (¶¶ 334.5, 344.4, 586.4)	OA Associate Member of other Annual Conference (¶ 346.1)	RA Retired Associate Member (¶ 357)
DC Deaconess (¶ 1913.2)	OD Deacon Member of other annual conference (¶ 331.8)	RD Retired Deacon in Full connection (¶ 357)
DM Diaconal Minister (2004 Discipline ¶ 369.1)	OE Elder Member of other annual conference or other Methodist denomination (¶ 346.1)	RE Retired Full Elder (¶ 357)
DR Retired Diaconal Minister (consecrated under provisions of 1992 or earlier Discipline) (¶ 357)	OF Full Member of other denomination (¶ 346.2)	RP Retired Provisional Member (¶ 357) (prior to Jan 1, 2013)
FD Deacon in full connection (¶ 330)	OP Provisional Member of other Annual Conference	RL Retired Local Pastor (¶¶ 320.5, 327.7)
FE Elder in full connection (¶ 335)	OR Retired Member of other Annual Conference (¶ 346.1)	
FL Full time Local Pastor (¶ 318.1)	PD Provisional Deacon (¶¶ 324, 325)	Not a Disciplinary Code: SY - Other Supplies – Used by GCFA for assigned pastors

ANDERSON DISTRICT (49 charges; 72 churches) STEVE A. PATTERSON JR., DS 6

ABBEVILLE:
—Bells—J. Scott Allen (OF)(¶346.2) 6
Grace – Claire C. Van Den Berg (PE) 1
Main Street – Brandon L. Fulmer 3
Sharon-Smyrna – Richard A. Powell (PL) (1/2) 3

ANDERSON:
Anderson Circuit – Annie K. Jackson (PL) (1/2) 6
(Mount Pleasant, Mount Sinai, Emmanuel)
Homeland Park – Michael L. Vandiver (RE) (1/4) 3
Marshall Memorial-Ebenezer Charge – Bruce Sayre (RE) 1
New Hope – Mari Gonlag (OE)(¶346.1) 3
North Anderson Charge – Cyrus D. Rogers (RE) (1/2) 9
(John Wesley, Sandy Springs)
South Main Chapel and Mercy Center – Kurt L. Stutler (OF)(¶346.2) 10
St. John's – W. Kevin Cooley 2
Thompson Centennial-Fairfield Charge – Hal B. Johnson (PL) (1/2) 7
Toxaway – Freda A. Brock (PL) (1/2) 8
Trinity – Roy M. Mitchell (OE)(¶346.1) 4
Minister of Discipleship and Outreach – Kathryn M. Bariou (PD) 2
Zion – Beverly Crowe Tipton 8

BELTON:
Latimer Memorial – Daniel K. Fortney (OF)(¶346.2) 3
Union Grove – Amy D. Bratton 12

CALHOUN FALLS:
Calhoun Falls – Franklin D. McCoy (RE) (1/2) 5

CENTRAL:
Mount Zion – Jonathan D. Harris 5

CLEMSON:
Clemson – Thomas B. Wilkes III 2
Associate & Campus Minister – Steven P. Simoneaux Jr. 11
Discipleship Minister – Margaret H. Wilkes (FD) 2
Lawrence Chapel – J. Gregory Martin (FL) 1

DUE WEST:
Gilgal-Shiloh – Jason E. Taylor (PL) (1/2) 2

EASLEY:
Ariel-Tabor – Roger M. Gwinn (RL) 20
Bethesda – A. Judson King 4
Easley Charge – LaTonya Monique Dash 3
(Easley Chapel, John Wesley)
Fairview-St. Paul – J. Kevin Gorry (RE) (1/2) 8
First Church – Michael J. Hood 3
Minister of Children, Youth, & Family Ministries – Deana Gentry (FD) (1/2) 6
—St. Andrew – Ronald A. Hoeksema 2

HONEA PATH:
—**Chiquita – TBS**
Trinity-Donalds – Christopher E. Arries 1

IVA:
Bethel-Ruhamah – Marguerite K. "Kempie" Shepard (RE) 1

LIBERTY:
Liberty-Zion – Peggy J. Gartland (RE) (1/2) 6
Associate – Ronald E. Bentley (FD) (1/4) 3

PENDLETON:
Pendleton – Richard R. Howell Jr. 2
Pendleton Charge – Carleatha L. Benson (RL) (1/2) 3
(Bethel, Central)

PICKENS:
Grace – Valerie K. Mireb 3
Minister of Visitation – Charlie Brookshire (RL) (1/4) 1
Mount Bethel-Porter's Chapel – Brenda W. Durham (RL) (1/4) 1
Co-Pastor – Joe D. Durham (RL) (1/4) 2

PIEDMONT:
Shiloh – Benjamin W. Herlong 3

SALEM:
—Salem – Stephen C. Turner (PL) (1/2) 6

SENECA:
Ann Hope-Friendship – Gregg S. Varner (RL) (1/2) 1
New Harmony-Robinson Chapel – Bernetha W. Orr (PL) (1/2) 8
St. Mark – S. Alexander Stevenson 1

STARR:
Starr Charge – Michael L. Vandiver (RE) (1/2) 3
(Hebron, Starr)

TOWNVILLE:
Dickson Memorial – W. Wallace Culp III 1

WALHALLA:
St. Luke – Kevin B. Lindley 6

WESTMINSTER:
Double Springs-Rock Springs – James R. McDowell (PL) (1/4) 3
Hopewell – James R. McDowell (PL) (1/4) 6
Westminster-Chicopee – Jeffrey J. Hogan (PL) (1/2) 3

WILLIAMSTON:
Grace-Pelzer – Edna R. Bowers (PL) (1/2) 2

Williamston Charge – TBS
(New Golden Grove, Moores Chapel, St. James)

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES

Within the Connection:
Patterson Jr., Steve A. – District Superintendent, Anderson District 6
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: None
Other Valid Ministries:
Glaze, Lane C. – President/Chair, One Eleuthera Foundation of the U.S., Clemson CC 4
ATTEND SCHOOL – None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
Spurrier, Ryan G. – Campus Minister, UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina Conference, Clemson CC 9
LEAVE OF ABSENCE – None
FAMILY LEAVE
Boatwright, Megan Augustine – Clemson CC 2
SABBATICAL LEAVE – None
MEDICAL LEAVE
Holtzclaw, Kitty C. 2
Petry, Scott 13

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers
Allinder, Joseph E.
Ashmore, E. Warren
Batson, Dan L.
Benson, Carleatha L.
Bryant Jr., T. Lee
Beaudrot, Gayle M.
Bowers, Randall E. (RL)
Bynum, William H.
Cannon, Barry W.
Carlisle, Robert N.
Claytor, Robert B.
Cleasby, Bruce
Cox, H. Michael
Durham, Brenda W. (RL)
Durham, Joe D. (RL)
Ethrige, Bobbie R. (FD)
Eubanks, Robert L.
Farley, William B.
Ford, Julian R.
Franklin, E. Herbert
Freeman, John M.
Gary, Clara M. (RL)
Gorry, J. Kevin
Gwinn, Roger M. (RL)
Hartsell, Franklin D.
Hendry, Joyce S. (RL)
Kelley, Patrick H. (RL)
Lack, P. Michael (RL)
Leppard, James F.
Lewis, Sinclair E.
Marsh, Ed C.
Marsh, Eileen C.
Massey, Ronald J. (RL)
McCoy Sr., Franklin DeWitt
McNatt, Linda M.
Medlin, Anthony Steele
Mims, Louis M.
Mitchell, Paul C.
Morgan, Steven D.
Owens, Kenneth D.
Patterson, Stanley B.
Pearce, Roger Wayne
Ray, Marie E.
Reynolds, Nena
Rogers, Cyrus D.
Sayre, Bruce
Shattuck Sr., Leslie J. (RL)
Shepard, Frederick J.
Shepard, Marguerite K.
Stillwell, Robert E.
Thompson, Morris C.
Vandiver, Michael L.
Varner, Gregg S. (RL)
Workman, George M. (HL)
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers:
Brashear, Carolyn Elaine – Trinity CC 1
Fuhr, Ann Barton – Lawrence Chapel CC 20

DEACONESES

Active: None
Retired:
Edens, Mary Lou – Main Street, Abbeville CC 21

CHARLESTON DISTRICT (61 charges; 76 churches) SANDRA STEVENS-POIREL, DS 8

BONNEAU:
Berkeley Circuit – James Lewis (PL) (1/2) 7
(Eccles, Hoods Chapel)

CHARLESTON:
—**Aldersgate – TBS**
Asbury-St. James – Timothy G. Shaw (PL) (1/2) 18
Bethany – Susan M. Pennock 3
Bethel – Susan P. Leonard 6
Centenary – Lorenzo Moses (1/4) 20
—**Charleston Korean – Yon Taek Bae 13**
Cokesbury – Bryan W. Pigford 2
Epworth – Vivian L. Fowler (FD) (1/2) 2
Grace – Benjamin O. Burt 3
Associate – Kim M. Bryant (PD) (1/2) 1
John Wesley – Kenneth B. Timmerman 4
Associate – TBS
Midland Park – Millard Cooper Stonestreet (RE) (1/2) 2
Mount Carmel – Nathan Smalls 4
New Francis Brown – Morris Waymer Jr. 8
North Charleston – Daniel R. Griswold 3
Old Bethel – David V. Washington (FL) 3
St. Andrews Parish – Brent L. Dehnbom (FL) 2
St. Mark – Edward J. Stiltz (FL) 3
Trinity – Michael D. Wood (PL) (1/2) 1
Washington – Kerry Brisbon (PL) (1/2) 3
Wesley – Eleanora C. Ellington 2

CROSS:
Cross – Davie Sanders 5
(Jerusalem, Zion)

—**Friendship – TBS**
Greater St. Paul – Raymond P. Gibbs (FL) 2

EDISTO ISLAND:
Edisto Island-Wesley Memorial – Kevin P. Stroop 9

FOLLY BEACH:
Folly Beach – Randall W. Horres (FL) 8

GOOSE CREEK:
Goose Creek – George Palmer Hudson (FL) 1
St. James – Joshua W. Tietje (OE)(¶346.1) 2

HOLLYWOOD:
Ravenel – Len C. Ripley (RL) (1/4) 6
Wesley – Dwight A. Nelson 6

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

ISLE OF PALMS:
First – Charles Andrew Phillips 1

JAMESTOWN:
Jamestown – J. Kris Bergmann (PL) (1/2) 2
(Mount Zion, New Hope, St. James)

JOHNS ISLAND:
Johns Island Parish – Pattie E. Gordon 6
(Bethlehem-St. James, New Webster)
Wesley – Doris R. Bright 2

LADSON:
Wesley – Curnell Graham (OE) 1

McCLELLANVILLE:
Sewee Santee Charge – Roye Lynn Kulik (RE) (1/2) 5
(McClellanville, Ocean Grove, Wren's Chapel)

MONCK'S CORNER:
Centenary – Eleanor Cooper Brown (PL) (1/2) 1
Ebenezer – Michael David Wood (PL) (1/4) 2
Joshua – Mae Frances Taylor 18
Moncks Corner – Randall L. Haase 2
Smyrna – William "Bill" Masciangelo (RL) (1/2) 5

MOUNT PLEASANT:
Hibben – Sara A. White 5
Associate – Katherine A. Brock (FD) 3
—Point Hope – Elizabeth Sullivan 6

PINOPOLIS:
—**Pinopolis – TBS**
Wesley – Shamond Riddy (OF)(¶346.2) 3

RIDGEVILLE:
Lebanon Charge – W. Michael Bruce (RE) 4
(Lebanon, Spring Hill)

ST. STEPHEN:
All Saints Charge – Marvin Taylor Jr. (PL) (1/2) 2
(Cordesville, New Light)
Bethel – Cindy S. Shaw (PL) (1/2) 14
Jehovah – Tony Richardson Sr. (PL) (1/2) 9
Mount Nebo – Richard Irving (PL) (1/2) 8
St. Stephen Charge – Lena Elizabeth Murdock (SY) (1/2) 1
(Rehoboth, St. Stephen)

SUMMERVILLE:
Bethany – Michael D. Ritter Sr. 2
Associate – TBS

Boone Hill – Sheldon L. Withrow (FL) 4
Enoch Chapel-Grove Hall:
(Enoch Chapel) – Victoria Richardson (RL) (1/4) 19
(Grove Hall) – Virginia B. Stafford (RL) (1/4) 20
Knightsville – Robert E. Harper (FL) 7
New Hope – A. Robert Nix (RE) 2
Stallsville – Robert L. Rabenstein III (RL) (1/2) 1
Summerville Parish – Darlene Brenda Richardson (PE) 1
(Murray, Wesley)

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES:

Within the Connection:
Poole, John (FL) – Director, Charleston Wesley Foundation 2
Stevens-Poirel, Sandra – District Superintendent, Charleston District 8
Walker, Suzanne – Congregational Specialist for Charleston/Walterboro Districts, Cokesbury CC 5
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Everson, Jason D. – Chaplain, US Navy, Chapel of Hope, Yokosuka, Japan, Isle of Palms CC 7
Flessas, Daniel – City of Charleston Emergency Management, Executive Department, Hibben CC 4
Grant, George Henry – Director of Research in Faith and Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, Bethel CC 24
Moses, Lorenzo – Chief Chaplain, Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, Centenary CC 29

Other Valid Ministries:
Mazyck, Bennett W. (FD) – President and CEO, South Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations, Murray CC 11
Meadows, S. Aaron – Chaplain of SC Corps of Cadets and Director of Religious Activities, The Citadel Military College of SC, Trinity-Charleston CC 2
Taylor, Kelli W. – Vice President for Campus Ministry and Community Engagement, Methodist University, Fayetteville, NC 9
Wicklund, Carly – Staff Chaplain, Pediatric Staff Chaplain UNC Health Care – Chapel Hill, NC, Bethel-Charleston CC 2

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL – None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
Burgess, Adriane – Associate, St. Mary's Road UMC, South Georgia Conference 5
Nix, Soon S. (FD) – Associate, Korean Church of Atlanta (3/4), North Georgia Conference 4

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Reams, Richard H. – Bethel CC 3

FAMILY LEAVE – None
SABBATICAL LEAVE – None
MEDICAL LEAVE – None

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:
Alewine, James Edwin
Belec, J. Peter
Bines, Lee
Blackwell, Theodore E. (RL)
Brisbon, David A.
Broomall, Richard A.
Brown, Joanne E.
Bruce, W. Michael
Cash, H. Carroll (RL)
Clardy Jr., Cermette (HL)
Clendaniel, Donald
Cubie, James (RL)
Davis, Gloria R.
Deal, Alice L. (Ally)
Derrick, Barbara A.
Dingle, Shirley (RL)
Edwards, Annette C.
Fender, Genevieve M. (RL)
Garrett, Jo Ann (RL)
Gaither, Stephen D.
Gindhart Jr., Harry
Houston, D. Mitchell
Hughes, Elizabeth C.
Hughes, Jessie Clark
Hunter, James C.
Hyatt Jr., James
Ivey, Ruth Ann (FD)
James, David
Jefferson, Ethel Gethers
Jones, Alfonza (RL)
Jones, Clayton (RL)
Kulik, Roye Lynn
Lee, Robert E. (RA)
Locklair, Josephine M.
Lupo, David E. (HL)

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Mabey, Janice L. (RL)
 Marcengill, Sam
 McFadden, Vivian
 Miller, Bonnie (RL)
 Mills, F. David
 Murphy, Joyce
 Myers, John David
 Nix, A. Robert
 Rabenstein, Robert (RL)
 Ratledge, Jackie S. (FD)
 Reeves, Timothy S.
Richardson, Victoria (RL)
 Ripley III, Leonard (RL)
 Rodeffer, Larry William
 Rogers-Berry, Richard
 Smith, David S.
 Smith, Debra Quilling
 Stafford, Virginia (RL)
 Stanton, Talmadge
 Stockman, Roy M.
 Stonestreet, Cooper
 Tanner Jr., William (RL)
 Washington, Lillian
 Wilson Jr., Harlan E.,
 Wilson, Rufus L. (RL)
 Younker, Ellen A.
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers: None

DEACONESES

Active: None
Retired: None

COLUMBIA DISTRICT (55 charges; 61 churches) FRANCES M. ELROD, DS 2

BLYTHEWOOD:

Trinity – Scott W. Smoak 4
Associate – Meegian A. Gossard 1
Upper Richland Charge – Robert V. McDowell (OR)
(¶346.1) (1/2) 1
(Beulah, Oak Grove)
 Zion – J. Scott Matthews (PL) (1/4) 6

CAyce:

Cayce – Meghan Lindsey Sweeney Cook 4

CHAPIN:

—Chapin—Joseph D. Flowers-23

COLUMBIA:

Asbury Memorial – Ashley McCoy-Bruce 2
 Ashland – J. Scott Efrid 5
 Bethel – Julie Songer Belman 6
 Bluff Road – Jeremiah F. Page (PL) (1/2) 2
 —Columbia Korean—Woongchul Daniel Ra-6
 Fair Lawn – John M. Williams III 5
 Francis Burns – Geneva G. Stafford 5
 Grace – W. Everette Haselden 5
Greene Street – Kermit C. Moss (SY) (1/4) 1
 Heyward Street – Tammy A. Blom (OF)(¶346.2) (1/2) 8
 I. DeQuincey Newman – Frank V. James (RE) (1/2) 2
 Journey – George A. Ashford 17
Main Street – Kermit C. Moss (SY) (1/4) 1
 McLeod – Jerry O. McLemore (SY) (1/4) 3
 Mill Creek – Sharon L. Long (PL) (1/4) 13
 North Columbia Charge – Ralph C. Young (PL) (1/2) 5
 (Mount Pleasant, St. John)
 Northeast – Antoinette Gaboton-Moss (FL) 2
Rehoboth – Robert D. B. Reeves 1
 Shandon – C. Smoke Kanipe 8
 Associate – James A. Grubb 6
 Minister of Music and Arts – Donald E. Huss Jr. (FD) 13
St. Mark – Margo W. Williams (SY) (1/2) 1
Suber Marshall Memorial – Marion Aldridge (OF)(¶346.2) (1/4) 5
 Trenholm Road – James L. McCoy-Bruce 2
 Associate - Mollie B. Reddic 1
 Director of Music Ministries – Sarah T. Fletcher (FD) (3/4) 15
 Virginia Wingard Memorial – Beth S. Faulk (OF)(¶346.2) 4
 Washington Street – Rebecca J. Shirley 3
 Associate for Nurture/Discipleship Development –
 Alston F. Lippert (PL) (1/2) 7
 Wesley – Tiffany D. Knowlin 9
 Whaley Street – Susan D. Culler (HL) (1/2) 3
 Windsor – Leatha W. Brown 6

EASTOVER:

—Lebanon—Gregory P. Davis (FL)-3

ELGIN:

West Kershaw – Stewart C. Kidd Jr. (PL) (1/2) 8
 (Ebenezer, Salem, Smyrna)

GILBERT:

Beulah – Anthony S. Rowell 11
 Gilbert – Mark E. Thompson (RE) (3/4) 3
 —Pond Branch—Andrew G. Martin-6
Shiloh – John N. Kronz (FL) 1

IRMO:

Salem – Jeffrey W. Childress 3
 Shady Grove – Tammy N. Grey 6
 Union – Stephen P. Taylor 8
 Associate – Faye J. Jones (FL) 2

LEESVILLE:

—Rehoboth—TBS-

LEXINGTON:

Boiling Springs – Stephan D. Elkins (FL) 1
 Faith – Hope R. Morris 5
 Lexington – James S. "Mack" McDowell 2
 —Mount Horeb—Jeffrey G. Kersey-30
 —Director of Congregational Care—Emma M. Murphy (FD)-4
 —Associate Pastor for Family Ministries—Trevor A. Miller (FL)-8
 Red Bank – W. Clay Faulk (OF)(¶346.2) 4

WEST COLUMBIA:

Brookland – Christopher Mark Payne (PL) (1/2) 5
 Mount Hebron – Cynthia C. Taylor 2
 Associate – Morgan B. Byars (PE) 2
 Platt Springs – Debbie H. Miller (RL) 2
 Shiloh – Sandra G. Stillingler (PL) (1/4) 6
 Trinity – John D. Jordan 6

WINNSBORO:

Fairfield Circuit – Benjamin R. Rogers (FL) 4
 (Bethel, Monticello)
First – Frances S. Connell 1
 Gordon Memorial-Greenbrier – Thurmond "Kem"
 Thomas (RE) 3

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES

Within the Connection:

Arant Jr., A. Melton – Coordinator of Clergy Services,
 Zion, Anderson CC 4
 Boyd, Fadetra Harrington – Chaplain and Director of
 Spiritual Life, Columbia College, Francis Burns CC 2
 Brum, Sonia Ely – Manager of US Missionaries and
 Diversity Relations, GBGM, Mount Hebron CC 11

Elrod, Fran M. – District Superintendent, Columbia
 District 2
 Friday, James L. – Director of Congregational
 Development, Wesley UMC CC 5
 James, Katherine L. (FD) – Epworth Director of Church
 Relations, Trinity, Sumter CC 5
 Lollis, Christopher M. – Conference Pension and Health
 Benefits Director, Shiloh, Gilbert CC 6
 Smith, Millie Nelson – Director, SC Conference
 Connectional Ministries, St. Paul, Camden CC 4
 Strawther, Walter E. – Congregational Specialist for
 African American/Columbia/Hartsville Districts,
 Shandon CC 3
 Vincent, Robert M. – President, SC United Methodist
 Foundation, Salem, Irmo CC 6
 Wall, Tom H. – Director, Wesley Foundation, USC,
 Washington Street CC 34

Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:

Byrd, Lara Caulder – Chaplain, United States Navy,
 Lexington UMC CC 5
 Evans, John D. (RE) – Pastoral Counseling, Licensed
 Marriage and Family Therapist, Columbia,
 Washington Street CC 29
 Fink, Adrienne H. (FD) – Chaplain, Prisma Health
 Department of Spiritual Care and Education,
 Washington Street CC 9
 Middleton, N. Nichole – Chaplain, Federal Bureau of
 Prisons, Bennettsville, SC, Trenholm Road CC 14

Other Valid Ministries:

Kennerly, Kenneth R. (RE) – Counselor V.A. Medical
 Center Addiction Treatment Unit, Columbia, Trinity,
 West Columbia CC 44
 Murray, Elizabeth (FD) – American Church in Paris,
 Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults,
 Lexington CC 3
 Rhyee, Luke Moon Taeg – Missionary to Guatemala,
 Mission Society, Columbia Korean CC 9
 Sipes, Jeri-Katherine Warden – Assistant Chaplain,
 Heathwood Hall

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL – None

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES

Rogers, James B. (PE) – Minister of Youth and Technology, St. Luke
 UMC, North Carolina Conference 3

APPOINTED IN OTHER METHODIST DENOMINATIONS – None

PERSONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Hoin, Jon A. – Union (Irmo) CC 2
 Relaford, Sara E. – Union (Irmo) CC 2
 Young, Amanda T. – Mount Hebron CC 5

FAMILY LEAVE – None

SABBATICAL LEAVE – None

TRANSITIONAL LEAVE – None

MEDICAL LEAVE – None

HONORABLE LOCATION

Arant Jr, M. David
 Culler, Susan – Washington Street CC
 Middleton, G. Scott – Washington Street CC 28
HONORABLE LOCATION – RETIRED:
 Bishop, Benjamin B. – Cayce UMC CC
 McCoy, Glenn – Main Street CC 22
 McDonald, Neal "Lex" – Shandon CC 24
 Percy, English B. – Trinity UMC-West Columbia CC

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:

Adams, James C.
 Alexander, Robert E.
 Alley, Joseph W.
 Anderson, David L.
 Arant Sr., Athon M.
 Arant, James S. (RD)
 Arant, Ruth H. (RD)
 Ballenger, Walter C.
 Barnes Jr., Rudolph C. (RL)
 Barwick, Kenneth W.
 Bauknight, David D.
 Bauknight, John M.
 Bell, Michael C.
 Bigelow, Archie R.
 Bishop, Benjamin B. (HL)
 Borom, W. Robert
 Bouknight, Bill (OR)
 Bowman, Thomas J.
 Bowman, Timothy J.
 Branch, Charles S.
 Bratton, Scott
 Britt, W. Donald
 Brooks, Boyce F.
 Buie, Franklin B.
 Childs, William R. "Bill"
 Chong, Yu Fong
 Collier, Elizabeth Jane
 Colton, Kenneth R.
 Cooper, Wiley B.
 Cothran, Lee J.
 Cox, Albert L.
 Cox, Robert L.
 Culp, John W.
 Culp, Karin B.
 Day, David W.
 DeDonato, David M.
 Dodds, Roger R.
 Edwards, Charlie A.
 Etheredge, Ernest C.
 Evans, John D.
 Evans, William F.
 Gramling, Roger M.
 Griffin, M. Kathryn
 Gunn, James H.
 Harmon, Paul W.
 Harmon, Samuel K.
 Hays Jr. Lawrence F.
 Helms, Lois
Henry-Crowe, Susan
 Holler, John E.
 Horne, R. Wayne
 James, Frank V.
 Johnson, Mary L.
 Jones, Joel R.
 Jones, Thom C.
 Kennerly, Kenneth R.
 Kinnett, Paul "Mac"
 Laney, Sterling S.
 Lare, Marvin I.
 Lavender, Phil C.
 Lee, Young In "David"
 Mayfield, Patricia P.
 McDowell Jr., Edward H.
 McKeown, Robert E.
 Middleton, Albert
 Middleton, Evelyn C.
 Miller, Debbie H. (RL)
 Miller Jr., Noble F.
 Mims, John W.
 Moore II, Raymond L.
 Morris, Franklin D.
 Moseley, Diane A.
 Nates, James H.

Norris, Robert J.
 Paik, Miyoung
 Parrish, Patricia J.
 Pearson, John C.
 Phillips, Gary D.
 Prill, Kenneth W.
 Reynolds, Phillip M. (RL)
 Rodgers, Augustus
 Rowell, Eldridge R.
 Scott Jr., Otis
 Simmons, Colin E.
 Steil, W. Edwin
 Stephens, Faye J.
 Summers, Thomas A.
 Taylor, Randy M.
 Teague, Willie S.
 Thomas, Thurmond K.
 Thompson, Mark E.
 Tuell, James
 Ulmer, B. Susan
 Walter, Ted H.
 Watson, J. Austin
 Watson, Joe Cal
 Westerkam, Diana C.
 White, Toni L.
 Williams, Robert T.
 Williams, Thurmond
 Wilson II, Joseph A.
 Yongue, Neil M.

Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers:

Laurie Brandes
Retired Diaconal Ministers:
 Carter, R. Fletcher – Virginia Wingard CC
 Quackenbush, Lillian – TBD
 Walker, Cheryl – Wesley CC
 Watson, Carol Hart – Main Street CC

DEACONESES

Active: None
Retired: None

FLORENCE DISTRICT (66 charges; 93 churches) TERRY FLEMING, DS 6

CADES:

Bethesda – Shawn Chestnut 2
 —Gades-Cameron—Jack McElveen (PL)(1/2)-6
Faith – Edward McKnight (OF)(¶346.2) (1/4) 1
 Hebron-Pergamos – Karen McElveen (PL) (1/2) 2
 (Hebron, Pergamos)

COWARD:

—St. Paul—Randy Calcutt Sr. (RL)(1/4)-5

FLORENCE:

Central – Thomas Smith 5
 Associate – Ann Kovan 2
 Minister of Faith Formation & Discipleship – Meg
 Jiunnies (FD) 7
 Cumberland – Martin L. Quick (PE) 2
 Dawsey – Frankie "Dusty" Owens (PL) 2
Highland Park – Katherine Haselden Crimm 1
Friendship – Gerald Camlin Wilder II (SY) 1
 —Liberty Chapel—Gerald Camlin Wilder II (SY)-1
 Mount Zion – Palma Duncan Thomas (PL) (1/2) 3
 —Pisgah—Joshua T. McClendon-6
 Quinby-Bethsaida – Gerald L. Truluck (RL) 19
 Salem – Briant S. Mungo (PL) (1/2) 8
 St. Paul – Bette A. Hedden (PE) 2
 —Tabernacle—Randy Calcutt Sr. (RL)(1/4)-6
 Wesley – James Peterson (PL) (1/2) 2

GREELEYVILLE:

Greeleyville Parish – Mildred M. Brown (SY) (1/4) 1
(Wilson Chapel, Long Branch)
 —Lane—Spencer Jordan (PL)(1/4)-3
 —Mount Vernon—Spencer Jordan (PL)(1/4)-4

HEMINGWAY:

—Ebenezer-First—Louis Perez (RL)-3
 —Good Hope—Craig Gribb (PL)(1/4)-4
 Jeremiah – Norma Bartelle (PL) (1/4) 3
 Mount Seal – Cynthia B. Williams (PL) (1/4) 3

JOHNSONVILLE:

Johnsonville – John Crouch (RL) (1/2) 6
 Johnsonville Circuit – Michael B. Henderson (RE) 3
 (Brown's Chapel, Vox Memorial)
 —Old Johnsonville—Craig Gribb (PL)(1/4)-4

JORDAN:

Jordan – Leo Wesley Roy (FL) 2
 (Jordan, Union, Bethlehem)

KINGSTREE:

Asbury –Patrick M. Wilson Sr. (PL) (1/4) 2
 Bethel – Louis R. Ashley (FE) 4
Elijah – Henry James Dixon Jr. (PL) (1/4) 1
Jerusalem – Isiah Brown (RL) (1/2) 1
 Kennedyville – Norma D. Bartelle (PL) (1/4) 9
Kingstree – Tom Easttve (OR)(¶346.2) 1
 —Kingstree Circuit—Tommy J. Conway (PL)(1/4)-8
 (Millwood, Cedar Swamp)

Mount Zion – Keith Hunter 2

—St. Luke—Henry James Dixon Jr. (PL)(1/4)-4
St. Mary – Edward Roderick McKnight (OF)(¶346.2) (1/4) 1
 St. Michael – Barry S. McFadden (1/2) 8
 St. Paul – Jerry L. Gadsden 5

LAKE CITY:

Lake City – Carsten Aubrey Bryant 1
 Lake City Circuit – Mark Mitchell 3
 (St. John, St. Luke, Ninevah)
Lake Point – Franklin Delano James (RL) (1/4) 1
 Mount Beulah – Benjamin Graham (PL) (1/2) 5
 Wesley Chapel – Amiri B. Hooker 4

LYNCHBURG:

Lynchburg Charge – Jimmy M. Ridenhour (RL) 31
 (Lynchburg, St. Luke, Trinity)
 New Haven – Samuel B. Cooper (RE) (1/2) 9
 St. Paul-Elliott – Pernerva Thomas (PL) (1/2) 2
 St. Paul-Wisacky-Warren Chapel – Evelyn Fulmore
 (PL) (1/2) 4

MANNING:

Manning – David McManus Jr. 3

MORRISVILLE:

St. Paul – James Pressley (PL) (1/4) 2

NESMITH:

Friendship – Ernest Frierson 2

NEW ZION:

—New Zion—Eric McGill (FL)-3
 (New Zion, Trinity)

PAMPALICO:

Bethlehem – Regena Swanson (FL) 3
Pampalico – Gary Newton Lowe (OF)(¶346.2) (1/2) 1
 —Prospect—Gary Newton Lowe (OF)(¶346.2)(1/2)-4

PINEWOOD:

Pinewood – Nancy Adams (PL) (1/2) 1
(Pinewood, Paxville, Andrews Chapel)

SCRANTON:

St. John Charge – Samuel Earle Marcengill (RE) (1/2) 1
(Scranton, St John, Nazareth-Olanta)

SHILOH:

Asbury – Corey LaSane (PL) (1/2) 2
 St. John – Gracie Singletary (PL) (1/2) 5
 Mount Zion – Jimmie W. Duncan (PL) (1/4) 9
 —Pine Grove-Salem Charge—Wade Everett (RE)(1/2)-3
 —Co-Pastor—Ann Everett (RE)(1/2)-3
 St. Luke – Jimmie Luoma (PL) (1/4) 3

TRIO:

—Trio—Mary Seth Luoma (FL)-3
 (Trio, Earle, Sutton)

TURBEVILLE:

—Turbeville—TBS-
(Pine Grove, Shiloh)

UNION:

Union-Elim Charge – Richard Carl Jayroe (RL) 2

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES

Within the Connection:

Fleming, Terry – District Superintendent, Florence District 6
 Jordan, Lou (SY) – Director, Francis Marion Wesley Foundation 10
 Congregational Specialist Florence/Marion Districts – TBS
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
 Morrison, David Todd – Chaplain, United States Army,
 Highland Park CC 14

Other Valid Ministries: None

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL – None

APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES – None

LEAVE OF ABSENCE – None

FAMILY LEAVE – None

SABBATICAL LEAVE – None

MEDICAL LEAVE – None

TRANSITIONAL LEAVE – None

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:

Abraham, Ebbie (RL)
 Altman Jr., John M. (RL)
 Bailey, Harold Jack
 Best, Kay Adams
 Bragdon, Danyne O.
Brown, Isiah (RL)
 Brown III, Major
 Brown, Matthew C.
 Brunson, Ashley C.
 Calcutt Sr., Randall L.
 Cooper, J. Jeannette
 Cooper, Samuel B.
 Crouch, John (RL)
 Dean, Dewey L.
 Edwards, Joyce M.
 Epps, Hazel (RL)
 Everett, Ann D.
 Everett, Wade H.
 Gain, George R. (RA)
 Gaskins, Joshua (RL)
 Henderson, Michael B.
 James, Franklin (RL)
James, Lindora (RL)
 James, William S. (RA)
 Jayroe, Richard (RL)
 Lawson, Willie
 Marcy, David
 McKnight, Shirley (RL)
 Morehead, G. Dane
Parker, Greta Louise (RL)
 Perez, Lou (RL)
 Pietila, Thomas C.
 Poston, Joseph A (RA)
 Ridenhour, Jimmy (RL)
 Sellers, John A. (RA)
 Smiley, John C. (RL)
 Snowden, Mary (RL)
 Snowden, Rufus (RA)
 Thomas, John Pinckney (RL)
 Truluck, Gerald (RL)
 Turbeville, Wright (HL)
 Wagnon III, Leon L.
 Watson, Jerry M.
 Watts, John (RL)
 Westfall, Myrna K. (RA)
 Williams, G. DeVere (RA)
 Wilson, Charles K.
 Wilson, Willie
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers: None

DEACONESES

Active: None
Retired: None

GREENVILLE DISTRICT (53 charges; 64 churches) JAMES D. DENNIS JR. 4

EASLEY:

North Easley Charge – Brian Lee Underwood (PL) (1/2) 1
 (Dacusville, Antioch)

FORK SHOALS:

Lebanon – John W. Polk (SY) (1/4) 2
 Pisgah-Oak Hill – Joseph D. Cate (SY) 2

FOUNTAIN INN:

Trinity – Shawna M. Darnall 2

GRAY COURT:

Bramlett – John E. Fahrney (OF)(¶346.2) (1/2) 6
 —Dials-Shiloh—Forest D. Mixon (RE)(1/2)-9
Gray Court – Michael Wayne Maston (SY) (1/4) 1
Green Pond – Michael Wayne Maston (FL) 1
 Owings – Terry LeRoy (SY) (1/4) 3

GREENVILLE:

Aldersgate – Michael S. Bingham 5
 Berea Friendship – C. Davon Harrelson (FL) 6
 —Buncombe Street—Timothy Julian Rogers (RE)-4
 —Associate—Justin M. Gilreath (FL)-9
 —Associate for Discipleship—TBS
 —Minister of Adult Ministries—William Grover Putnam (RD)-23
 Christ – Larry G. Smith (RL) (1/2) 22
Disciples – Narcie McClendon Jeter 1
 East Greenville – LaShelia M. Wyatt 5
 (Wesley Chapel, Allen View)
 Francis Asbury – Ronald Edward Cook (SY) (1/4) 2
 Greenville Parish – Brenda R. Washington (PL) (1/2) 15
 (Minus Chapel, New Beginnings Mission)
 John Wesley – Daniel T. Hembree (OF)(¶346.2) 3
 Laurens Road – Laura R. Bratton (1/2) 13
McBee Chapel – Laura Martin (SY) (1/4) 1
St. John – Martha Ann Johnson (PL) (1/4) 1
Monaghan – Patricia Dianne Boyer (SY) (1/2) 1
 Northside – Anthony A. Harder (FL) 3

Continued from previous page

Salem – Eric B. McKee Sr. (FL) 4
 South Greenville – Redonia M. Thomas 8
 (Bethlehem, Laurel Creek)
St. Mark – Charles “Tony” Owens (OF) (¶346.2) (1/2) 1
 St. Matthew – Kurt A. McPherson 2
Associate – Janice Hughey (PL) (1/2) 1
 St. Paul – Matthew E. Greer (FL) 2
New Church Start – The Gathering – Karen Lail Jones (FD) 1
Associate – James F. Patterson (RE) 1

GREER:
~~Covenant – Darren C. Hook 17~~
~~Executive Pastor – Matthew L. Yon 6~~
~~Discipleship Pastor – Janice B. Hughey (FL) 5~~
~~Assimilation Pastor – Laura Geloni (PB) (3/4) 2~~
 Faith – Michael Cheatham (LM) (1/4) 2
 Few’s Chapel – John A. MacKeil (LM) (1/4) 4
Grace – Angela M. Etheredge-Erwin 1
 Greenville Korean Mission – Kyu-Seok Shin 11
 Greer Circuit – Twana R. Cruell (FL) 2
 (Bethel, St. Paul)
 Jackson Grove – Alice E. MacKeil (RE) (1/4) 5
 Liberty Hill – Nelson L. Stokes (RE) (1/2) 7
 Memorial – Perry D. Evatt 2
~~Mountain View – Carole A. Walters 6~~
~~Sharon – Anthony Griffith Carosiello 5~~
Slater – Wesley Manly (SY) (1/2) 1
 Victor – Debbie Pisor (FD) (1/2) 7
 Wood’s Chapel – Paul David Wilmer (RL) (1/4) 7
~~Zoar – Michael Cheatham (LM) (1/4) 8~~

MAULDIN:
~~Mauldin – Washington Webster Belangia V 8~~
~~Associate – Richard K. Herd (OF) (¶346.2) 8~~

PIEDMONT:
 Augusta Road – David B. Smith 9
 Piedmont – Richard W. Waldrep (RE) 2

SIMPSONVILLE:
 Advent – Michael A. Turner 12
 Associate – Rachel Witt Carosiello 3
Associate – TBS
 Bethel-Ebenezer – Bradley Thompson (FL) 2
 Hopewell – Donald R. Brown 7
 Simpsonville – J. Michael Smith 6

TAYLORS:
 Lee Road – Rusty Godfrey (FL) 2
St. Mark – Carlton J. McClam Sr. 1
 St. Matthew – Amenti Sujai (FL) 3
TRAVELERS REST:
 New St. Luke – James L. Drummond Jr. (PL) (1/2) 9
Travelers Rest – Christopher Brian Gilmer 1
 Associate – Christine M. Matthews (3/4) 8

WOODRUFF:
 Emma Gray – Joel Andrew Watson (PL) (1/2) 9

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES
Within the Connection:
 Dawsey, James M. – Professor, Emory and Henry College, Oak Hill CC 16
 Dennis Jr., James D. – District Superintendent, Greenville District 5
 Joens, Cathy Louise W. (FD) – Congregational Specialist AN/GV, Aldersgate CC 14
 McCutcheon, Edward – Director, Wesley Foundation, Furman University 15
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
 Hayhurst, Michael – United States Air Force Chaplain 16
Other Valid Ministries:
Reeves-Pendergrass, Christine – St. Matthew CC 1
Pendergrass, Weston B. – Grace 1
Jones, Andrew T. – Buncombe Street CC 1
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL – None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
 Elder, James Edward (AM) – Newman Spring/Graysville UMC, North Georgia Conference 7
 Johnson, Angela Renee (FD) – Minister to Children, Sugar Hill UMC, North Georgia Conference 6

LEAVE OF ABSENCE
 Goldston, Michael E. – Sharon UMC CC 2
Kerlin, Laura-Allen – Advent CC 1
SABBATICAL LEAVE – None
MEDICAL LEAVE
 Watson, Sylvia F. 3
FAMILY LEAVE – None
TRANSITIONAL LEAVE – None
HONORABLE LOCATION
 Blackwelder, Josh L. – Covenant UMC (Greer) CC 5
 Cox, Christopher W. – Bramlett UMC CC
 Dollar, Kristin M. – Prairie Village UMC CC 4
 Matthews, Mary K. – Apex UMC CC

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:
 Addis, Howard D.
 Allison, Carol D.
 Boyer, Patricia Diane
 Brown, Billy
 Bowman
 Callahan, John P.
 Campbell, James C.
 Childers, R. Clayton
 Cole, Joseph L. (RL)
 Curtis, Brenda I.
 Curtis, Joseph L.
 Elliott, Nicholas
 Elliott Jr., Richard F.
 Errington, Joseph R.
 Gannaway, Patricia A.
 Gardner, Les (RL)
 Gillespie, Steven D.
 Gilliam Jr., James O.
 Goulart, Robert I. (RL)
 Griffis-Woodberry, Debra
 Guffee, Michael L.
 Guthrie, Linda M.
 Hicks, Granville A.
 Hill, Jerry M. (RL)
 Howell Jr., Robert J.
 Huff Jr., A.V.
 Joens, Janet C.
 Keely, Robert P.
 Lee, Dennis R.
 MacKeil, Alice E.
 McAlister, J. Richard
 Miller, John Teague
 Mixon, Forest D.
 Parker, Fred W. (RL)
 Patterson, James F.
 Peterson, Gary L.
Putnam, William Grover
 Riser, George M.
 Rush, John
 Scott, George W.
 Shaw, Charles S.
 Smith, Larry G. (RL)
 Smith, S. Randolph
 Snow, Murray A.

Stanley, Dwaine C. (RL)
 Stoehr, Lorna Lee Curtis
 Stokes, Nelson L.
 Stout, Phillip E.
 Strait, George E.
 Sullivan, Patricia A. (FD)
 Temple, Jerry E.
 Thomas, George
 Thomas, Tina
 Thrailkill, Phillip
 Treaster, Fred
 Waldrep, Richard W.
 Ward, Jon P. (RL)
 Warren Jr., John L.
 Watson, John H. (RL)
 Wechsler, Christine MacDonald
Whited, J. Timothy
 Williams Jr, John M.
 Wilmer, Paul David (RL)
 Wood, Patricia S.
 Wright, Alfred T. (AM)
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers: None

DEACONESES

Active: None
Retired: None

GREENWOOD DISTRICT (54 charges; 78 churches) STEPHEN LOVE, DS 8

BATESBURG:
 St. John’s – Scott D. Nurse (PL) (3/4) 8
BELVEDERE:
 Belvedere – Mark English (PL) (1/2) 2
CLINTON:
 Broad Street – Justin Ritter 2
EDGEFIELD:
 Edgefield – Michael E. Evans (FL) 4
GRANITEVILLE:
 St. John-Warrentonville – Kendell Healy (FL) 3
GREENWOOD:
 Aldersgate – Nona Woodle (FL) 4
 Ebenezer-Mathews Charge – Adrian Rogers (SY) 4
~~Hodges – Cheryl E. Remchuk (FL) 2~~
 Lowell Street-Panola – Viki M. Hydrick (PL) (1/2) 2
 Lupo Memorial – Craig Vondergeest (OE) (¶346.1) 7
 Main Street – Steven P. Keck 2
 Mount Carmel – Donald Black (LM) (1/4) 4
 Mount Lebanon-Kinards – Arthur Gamble (FL) 5
 Rehoboth – Carol Peppers Wray (RE) 9
St. Mark – Jason Glen Wilson 1
 Associate – Joseph Gambrell (FL) 3
 Associate – Robert T. Lybrand (PL) (1/4) 3
 Tranquil – John P. Bolin 3
 Trinity-Harris Charge – Thessa G. Smith (PE) 2
Troy – P. Kile Antone (PL) (1/2) 1
JOANNA:
Epworth-Springdale – Joie Rogers (SY) (1/4) 1
JOHNSTON:
 Johnston-Harmony – Amanda G. Richardson (PE) 3
KINARDS:
 Hopewell-Sharon Charge – Kathy Cinnamon (SY) (1/4) 1
LANGLEY:
 Capers Chapel – Donna Eidson (RL) (1/2) 4
 Langley – Graham Bennett (FL) 3
LAURENS:
 Central-Trinity – Myra Taylor (PL) (1/2) 3
 First – Asa Gray Stallworth (FL) 2
 St. James – Clyde Scott (RE) 2
LEESVILLE:
 Leesville – Shawn Armstrong 3
McCORMICK:
~~McCormick – C. Nels Ledwell 7~~
 Plum Branch Charge – Susan Galasso (OF) (¶346.2) 3
 (Republican, St. Paul)

NEWBERRY:
Central – Laura Canine Parrish 1
 Epling Memorial-Lebanon Charge – William A. Hightower (PL) (1/2) 9
 Lewis Memorial-Ebenezer Charge – James H. Counts Jr. (RL) 14
 Trinity-New Chapel Charge – Douglas Benton (RA) 3
NINETY SIX:
 Cambridge – Henry Brooks Sr. (PL) (1/2) 6
 St. Paul – Scott Gilmer (PE) 3
NORTH AUGUSTA:
 Grace – Catherine Jamieson 2
 Associate – Daniel Eplee (FL) 2
 Associate – Ashley Buchanan (FL) 2
POMARIA:
 Mount Pleasant-O’Neal Street – Darlene Kelley 3
 Pomaria Charge – Jesse Rogers (FL) 3
 (Caper’s Chapel, New Hope)
PROSPERITY:
 Wightman – Ben Barnett 4
 Zion – Ralph T. Bowling III 7
RIDGE SPRING
 Ridge Spring Charge – John Timothy Jones (PL) (1/2) 2
 (Ridge Spring, Spann)

SALUDA:
 Bethany-Zoar – John T. Jones Jr. (FL) 3
 Bethlehem – Charles Adams (RL) (1/2) 8
~~Butler-Shiloh – J. Robert Huggins (RL) (1/2) 3~~
 Crossroads-Martha’s Chapel-Mays – Gerald F. Clinkscales (PL) (1/2) 3
 Emory-Nazareth – Kenneth Freeman 6
 St. Paul – Cameron Levi (PE) 2
TRENTON:
 McKendree – Kile Antone (PL) (1/2) 4
 Trenton – Durand Hall (PL) (1/2) 5
VAUCLUSE:
 Vauclose-Pentecost – Patrick J. Taylor (OE) (¶346.1) (1/2) 2
WARE SHOALS:
 Mount Bethel-King’s Chapel – Vincent Davis (PL) (1/2) 2
 Ware Shoals-Harmony – William F. Rogers III (RE) 9
WATERLOO:
 Soule Chapel – Emil Finley (RL) (1/2) 5
 Waterloo – Dan S. Bradley (RE) 9

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES
Within the Connection:
 Copeland, Jennifer E. – Executive Director, NC Council of Churches, Broad Street CC 9
 Love, Stephen L. – District Superintendent, Greenwood District 8
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: None
Other Valid Ministries: None
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL – None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES – None
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
 Hendrickson, Eric – Wesley UMC North Georgia Conference CC 5

SABBATICAL LEAVE – None
TRANSITIONAL LEAVE – None
MEDICAL LEAVE
 Surret, David Cofield 2
HONORABLE LOCATION
 Newell, John 15

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:
 Adams, Charles (RL)
 Alford, Judy Ann Martin
 Allen, Robert L.
 Anderson, Vernon O.
 Bradley, Dan
 Campbell, J. Taylor
 Charles, Ada A.
 Connelly, Jacqueline
 Counts Jr., James (RL)
 Curry, Eugene L.
 Davis, James Ray
 Eanes, Lisa Kim
 Eidson, Donna (RL)
 Finley, Emil (RL)
 Goldie, Richard C. (RL)
 Hadden Jr., O. Julius
 Hadden, Miriam G.
 Hudson, Blaine S.
 Huggins, J. Robert (RL)
King, Sandra S.
King, Steven M.
 Lusk, T. Joseph
 Morton Jr., Ted R.
 Palmer, Bruce H.
 Peurifoy, Harvey O.
 Pickens, John Gerald
 Quarles, Alan Nathan (RL)
 Quarles, J. William (RL)
 Rainwater, Brian T.
 Rogers, Paul H.
 Rogers, Sheila D.
 Rogers III, William F.
 Roof, Terry A.
 Ruth, E. DeVon
 Scott, Clyde E.
 Shoemaker, Mary Jane
 Smyth, Dan (RA)
 Stephens Jr., Herbert
 Sweat, Keith (RL)
Tooth, Cheryl Dyke
 Wiggins, Elwood Holler
 Williams, James Haddon
 Wray, Carol P.
 Younginer Jr., John M.
Retired Missionaries: None

MINISTRY OF DEACONS

Active: None
Retired:
 Bennett, Hazel
 Osborne, Jean O.
 Taylor, Bobbie Opal

HARTSVILLE DISTRICT (66 charges; 100 churches) TELLEY LYNETTE GADSON, DS 3

BETHUNE:
 Bethune – Frederick N. Yebuah (RE) (1/2) 2
 (Bethel, Sandy Grove)
BISHOPVILLE:
 Bethlehem – Rebecca D. Seymour (OF) (¶346.2) 2
 Bishopville Circuit – Angela N. Hampton (FL) 2
 (New Haven, Springhill)
 Hebron – Jerry Cal McManus Sr. (PL) (1/2) 11
 Mechanicsville – Kenneth B. Middleton (PE) 2
Mount Zion – Michael Brisbon (PL) (1/2) 1
 St. Matthew Circuit – Terence I. Squires Jr. (FL) 3
 (Ashland, Concord, St. Matthew)
CAMDEN:
Camden First – Gwendolyn Thompson White (PL) (1/2) 1
 East Camden – Jerry L. Dicks 5
 (Emmanuel, St. Matthew)
 Good Hope Wesley Chapel – Brenda J. Thomas 3
 Lyttleton Street – Bishop Gary Rivas (OE) (¶346.1) 3
 Associate – J. William Smith (PE) 3
 St. Paul – James P. Smith 9
 West Camden – Franklin Garrett (RE) 2
 (Rockspring, St. Peter)

CHERAW:
 Cheraw Parish – Sammy Pazi 2
 (Bethel, Mount Zion, Wesley)
First Church – Billy Keith Stewart (PE) 1
Mount Olivet-Pleasant Grove – Maurice Earl Nason Jr. (RE) 6
CHESTERFIELD:
 Bethel-Ebenezer – Michael Steven Phares (PL) (1/2) 11
 Friendship-Mount Croghan – Charles E. Teal (PL) (1/2) 5
 Shiloh – Fred McDaniel 9
 St. Paul – Alisha Hansen (PE) 6
 Wesley Chapel – Robin Miles (PL) (1/2) 3
 Zoar – William “Billy Jack” Johnson (SY) (1/2) 5
DARLINGTON:
 Darlington Cooperative Parish* – Reginald Lee 4
 Associate – Lyndon B. Alexander II (PL) 2
 (New Providence) (St. John, Wesley Chapel)
 Indian Branch-Epworth – Barbara Segars (RL) 7
 Shiloh – Darren J. McClam (PL) (1/2) 9
 St. James – Henry Ravenel 2
Trinity – Ronald Brent Crimm (FL) 1
 West Darlington – Daniel M. Hall (RL) (1/2) 3
 (Bethel, Wesley Memorial)

HARTSVILLE:
 Bethlehem-Prospect – Cindy A. Rumsey (PE) 4
 Centenary-Kingsville – Anthony D. Caldwell (PE) 5
 Kellybell-Sandy Bluff – Mary B. Burnell (PL) (1/2) 5
 Mount Beulah – Leverm Epps (PL) (1/2) 3
New Hope – Jacob McLeod (RL) 1
 New Market – Corinthia Mack (PL) (1/2) 2
Sandy Bluff – Tiffany Redmond (OF) (¶346.2) 1
St. Luke – Henry Murray Davis 1
Tabernacle – Thomas M. McCoy (PL) 1
 Wesley – Robert “Tony” Adams 5
JEFFERSON:
 Hopewell-Wesley Chapel – Willie Mae Cannon (PL) (1/2) 8
 Jefferson – David E. Christopher (FL) 5
 (Fork Creek, Jefferson)
 Sandy Grove-Mount Elon – Marion L. Cooper (PL) (1/2) 8
LAMAR:
 Elim – Julius L. McDowell (RE) 2
 Lamar – Paula Stover (FL) 3
 Lamar-Ebenezer – James “Elbert” Williams (1/2) 4
 (Ebenezer, John Wesley, Sandy Grove)
 Lamar Parish – (Newman Swamp-Zion) - Emma Jones (PL) (1/2) 5
LUGOFF:
 Lugoff Parish – William DuBose (PL) (1/2) 3
 (Mount Joshua, Mount Prospect, Shiloh)

St. John – Angela Halter Marshall (FD) 5
Unity – Charlie Thomas 1
LYDIA:
Wesley Chapel – TBS
MCBEE:
 McBee Charge – Charles Gary Compton (RL) 19
 (Hebron, McBee)
 Union – Paige D. Wheeler (FL) 6
OSWEGO:
~~Bethel – J. Timothy Whited 6~~
Clark – Sarah Johnson (LM) (1/4) 1
Oswego Circuit – Debra Anderson-Joe (PL) (1/2) 1
 (Mount Moriah, St. Mark)

PAGELAND:
 Pageland – Patricia Bowman (PL) (1/2) 4
 Salem – Jeffrey Belton (PL) (1/2) 5
Zion-Zoar Charge – Teri Overlees Schell (FL) 1
REMBERT:
~~Rembert-St. John – Debra Anderson-Joe (PL) (1/2) 3~~
 (Beulah, McLeod Chapel, St. John)
SUMTER:
 Aldersgate – Laura Whitt 3
~~Daizell – Joshua Colvin (PL) (1/2) 5~~
Emmanuel – James Moses Smith (PL) (1/4) 1
~~Lewis Chapel – J. Mel Thompson II (FL) 3~~
Mount Zion – Troy Cato (PL) (1/2) 1
 North Sumter – Marvis Stewart (1/2) 4
 (Antioch, Shepherd)
 St. James – Allen Nesmith 3
St. Mark – Darlene Dellinger (OF) (¶346.2) 1
~~St. Mark’s – Wes Conner (PL) (1/2) 7~~
 Trinity – Joseph R. James Jr. 8
Associate – Rachel E. Headden (FL) 1

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES

Within the Connection:
 Gadson, Telley L. – District Superintendent, Hartsville District 3

Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: None
Other Valid Ministries:
 Ross, Rosetta Everna – Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Spelman College, St. Mark CC 30
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL – None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES – None
LEAVE OF ABSENCE – None
FAMILY LEAVE – None
SABBATICAL LEAVE – None
TRANSITIONAL LEAVE – None
MEDICAL LEAVE
 Hunsucker, Carl W. – St. Luke 3
 Lane, J.C. – Mount Zion (Sumter) CC 4
 Vickers III, John H. “Jack” – First Cheraw 8
HONORABLE LOCATION
 Ritter, Audrey G. – Jefferson UMC CC

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:
 Ammons, Gene Sarvis
Armstrong, Debra A.
 Baker, Alexander
 Ballard Jr., Paul McKinney
 Beckom, Terry Martin
 Boatwright Sr., Donald W. (Bud)
 Bowman, Charles Lee (RL)
 Brown, Larry Richard (RL)
 Chandler, George P.
 Compton, Charles Gary (RL)
 Dargan, Bill
 Dean, Dewey Levan
Dicks, John
 Feagin III, Eugene L.
 Flail Jr., Melvin W.
 Frey, Paul
 Garrett, Franklin R.
 Griffin Jr, Alfred V.
 Griffith, Frank J.
 Hall, Daniel M.
 Herlong, Edward
 Josey, Roberta
 Ledbetter, Pamela
 McCormick, Stephen M.
 McDaniel, Linda E. (HL)
 McFadden, Genova
 McDowell, Julius L.
 McLeod, Jacob L. (RL)
 Miller, Blondell
 Moore, James
 Nason Jr., Maurice E.
 Orr, Patricia Pepper
 Parsons, Barbee Ollis
 Ritter II, Carl F.
 Segars, Barbara
 Short, Charlie A.
 Shugart, Steven L.
 Thackston, Thomas Reginald
 Thomas, Eddie, Jr. (RA)
 Waddell III, Howard S. (HL)
 Watry, Philip N.
 Wood, Mary Kay
 Wood, Paul A.
 Yebuah, Frederick N.
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers: None

DEACONESES

Active:
 Smith, Selena Ruth – Fire Prevention Educator, Sumter, SC Fire Department 11
Retired: None

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

MARION DISTRICT (65 charges; 89 churches) STEVEN LEE BROWN, DS 1

ANDREWS:
~~Trinity – D. Jeffrey Roper 4~~
AYNOR
~~Aynor – Kelly G. Snelgrove 5~~
~~Pisgah – TBS~~
~~Rehoboth – TBS~~
BENNETTSVILLE:
~~Antioch – Jerry Wayne Shaw (RL) (1/4) 7~~
Bennettsville Charge – Larry McCray (FL) 1
 (Aaron Temple, Ebenezer)
~~Bennettsville First – Elaine F. “Taylor” Coates (FL) 4~~
 Bennettsville Parish – Maurice E. McZeke (PL) (1/2) 2
 (Shiloh, Smyrna, St. Michael)

Continued on next page

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BUFFALO:
—Buffalo-Sardis — Jeff W. Farmer (FL) 3

CAMPOBELLO:
—Foothills Charge — L. Daniel “Dan” Mason (PL) (1/4) 9
(Campobello, Liberty)

CHESNEE:
Chesnee-Fingerville — Thomas A. “Thom” Thornton (OF) (¶346.2) (1/2) 4
Friends in Christ — James R. “Jimmy” Lewis (PL) (1/2) 9

COWPENS:
Cowpens Charge — Wayne R. Major Sr. (RE) (1/2) 9
(Salem, St. Mark, St. Andrews)

CROSS ANCHOR:
Cross Anchor Charge — Brian P. Williams (PL) (1/2) 12
(Hebron, Cross Anchor Yarbrough)

Golightly-Tabernacle — Stephen Lapham (SY) 2

DUNCAN:
Tyger River Charge — Susan Yvonne “Suzy” Sullivan (PL) (1/2) 2
(Duncan, Immanuel)

ENOREE:
Trinity-Enoree-Patterson Chapel — Gregory W. Thompson (OF) (¶346.2) 2

GAFFNEY:
Buford Street — David E. “Dave” Nichols (RE) (1/2) 5
Dunton — Calvin L. Smith (RE) 9
Gaffney Charge — James Ronald “Ron” Singleton (1/2) 3
Mesopotamia-Asbury — Angelia P. Price (RA) (1/2) 15

GRAMLING:
Gramling — Charles Richard “Rick” Brown (OE) (¶346.1) 6

INMAN:
Inman Charge — Joe L. Blackwell (RE) 1
(Aldersgate, Inman)

JONESVILLE:
Jonesville-New Hope — Lehman A. Moseley (SY) (1/2) 1
—Kelton Charge — Lee V. Goyle (OF) (¶346.2) 2
(Bethlehem, Foster’s Chapel)

LANDRUM:
Jacksons Grove — Timothy “Tim” C. Drum II (OE) (¶346.1) (1/2) 2
Landrum — Nancy Creswell Reed (FL) 3

LOCKHART:
—Wesley Chapel — Richard D. Lewis (RL) (1/2) 6

LYMAN:
—Lyman — Erik K. Grayson 2

PACOLET:
Montgomery Memorial — Charles “Brian” Humphries 4

ROEBUCK:
—Walnut Grove — Chris B. Snelgrove (FL) 17

SPARTANBURG:
Beaumont — Annie R. Crocker (LM) (1/4) 5
Ben Avon — Cecil “Edward” Enlow (SY) (1/2) 2
Bethel — William Bradford “Brad” Gray 4
Associate — Megan L. Gray 3
Cannon’s Camp Ground — Miriam Wilson Mick 1
Central — Cameron “Cam” Y. Treece 3
Director of Christian Education & Programs — Paige M. Wolfe (FD) 7
Cherokee Springs-Liberty — Mason Heyward Cantey 4
Church of the Covenant — Heather B. Humphries 7
El Bethel-Pacoleet Charge — Phillip Wayne Park (OR) (¶346.1) (1/2) 2
Fairmont — William Clifton “Bill” Mullis (SY) (1/2) 2
Gravely Memorial — Joaquin “Jack” Polin (PL) (1/2) 7
—Reidville Road — Daniel Allen “Danny” Wiley 11
—Roebuck — Cecil “Edward” Enlow (SY) (1/2) 2
Silver Hill Memorial — Sheila Elliott Hodge 5
Skylyn-Arcadia Charge — Robert L. “Skipper” Brock (PL) (1/2) 2
Spartanburg Parish — Andre Gary (PL) (1/2) 5
(Allen Chapel, Florence Chapel)
St. James — Andrew R. Wolfe 4
St. Luke-White Stone — Chris J. Allen (PL) (1/2) 2
St. Paul — Jeremy Lawton Howell 2
Trinity — Michelle Dellinger Cockcroft 3

UNION:
Bogansville — Francis Edward Traxler (FL) 1
Grace — Jerry L. Phillips Jr. 3
Union Charge — Merritt R. “Tuie” Wentz (FL) 12
(Bethel, Duncan Acres)

WHITMIRE:
—Cartiste — TBS
Whitmire — Chad Ponder (PL) (1/2) 2

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES
Within the Connection:
Drum, Timothy, II (OE) — Chaplain and Director of Church Relations, Spartanburg Methodist College 7
Mitchell, Cathy D. — District Superintendent, Spartanburg District 6
Pace Jr., Phillip Lynwood — Chaplain, Oxford College, Emory University, St. James CC 15
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency:
Bennett, Traci S. (FD) — Chaplain III, Tyger River Correctional Institution, Cannon’s Camp Ground CC 16
Franklin Jr., E. Herbert — Chaplain, United States Army, Bethel-Spartanburg CC 22
Other Valid Ministries:
Timmons, Martha Ann (FD) — PS I Love You (3/4) & The Children’s Resource Closet (1/4), St. James CC 2
Wolfe, Paige Matthews (FD) — Fostering Great Ideas (3/4) & Central UMC (1/4)

APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL — None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
Blair, Dan — First UMC and Fellowship UMC, North Carolina Conference 7

STUDENT PASTOR
Fallaw, Grayson — Sandes Chapel and Pine Level First, licensed by N.C. Conference 1

SABBATICAL LEAVE — None
LEAVE OF ABSENCE
Teagan, Deborah Luther — St. Paul-Spartanburg CC 14

PERSONAL LEAVE — None
MEDICAL LEAVE
Fallaw, Jo Anna — Bethel-Spartanburg CC 3

FAMILY LEAVE
Hudson, Wendy T. — Bethel-Spartanburg CC 2

TRANSITIONAL LEAVE — None
HONORABLE LOCATION
Wood, Sherry M. Trinity UMC CC

RETIREMENT

Retired Ministers:
Anderson, Thurman W.
Andrews, Richard C. (RL)
Bobo, Kenneth G.
Boshell, Donald C. (RL)
Bowers, Michael E.
Brewer, Jones L. (RL)
Brown, David A.
Brown, Will Rogers
Caldwell, Jack A. (RL)
Cannon, Carol R.
Cannon, Robert T.
Carter, James B. “Jim” (RL)
Clyburn Jr., David A.
Culp, Wayne A.
Dillard, Jimmy W.
Duncan, Jason C. (RL)
Ervin, David F. (RA)
Fields, George D. (RL)
Fisher, A. Mickey
Fizer, George H. (RL)
Gavalas, Anthony N.
Gilliland, Douglas W.
Griffeth, James Ellis
Hill Jr., Thomas H. (RL)
Holt, Arthur H.
Hope, Donald J.
Hopper, Richard D.
Hunter, Kathryn O.
Hyder, Larry R.
Ivey, James W.
Jamison, Louis D.
Jenkins, Jane D.
Johnston, James W.
Kyllonen, Mitchell W.
Leonard Sr., Ronald Lee
Lewis, Richard D. (RL)
Long, Allen E.
Major Sr., Wayne R.
Monson, Robert C.
Nichols, David E.
Norrell, Thomas H.
Price, Angelia P. (RA)
Rawlinson, Carol M.
Reynolds, Edgar B.

Rickenbaker, Luther H.
Roper, Frances “Lee” (RL)
Ropp Jr., John Wesley
Sistare, James Bart
Smith, Calvin L.
Strother, Robert G.
Thompson, Elizabeth A.
Thompson, William L. (RL)
Tillerson, Elbert S. (RL)
Towery, Ronald D. (RL)
White, Lloyd E.
White, Rufus Horace (RL)
Wilkes, Molly F. (RA)
Wilkes Jr., Thomas B.
Wilkins, Rebecca A.
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers:
Miller, Mary Lou (DR)

DEACONESSES

Active: None
Retired:
Miller, Mary Lou (DC)

WALTERBORO DISTRICT
(53 charges; 94 churches)
JOSEPH A. MCDONALD, DS 4

ALLENDALE:
Allendale — Jeremy N. Phipps (PL) (1/2) 2
(Gillette, Swallow Savannah)
Central Circuit — Lisa M. Way 2
(New Hope, Simpson, Union)

BEAUFORT:
Carteret Street — Charles Bryson Williams Jr. 5
Holy Trinity — SanRoman King (PL) (1/4) 3
Port Royal — Anne Gregory Bridgers (RL) (1/2) 13
Waters Edge — Hans Jerome Hamm (PL) (1/2) 2
Wesley — Tracy Paulette Colleton-Glover (PL) (1/2) 3

COTTAGEVILLE:
—Cottageville — Keith Yates (PL) (1/2) 2
Jericho — Marvin Jones III (PL) (1/2) 6
Rehoboth — Becky G. Hogan (SY) (1/4) 1
Macedonia — Wilhelmina Thompson (PL) (1/4) 3
Wesley Grove — L. Johnny Epps (PL) (1/4) 6

DORCHESTER:
Dorchester Circuit — Larry W. Stocker (SY) (1/2) 1
(Salem, Zion)
Dorchester Parish — Laurie Michael Jamar Tomlin (OF) (¶346.2) (1/2) 4
(Oak Grove, St. John)

EHRHARDT:
Ebenezer-Rizer’s Chapel — Stanley Bernard Ritter (PL) (1/2) 9
Ehrhardt — Lewis Christopher King III (PL) (1/2) 20
(Wesley Chapel, St. James, Zion, Lodge)
Friendship-St. Luke — Vivian Remona Lingard (PL) (1/2) 14

HAMPTON:
Estill-Black Swamp — Dewey L. Shaffer (OF) (¶346.2) (3/4) 10
(Estill, Furman, Mount Carmel)
Fairfax Charge — Mary Benton Holladay (OF) (¶346.2) (1/2) 6
(Bellinger Chapel, Brunson)

Hampton-Varnville Charge — TBS
Toby-Mount Nebo Charge — Lamonte Darnell Hodges (PL) (1/4) 9

HARLEYVILLE:
Bethel-Duncan Chapel — Paul Lawton (PL) (1/2) 6
First Church — Yvette Mickyalla McDonald (FL) 3
Harleyville Parish — James A. Ross (RL) (1/2) 3
(Morris Chapel, St. Daniel)

HILTON HEAD:
Bluffton — Scarlett Tanner Hester 4
Church of the Palms — Shannon Renee Bullion 1
St. Andrew By-The-Sea — Jonathan E. Tompkins 1

RIDGELAND:
Fisher Chapel-St. Stephen — William H.D. Bowser Jr. (RE) 7
Hardeeville — Richard Moses Smith (RE) (1/4) 3
St. Luke — Christopher Lee Thompson 3
—St. Paul — Alvin Shifflett (OF) (¶346.2) 10
—Tillman Charge — Alvin Shifflett (OF) (¶346.2) (1/4) 10

RIDGEVILLE:
Canaan-Sand Hill — Jeffrey Salley 8
—Cypress — Cheryl Elaine Yates (1/4) 4
—Mount Tabor — Cheryl Elaine Yates (1/4) 4
New Hope-St. Paul Charge — Sharon Spann Gamble 5
—Trinity — Cheryl Elaine Yates (1/4) 4

RUFFIN:
Adnah-Williams Charge — Richard W. Kelly (SY) (1/4) 1
Bells Parish — James Bernard Grant (PL) (1/2) 17
(Red Root, Sykes Savannah)
Mount Pleasant — Schoneke Summerhill (SY) (1/4) 2
Ruffin Circuit — N. Keith Yates (PL) (1/2) 1
(Bethel, St. John, Tabor)
Ruffin Parish — Adrienne Elaine Stokes (PL) (1/2) 4
(Buckhead, Hickory Hill)
Smoaks Circuit — Jeffrey P. Cila (PL) (1/2) 2
(Green Pond, Little Swamp, Trinity)
Springtown — Norman Aaron Brown 10

ST. GEORGE:
Grover Charge — Sidney Wells Mims (RL) (1/2) 3
(Grover, Providence)
Indian Field — Michael Leonard Written (FL) 1
New Grace — Constance Nelson McLeod 3
Shady Grove — Leonard Huggins Jr. 6
St. George — Kathy Priest Hudson 3
St. George Parish — Fred Moore (PL) (1/2) 1
(St. Mark, Trinity)

WALTERBORO:
Bethel — Scott Wachter 6
Bethel-Red Bank Charge — Walter Harley (PL) (1/2) 2
Colleton Circuit — Curtis J. Young (PL) (1/2) 19
(Bethel, Heaven Gate, Trinity)
Hendersonville Charge — Gary Wade Finch (PL) (1/2) 3
(Ebenezer, Ritter; Ebenezer, Yemassee; Salem)
New Life — Angela Ford Nelson 3
Walterboro Charge — TBS
(Mount Carmel, Peniel, Sandy Dam)
Walterboro Parish — Destine M. Spells (SY) (1/2) 2
(Cumberland, Isaiahh)

APPOINTMENTS TO EXTENSION MINISTRIES
Within the Connection:
McDonald, Joseph A. — District Superintendent, Walterboro District 4
Approved by United Methodist Endorsing Agency: None
Other Valid Ministries: None
APPOINTED TO ATTEND SCHOOL — None
APPOINTED IN OTHER ANNUAL CONFERENCES
McNeal, Steven Moore — Pastor, Advent Ferry UMC, North Carolina Conference 3
STUDENT LOCAL PASTOR — None
LEAVE OF ABSENCE — None
FAMILY LEAVE — None
SABBATICAL LEAVE — None
MEDICAL LEAVE — None

RETIREED

Retired Ministers:
Bell, Melvin (RL)
Bowser Jr., William D.
Brewer, Ronald L. (RL)
Bridgers, Anne (RL)
Cox, David W.
Davis, Frederick R.
Geddis, Roosevelt
Harrison Jr., Jerry
Hoover, Robert E. (RL)
Lybrand, Frank E.
Marchant, James D. (RL)
Mims III, Sidney W. (RL)
Ross, James Albert (RL)
Smith, Richard M.
Smith, Theron
Walker Thomas, J. Herbert
Retired Missionaries: None

DIACONAL MINISTRY

Diaconal Ministers: None
Retired Diaconal Ministers: None

DEACONESSES

Active: None
Retired: None

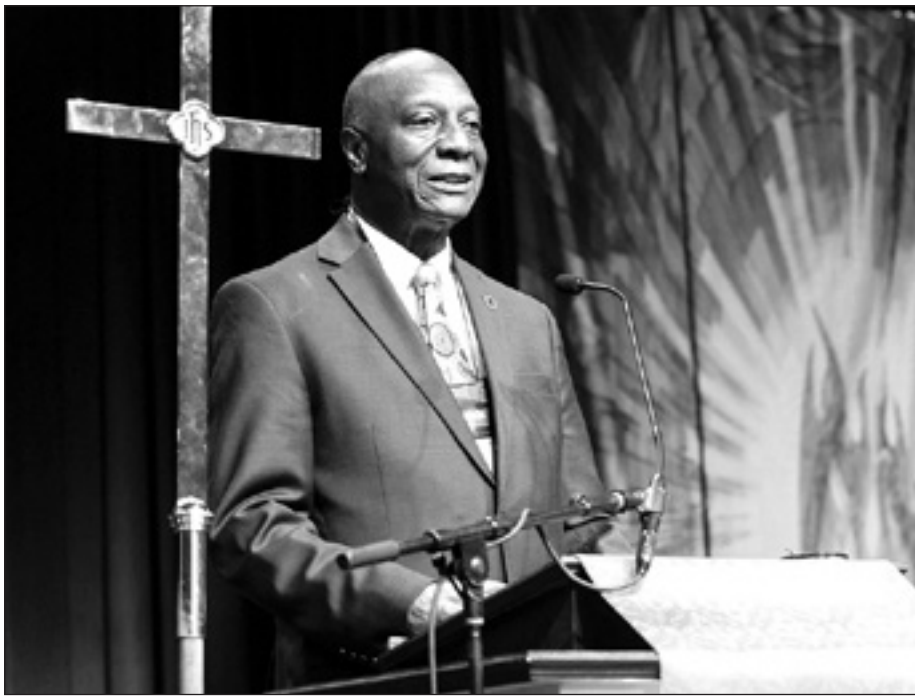


Photo by Matt Brodie

Investing in Africa’s future

Jim Salley gives an update on Africa University to Annual Conference, lifting up what he called “a United Methodist dream come true.” Africa University, located in Zimbabwe, was founded in 1992 and hosted its 29th graduation ceremony June 10. Salley, who is president and chief executive officer of Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. and associate vice chancellor for institutional advancement, thanked the body for the \$800,000 it helped give to Fairfield Children’s Home, located across the road from Africa University. South Carolina raised \$8 million to help Epworth, and part of that campaign was committing a 10 percent tithe to help children in Zimbabwe. “Thank you, South Carolina Conference, for not only being the church in South Carolina but the church in the world,” Salley said to applause. He noted that today the university has 45 campus buildings debt free.



Photos by Matt Brodie

Welcome, new leaders

Annual Conference got the chance to officially welcome the new presidents of Epworth Children’s Home and Claffin University. Above left, Beth Williams, Epworth’s new president and CEO, greets the body Monday afternoon, calling her time at the helm so far “a joyous ride.” She offered fervent thanks to South Carolina UMCs, who have allowed the 127-year-old children’s home to expand beyond Columbia. Their newest location, opening this summer, is in Hilton Head. Epworth Chair the Rev. Smoke Kanipe praised William’s deep love for God and God’s children. “God brought Beth Williams to us,” Kanipe said, praising her work. Above right, Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack, who took the helm in 2019 as the ninth president since Claffin’s founding 153 years ago, shares about their record enrollment once again this year, noting that his service is a distinct pleasure. “We have not wavered from our mission to educate the whole student academically, socially and for us, spiritually,” Warmack said. The Rev. Larry McCutcheon introduced Warmack, calling him a dynamic and excellent leader.



Photos courtesy of Betty Neal

JOY class marks 60 years

The JOY Sunday School Class of Shandon UMC, Columbia, celebrated its 60th anniversary May 21 with a camp-meeting-style Diamond Jubilee Celebration and luncheon. Sonny and Leanne Jarrett, Donna and Major Pearman and Gessner and the late Bill Dunn were honored as founding members. Dr. Jimmy Adams blew the shofar to signify the beginning of the camp meeting. A picnic-style lunch was served, followed by comments about the last 60 years by class president Al Moses. Ariel Barker, above, a former member of the choir while she was earning her master's in vocal performance at USC, entertained all with "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho," "My Tribute" and "Amazing Grace." Barker also led the class members in singing "I'll Fly Away," "This Little Light of Mine" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." Members feel blessed to be a part of this group. JOY stands for Jesus First, Others Second and Yourself Third. More than 100 members and guests attended and enjoyed celebrating this memorable event.



Conference Historical Society

by the Rev. Meredith M. Dark

'We've Come This Far By Faith' (Part Two)

This column continues the story of the African American Methodist Heritage Center's excellent documentary begun last month on the history of African Americans in American Methodism. The DVD of "We've Come This Far By Faith" is available from the center and makes an excellent program.

A number of churches in the Southeast gave birth to historically Black colleges and universities, or HBCUs. Many of these schools started in modest church basements.

Among them, St. Matthew's Church in Greensboro, North Carolina, convened the first classes of Bennett College, founded in 1873.

Asbury Church in Holly Springs, Mississippi, gave birth to Rust College.

At Central Church in Atlanta, Georgia, Clark Atlanta University and Gammon Theological Seminary began.

At Ebenezer Church in Jacksonville, Florida, Mary McLeod Bethune began Bethune-Cookman University.

Clark Memorial Church in Nashville, Tennessee, was the original site of Meharry Medical College.

The Northern Methodist Church created over a hundred schools and seminaries, most of them established by the Freedmen's Aid Society and the Women's Missionary Society. Today 11 HBCUs remain affiliated with The United Methodist Church.

In 1958 Gammon Theological Seminary, founded in 1883, joined seminaries of other denominations to become a part of the Interdenominational Theological Center.

The Rev. Joseph Crawford, an Atlanta pastor and seminary trustee, says, "Gammon provided opportunities for those who would have turned away from their calling to ministry. That meant a lot because I was one of those and I've known other friends who probably would not have received a theological education had it not been for Gammon doing creative recruitment and financial packages to assist students to go to school."

Black Methodist churches became centers not only for religious life, but also education, civic leadership, cultural enrichment and cultural support in their segregated communities.

By the year 1900, 92 percent of African Americans lived in the South where 18 African-American conferences, 1,700 African-American clergy, 4,000 African-American churches and 250,000 African-American members of the Methodist Episcopal Church resided. By 1900 all of the South's annual conferences were racially segregated in part because of to the Supreme Court's 1883 ruling that sanctioned separate but equal accommodations.

There were key African-American leaders who affected their congregations and the nation as a whole, among them Frederick Douglas, Mary McLeod Bethune and Charles Albert Tindley. In time, African-American leadership became more widely known. The 1920 General Conference of

the Methodist Episcopal Church elected its first African-American bishops with equal status: Matthew W. Clair Sr. and Robert E. Jones.

For years there were efforts to reunite the major branches of American Methodism: The Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and The Methodist Protestant Church.

Race continued to be an issue in determining the place of African-American membership in the reunited church. The Plan of Union, which was finally adopted by the three branches, contained provisions that all White conferences and congregations would be placed in five regional jurisdictions, while all African-American conferences and members would be placed in a separate non-regional jurisdiction called the Central Jurisdiction.

The election of bishops and certain other business would be conducted at the jurisdictional level.

The Uniting Conference took place in April 1939 in Kansas City, Missouri. The African-American Central Jurisdiction convened its first quadrennial session in 1940 in St. Louis.

After World War II, President Harry S. Truman ended segregation in the Armed Forces in 1950. In the 1956 General Conference, African-American delegates presented their findings in a comprehensive study on the Central Jurisdiction and called for its abolishment.

On May 1, The Methodist Church agreed, "There must be no place in the Methodist Church for racial discrimination or forced segregation. We recommend that discrimination or segregation by any method or practice, whether in conference structure or otherwise be abolished with reasonable speed."

The next day delegates approved Amendment Nine, the plan for an orderly dismantling of the Central Jurisdiction.

The 1956 Conference also approved two other measures: equal representation for lay and clergy at Annual Conferences and full clergy rights for women.

The first African-American woman ordained was the Rev. Laura Lang of Kentucky.

The Central Jurisdiction came to an end in 1967 in Nashville, Tennessee. The next year, The United Methodist Church was born from the merger of The Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren Churches with five geographical jurisdictions in the United States and conferences in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Influential African-American leadership exists today at all levels of the church, including the episcopacy, as well as through The Black College Fund to support HBCUs and through Black Methodists for Church Renewal.

Dark serves as president of the South Carolina Conference Historical Society. She is the pastor of Socastee United Methodist Church, Myrtle Beach.



From the Archives

by Dr. Phillip Stone

Methodism's first 150 years

In just over ten years, South Carolina Methodists will be celebrating the 250th anniversary of our denomination's founding. Back in 1935, as they prepared for the sesquicentennial, the South Carolina and Upper South Carolina conferences created a joint working group to plan a celebration.

On May 23 and 24, 1935 (Aldersgate Day, which was presumably not a coincidence!), Methodists convened at Columbia's Township Auditorium to celebrate their history and look to the future.

The celebration was a combination of devotionals, musical performances and lectures on aspects of Methodist history and beliefs. On Thursday night, those in attendance saw a 150-voice choir and 30-piece orchestra present "The Evangel of the New World," an oratorio directed by Professor Fred H. Parker, dean of music at Columbia College. On Friday night, attendees saw students from Lander College under the direction of Mrs. J. H. Groves, who was director of dramatic arts at Lander, present a pageant titled "The Way of Holiness."

We know all of this happened because after the celebration, an editorial committee compiled all of the lectures and addresses into a book. Additionally, the Rev. Emory O. Watson prepared a historical sketch that appeared at the beginning of the book. It was the first narrative history of the conference to be prepared since the Albert Shipp volume in the 1880s. Watson's narrative ran about 40 pages and provided numerous facts and figures about the evolution of the conference. It identified many of the early leaders in the conference, talked about how the boundaries had evolved, and introduced many of the institutions that the conference had helped create. It devoted a good bit of space to educational institutions.

Watson also talked about the founding of the *Advocate*, of the historical society and of the conference brotherhood, which was a precursor to the pension fund.

Though a few of the topics covered in the addresses were historical, most were about Methodism's beliefs and practices. One, by Duke Professor Frank Hickman, talked about John Wesley and his religious experience. He particularly noted Wesley's influence as a theologian, his reliance on the doctrines of the Church of England, but his unwillingness to set a doctrinal test for membership in the Methodist Church. Bishop Edwin Mouzon spoke of Methodism's contribution to theology. The Rev. J. M. Rowland spoke on "The Pioneer Methodist Preacher" and the Rev. William Dibble spoke on "Methodism's World Parish," and both articles speak of the church's work in spreading the Gospel around the world.

The remaining articles were more about history. Wofford President Henry Nelson Snyder spoke on the educational work of the conference. Mrs. James McCoy talked about the role that women had played in the church's work, focusing on the Woman's Missionary Society. Bishop Edwin Hughes' talk was billed as an interview with Francis Asbury. The final two talks were about "Methodism and the Holy Spirit," and Bishop Paul B. Kern, who was serving the South Carolina conferences that year, concluded the event with a forward-looking address about the future of Methodism.

The published version of the events also had a summary of the two musical productions and a note that the pageant was so popular that it was repeated in October to a completely full Township Auditorium.

It's noteworthy as well that while the presenters did examine the past, they were also looking toward the future of the denomination. I hope that, as we begin to think about the semiquincentennial of Methodism, we will reflect on our past but use the opportunity to plan for the next 250 years of South Carolina Methodism.

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

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Bishop Meadors remembered as 'giant of justice'

By Jim Patterson

Reprinted courtesy of UMNews

Bishop Marshall L. "Jack" Meadors Jr. is being remembered for his compassion and activism, including helping the Rev. Jesse Jackson free three prisoners of war. The former bishop of the Mississippi Conference died May 25 at 90 in his native South Carolina.

"We are grateful to God for allowing Bishop Meadors to serve with us," said Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, president of the Council of Bishops.

"We are especially grateful for his advocacy and quest for justice."

Bickerton noted Meadors' work on issues including the rights of women and children, diversity and poverty, saying he worked "to make sure God's children did not live in scarcity and without the basic needs of life.

"We will surely miss our friend and this giant of justice."

Meadors, ordained as an elder in 1958, served churches and the conference in South Carolina before being elected bishop in 1992. He led the Mississippi Conference from 1993 to 2000. He remained active for years after retirement, serving as the bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta; a trustee of Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina; and a trustee emeritus of Emory.

"Bishop Meadors was a great gift to the Mississippi Conference," said Bishop William T. McAlilly, who leads the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference. McAlilly worked with Meadors while serving in Mississippi.

"He was a mentor who modeled grace and generosity to all persons, especially children and those on the margins," McAlilly said. "With his (late) wife, Hannah, he led Mississippi to engage in mission and ministry with humility.

"The world is a better place because Jack walked this way.



Meadors

I rarely make a decision of consequence without asking the question, 'What would Bishop Meadors do?'"

Meadors was part of a delegation of religious leaders led by the Rev. Jesse Jackson that secured the release of three captured U.S. Army soldiers from Yugoslavia in 1999, according to the Los Angeles Times. The soldiers were captured during a peacekeeping patrol along the Yugoslav-Macedonian border.

"He lived justice and compassion, not only in the bounds of the denomination, but out in the community around him," said the Rev. Joe Ranager, who served under Meadors in Mississippi. "That was his life spark."

Meadors was born on New Year's Day 1933 in Kingstree, South Carolina, and grew up an hour away in Florence, South Carolina.

He was an accomplished athlete during his school days, said the Rev. Jim Patterson, a longtime friend. (Editor's note: The Rev. Jim Patterson is not related to the author of this obituary).

"He ... could have played college football," Patterson said. "At one time, he held the state track record for the high hurdle."

At Wofford College, Meadors opted not to play football. "He said he was there to be a student," Patterson said.

After Wofford, Meadors graduated from Candler School of Theology at Emory University. He served as a pastor and district superintendent in South Carolina for more than three decades before becoming a bishop.

"His sermons were excellent. (He was) one of the best preachers that I've ever come across," Patterson said.

Meadors also was a community activist and official. He was elected twice to the Anderson County District 5 School Board and was appointed by South Carolina Gov. Richard

Riley to two state bodies regarding aging. He also was president of the Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference, a group of religious leaders who promoted tolerance and understanding.

For the denomination, he was a director for both the Commission on the Status and Role of Women and Board of Church and Society and chaired the Council of Bishops' Initiative on Children and Poverty from 1995 to 2000.

Linda Bales Todd, a retired staffer at the United Methodist Board of Church and Society, remembered Meadors as "a gentle giant" in a Facebook post.

"(Meadors had) such a strong faith and compassionate heart for those living on the margins," she added. "One of God's most amazing servants."

Meadors was twice arrested while practicing civil disobedience, the first time for protesting the Iraq War and the second during a rally to demand more humane immigration deportation policies.

"I can almost repeat his sermon that he preached when Dr. (Martin Luther) King was killed," Patterson said. "It was the first time I heard him say an ugly word."

A memorial service was held at 2 p.m. June 9 at St. John's United Methodist Church in Anderson. A graveside service followed.

Meadors' wife, Hannah, preceded him in death. Survivors include daughter Jane M. Cromley; sons Marshall Meadors III and James Meadors; sister Sarah M. Stokes; niece Sarah L. Stokes; 10 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Meadors Family Endowed Scholarship Fund at Wofford College, 429 N. Church St., Spartanburg, SC 29303-3663; or the Meadors Endowment Fund for Children at the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, P.O. Box 5087, Columbia, SC 29250.

Obituaries

Rev. Clyde Major Aiken

HARKER HEIGHTS, Texas—The Rev. Clyde Major Aiken, a retired elder in full connection of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died May 3, 2023.



Aiken

Prior to his retirement in 1987, Rev. Aiken served the Lowndesville Charge before being appointed to the Division of Chaplains. Following his retirement, he served the St. John-St. Luke Charge.

Funeral services were held May 7 at the Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home, Killeen, Texas. Burial was held May 11 at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, Killeen, Texas, with full military honors.

Rev. Aiken is survived by his wife, Ann Aiken, and daughter.

Melba Arant Cassidy

LEXINGTON—Melba Arant Cassidy, sister of the Rev. Athon M. Arant Sr., died May 24, 2023. Rev. Arant is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

A memorial service was held May 26 in the chapel at Thompson Funeral Home.

Mrs. Cassidy is survived by her brother and sister.

Bishop Marshall L. Meadors Jr.

ANDERSON—Bishop Marshall L. "Jack" Meadors Jr., a retired bishop of The United Methodist Church, died May 25, 2023.

Before retiring in 2000, Bishop Meadors served Union Church in Stockbridge,

Georgia; the McBee, Trinity, Berea Friendship, First Marion, St. John's and Buncombe Street Greenville charges.

He served the Columbia District as superintendent and was elected bishop in 1992 and assigned to the Mississippi Conference.

A memorial service was held June 9 at St. John's UMC, Anderson, with graveside services June 10 at Mount Hope Cemetery, Florence.

Memorials may be made to the Meadors Family Endowed Scholarship Fund at



Meadors

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.

Wofford College, 429 N. Church St., Spartanburg, SC 29303; or to the Meadors Endowment Fund for Children at the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, P.O. Box 5087, Columbia, SC 29250.

Bishop Meadors is survived by his daughter and three sons.

Valma Virginia Corne Mewborn

TUXEDO, N.C.—Valma Virginia Corne Mewborn, widow of the Rev. William Mewborn, died May 11, 2023.

Graveside services were held May 15.

Mrs. Mewborn is survived by her sister.

Danny Miles

FLORENCE—Danny Miles, brother of the Rev. Robin Miles, died May 20, 2023. Rev. Miles is the pastor of Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church, Bennettsville.

Funeral services were held May 25 at

the Palmetto Street Church of God with entombment in Florence Memorial Gardens Mausoleum.

Mr. Miles is survived by his wife, Charity B. Miles, and daughter.

Alexander Andrew Thomas

GOLDSBORO, N.C.—Alexander Andrew Thomas, son of the Rev. Alexander Thomas, died May 28, 2023. Rev. Thomas is the pastor of Mays Chapel United Methodist Church, Branchville.

Funeral services will be held at a later date.

Mr. Thomas is survived by his father and fiancé.


Georgia Mae Way

WALTERBORO—Georgia Mae Way, mother of the Rev. Pattie E. Gordon and Stacey Way. Rev. Gordon is the pastor of the Johns Island Parish; Mr. Way is the husband of the Rev. Lisa Way, pastor of the Central Circuit, Allendale.

Graveside services were held June 5 at Ole Miss Cemetery, Smoaks.

Memorials may be made to Alzheimer's Association, Home Office, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Fl. 17, Chicago, IL 60601.

Mrs. Way is survived by two daughters and five sons.




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General Conference 2024 petition submission opens and logo revealed

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The Commission on General Conference gathered in Florence, Kentucky, for an in-person meeting May 21-24 that revealed the event’s logo and opened the window for petition submissions.

Participants included representatives from each U.S. jurisdiction and Central Conference members from Africa. Members from Europe and the Philippines were unable to attend for a variety of personal reasons. During the session, important updates and continuing work were discussed in preparation for the postponed 2020 General Conference to be held April 23-May 3, 2024, at Charlotte Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.

“The commission is tasked with making sure that the delegates who come to General Conference can do their best work,” said Kim Simpson, chair of the Commission on the General Conference. “With a spirit of love and cooperation we seek to energize and revive others within The United Methodist Church. We’re dedicated to acting on behalf of the church with respect, integrity and vision for the path ahead. We need to keep carrying the light of Christ into this world that needs it, and empower others to do the same.”

The event’s updated logo was revealed. The original theme “... and know that I am God,” based on an excerpt from Psalm 46:10, moves forward now paired with a Char-



lotte skyline image representative of the new host city. The image was designed by the commission in partnership with United Methodist Communications. Logo files, in different formats and file types, are at ResourceUMC.org.

Logistics pertaining to programming, visa processes, hotel blocks, meal arrangements and per diems were included in the topics of discussion. It was also announced that a supplement to the previously printed Advance Daily Christian Advocate (ADCA) is being compiled. Once completed, it will be available to delegates through the online edition and will

also be printed and provided to delegates at the event.

Also at the meeting, it was decided that petitions that were submitted for the 2020 General Conference are still valid for consideration in 2024, but there will also be a new window for submission of petitions to fulfill the requirements of Paragraph 507.

A question arose during the meeting regarding whether petitions submitted by persons who have subsequently left the denomination should be identified as such. Since there was no consensus among commission members regarding this question, a decision was made to refer the matter to the Rules Committee of the Commission for further consideration with a recommendation expected at the fall meeting.

Upon conclusion of the gathering, the window for petition submissions was opened. Petitions must be received by mail, email or via the official online General Conference 2024 Petition Submission Form by the Petitions Secretary no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT Wednesday, Sept. 6. Instructions for preparing petitions can be found at: bit.ly/GC2024petitionform.

Sara Hotchkiss, business manager of the General Conference, noted, “There are a lot of details and moving pieces associated with our General Conference gatherings. But we want the members to know that we’re doing the due diligence to facilitate a successful and productive event.”

United Women in Faith Board elects Sally Vonner General Secretary and CEO

NEW YORK, New York—United Women in Faith has elected Sally Vonner to the position of general secretary and chief executive officer, effective June 1.

The May 22 board vote culminated a six-month nationwide search.

Vonner joined the organization’s national staff in 2010 as assistant general secretary of membership and leadership development. With reorganization in 2018, she became the transformation officer, coordinating the organization’s visioning and strategic development to positively impact the lives of women, children, and youth. She oversaw an



Vonner

organizational rebranding that opened new ways for women to join, introduced program innovations and initiatives and rolled out United Women in Faith as the new public-facing name.

“Sally is not just a woman who knows this organization but also a visionary who possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience,” said Aïnise ‘Isama’u, board

president. “She is the kind of leader who understands where we’ve been, where we are and where we need to go.”

Vonner is ready for the new challenge.

“My primary focus is to continue and expand the mission and reach of United

Women in Faith as we put our love and faith in action to change the world and work to improve the lives of women, children and youth around the world,” Vonner said. “I commit to lead with faith and trust in God, the support of the directors, the Program Advisory Group, my colleagues, and most of all, the members of United Women in Faith.

“I look forward to connecting with members, soon to be members and The United Methodist Church family in the weeks, months and years to come. Get ready for the awesome future God has for us.”

The Texas native has served The United Methodist Church in several other capacities including women’s retreat leader and jurisdictional conference delegate and alternate in

2008, 2016 and 2020 representing the North Texas Annual Conference. Vonner was an organizer for the denomination’s work on immigration assistance, community development initiatives and dismantling racism work. She was commissioned as a U.S. missionary by the General Board of Global Ministries in 2000 to serve in the North Texas Annual Conference as the Communities of Shalom Coordinator. Vonner also served as the associate director of Connectional Ministries for the North Texas Annual Conference, 2005-2010.

Vonner is a graduate of Perkins School of Theology with an M.Div. and Women’s Studies Certification and Texas A&M Commerce with a B.S. in biology.

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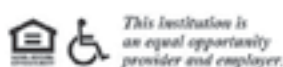


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June

June 14—Flag Day

June 18—Father's Day

June 19—Juneteenth; United Methodist Center closed.

June 24—UWF Charter for Racial & Environmental Justice Event, virtual, 10 a.m. Register: <http://www.umcsc.org/women>

July

July 1—UWF Limitless Event, virtual, 10 a.m.

July 4—Independence Day; United Methodist Center closed.

July 20-22—Mission u, Spartanburg Methodist College, Spartanburg.

August

Aug. 5—Lay Servant Ministries Academy, Washington Street UMC, Columbia, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Aug. 13—Aldersgate Special Needs Sunday

Aug. 20—Safe Sanctuary Training, Anderson District, First UMC, Easley, 2-5 p.m.

September

September 15-October 15:
Hispanic Heritage Month

UWF Special Emphasis Month: Killingworth

Sept. 4—Labor Day; United Methodist Center closed.

Sept. 5—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 9—Connectional Ministries meeting

October

UWF Special Emphasis Month:
Bethlehem Center, Spartanburg

Oct. 9—Indigenous Peoples' Day

Oct. 20-21—SCCUWF 51st Annual Meeting, St. John's UMC, Aiken

Oct. 31—Halloween

November

Native American Heritage Month

Nov. 1—All Saints Day



Books for all!

Girl Scout Troop 1001 at Dickson Memorial UMC, Townville, have set up a miniature children's library in the parking lot of the church. Children can borrow and donate books to read.

GCORR opens grant cycle for mental health awareness and wellness initiatives

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A new grant from the General Commission on Religion and Race Action Fund is now open, and all United Methodist Church pastors and laity in the United States can apply for funding to create cohorts and small groups focused on mental health awareness and wellness.

The grant aims to support initiatives that are trauma-informed, culturally appropriate and promote justice-oriented praxis.

The CORR Action Fund committee recognizes the

critical need to address mental health and wellness within our communities. Through this grant cycle, the fund seeks to empower and equip United Methodist pastors and laity in developing initiatives that foster intentional diverse engagement, encompass multigenerational voices, and prioritize trauma-informed approaches. The grants also encourage service and solution-centered approaches while ensuring cultural sensitivity and resourcing for the diverse groups involved.

Grants of as much as \$10,000 will be awarded to suc-

cessful applicants for a project duration of as many as nine months. These funds will enable the implementation and sustenance of impactful cohorts and small groups, promoting mental health awareness and wellness initiatives across the United Methodist Church.

Applicants are requested to submit complete applications with all required documents via email to grants@gcorr.org. The deadline for submission is July 15. Detailed guidelines and application requirements can be found at www.gcorr.org/caf2023.

S.C. Lay Academy set for Aug. 5 in Columbia

South Carolina Conference Lay Academy will be held Aug. 5 at Washington Street United Methodist Church, Columbia.

The event starts with registration at 8:30 a.m., then greetings and a devotion at 9 a.m.

The Rev. Ken Nelson will lead on "The Meaning of Grace," followed by two plenary

courses, one on "Your Prayer Life" and the other on "Discernment."

After lunch at 11:30 a.m., breakout courses begin at 12:45 p.m. through 4:30 p.m. "Youth Basic" will be led by Melissa Williams and her son, Bryce Williams. "Discipleship Begins with Relationship" will be

led by Tony Watson. "God's Mission ... Our Journey" will be led by Tony Jackson. "Living Our United Methodist Beliefs (United Methodist Heritage)" will be led by the Revs. Ted and Athena Cathcart. "Justice in Everyday Life" will be led by the Rev. Bernie Mazyck. And "Ministry with The Forgotten"

will be led by the Rev. Steve Holler.

The registration deadline is July 28, and the cost is \$25.

Train the Trainer will be held in four different regions in September.

To register: <https://www.umcsc.org/lsmacademyregistration>.

SCMYP plans big trip to Youth 2023 in Florida this summer

South Carolina Ministries with Young People is hoping to have a significant presence of youth at Youth 2023—the national quadrennial youth event for United Methodist youth from across the U.S.—July 25-28 in Daytona Beach,

Florida, this summer. They have reserved two charter buses to transport youth, and leaders are subsidizing the cost of transportation for groups.

The per-person cost for round trip transportation is only

\$60 per person. To reserve your seat, complete the online registration form and submit payment no later than June 21.

To register for transportation, visit <http://scmyp.org/youth-23-transportation>.



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Pray God grants us wisdom

by the Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

July 2

Testing. Testing. One. Two. Three.

Lesson Scripture: James 1:2-8

Background Scripture: James 1:2-27

Key Verse: James 1:5, “But anyone who needs wisdom should ask God, whose very nature is to give to everyone without a second thought, without keeping score. Wisdom will certainly be given to those who ask.”

We begin the month traveling with James, the brother of Jesus and a leader of the early church in Jerusalem. Although the official title of the book is The Letter of James, many scholars believe the book began as a sermon that was supplemented decades later. Martin Luther soured the book for generations when he called it “an epistle of straw,” condemning the work for its apparent disagreement with Paul’s theology of justification through faith. After all, James tells us “faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead” (2:17).

Yet recent scholarship points to a softening in the conflict. According to The New Oxford Annotated Bible, the tension between James and Paul may be “more apparent than real” explaining that while “James sees works as acts that spring from the love of the believer for God” (2:14), “for Paul works are the external observations of ritual, like circumcision,” and may be regarded “in isolation from any connection to one’s relationship to God.”

Today’s lesson steps away from the central conflict that troubled Martin Luther and focuses not on works or faith, but on wisdom. Right from the start, James tells us, “If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly” (1:5). The New Interpreter’s Bible explains that James is concerned with “morals rather than manners,” including “some 59 imperatives in his 108 verses” pointing the reader to a right relationship with God where even our trials may be considered a “joy because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance” (1:2).

At this point, we may be reminded once again of Paul, who echoes James in his letter to the Romans: But we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:3-5).

How does your faith help sustain you through life’s tests and challenges?

July 9

Directing your ship

Lesson Scripture: James 1:19-20, 26; 3:1-12

Background Scripture: Same

Key Verse: James 3:4-5, “But pilots direct their ships wherever they want with a little rudder. In the same way, even though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts wildly.”

My father put me at the helm of our commercial crabbing boat when I was 9 years old so I could learn how to navigate the vessel and help with the day’s catch. At first, I was too afraid to turn the rudder, so we went round and round in a circle on the Chesapeake Bay while my father laughed. It took all summer and hours of practice before I was comfortable handling the boat.

Handling my emotions is another story. Sometimes I wonder how we can “practice” steering our own spiritual ships, so that when our feelings get the best of us, we don’t act out in anger and say things we later regret.

“Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger,” James advises, because “anger does not produce God’s righteous-

ness” (1:17).

In the third chapter of his letter, James warns: “How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire.” Once again, James gives us moral imperatives to live by and ideals to uphold, reminding us that we are “made in God’s likeness” and can use our tongues to both praise and curse (3:9).

As postmodern Christians, living in a world full of advertising and misinformation where even our own eyes and ears can deceive us, it may be hard for us to know what to believe. James reminds us of our obligation as people of faith to honor truth and pay attention to the power of our words. In many ways, our language shapes our reality. James warns us again and again about the power of language and the intention behind our words. “If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless” (1:26). As people of faith, how can we learn to navigate our feelings and use our words to heal the community?

July 16

The gift of true wisdom

Lesson Scripture: Job 28:12-18; James 3:13-18

Background Scripture: Job 28:12-28; James 1:15, 3:13-18

Key Verse: James 3:13 “Are any of you wise and understanding? Show that your actions are good with a humble lifestyle that comes from wisdom.”

A new character joins our discussion this week, beloved Job. Job and James travel harmoniously; they share the same backbeat—wisdom literature. Placed snugly among the letters of the New Testament, James seems far from the five Old Testament books described by The New Oxford Annotated Bible as “poetical and wisdom books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.” Yet James resonates with the same concerns as his Old Testament neighbors. How do we live righteously in a sinful and chaotic world?

And for all the answer is the same—we’ll need wisdom.

For his part, Job creates a poetic tribute to wisdom’s value, a value that “can’t be bought with gold” or “measured in silver” (28:15-16), and like James, Job asks where “wisdom can be found” (28:12). But while Job waits patiently on his ash pile wondering if God will show up with the answers, James turns back to the crowd with practical advice.

“Jealousy, bragging, selfish ambition” are not “wisdom that comes down from above,” James warns (3:14-15). Those are the snares and temptations of humanity, “from the earth, natural and demonic” (3:15). “What of the wisdom from above? First, it is pure and then peaceful, gentle, obedient, filled with mercy and good actions, fair and genuine” (3:17).

Taken together, Job and James paint a picture of wisdom’s value and a clear description of its gifts and attributes. Humility, gentleness, fairness, and mercy—these are the fruits of “wisdom from above.” They create a righteous spirit, and we can’t create a righteous spirit by being reckless or deliberately obtuse. Wisdom is a gift from God; it leads to “peaceful acts” and sows “seeds of justice” (James 3:18).

How are you striving for wisdom? What spiritual practices might help us sow “seeds of justice” and live lives filled with “wisdom from above”?

July 23

RSVP

Lesson Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:10-25

Background Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:10-31

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:24-25, “But to those who are called ... both Jews and Greeks ... Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom. This is because the foolishness of God is wiser than human weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

For insight into this week’s Scripture, we turn once more to our trusted New Oxford Annotated Bible and quickly discover a church in Corinth facing “internal conflict” and plenty of “struggles.” In these summer weeks after Pentecost, while we are still reminded of the birth of the church, we may do well to admit that Christians have never stayed unified for long.

Christian history is full of dissension, reformation and schism, and it’s been that way right from the start—just ask our friends in Corinth.

Yet if we come full circle and remember that this study started with a plea from James for wisdom, we may be able to improve our relationships and build not only a stronger faith community but also a stronger community in general. I don’t know about you, but I can’t love my neighbor as myself without a bit of grace and wisdom from God.

Perhaps the more I learn and understand about my neighbor, the more compassion and acceptance I can offer him or her. Certainly, the more I understand the better equipped I’ll be when it comes to accepting, sympathizing and genuinely connecting with others.

It’s hard to hate someone you’re sharing a pot of tea with.

However, we may end this week with more questions than answers. If Christians have been struggling to get along since the beginning of time, when will we ever learn? In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul explores the community to be “in agreement” without any “divisions among you” but “united in the same mind and same purpose” (1:10). That may be easy for Paul to say, but how about us postmodern folk? The New Interpreter’s Bible asks: “Does unity preclude differences?”

In an ever-changing world that keeps getting smaller, how do we accept diversity and maintain unity?

How do we truly follow Christ and manage an ever changing and dissenting church?

July 30

Guided by God’s wisdom

Lesson Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Background Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-22

Key Verse: Ecclesiastes 3:1, “There’s a season for everything and a time for

every matter under the heavens.”

In the play “As You Like It,” William Shakespeare’s clever court jester, Touchstone, proclaims: “The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.”

Our “Teacher,” “Preacher,” “leader of the assembly” would agree, no matter what you called him, no matter how you translated his name from the ancient Hebrew title, Qohelet. According to The New Interpreter’s Bible, the Greek translators of the Septuagint give us the “name that reached the English language”: Ecclesiastes. So Ecclesiastes it is who joins this month’s ranks with James and Job to complete our humble foray into wisdom literature and our own search for the personal wisdom that allows right relationship with God.

After all, one of the reasons we keep Ecclesiastes around is so we won’t feel so bad about our own doubts and very human struggles.

Like the Letter of James, tarnished by Luther’s opinion, The Book of Ecclesiastes remains unpopular. The New Interpreter’s Bible goes so far as to say: “Ecclesiastes has always had fans among the original thinkers of the Jewish and Christian communities: skeptics, people with a dark vision of reality, recovering alcoholics On the whole, however, believers have found it at least baffling and at most wrongheaded. From the beginning serious efforts were made to exclude it from the list of sacred books, and even now in liturgical practices it enjoys only a very small place.”

In the 1960s Pete Seeger and then The Byrds turned part of that skeptical, “dark” and “baffling” book into a catchy and enduring part of pop culture with the folk song, “Turn! Turn! Turn!” highlighting the reality of time’s passing and the assurance that “there’s a time for every matter under the heavens” (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

Perhaps that’s the wisdom we are ultimately searching for and one of the reasons for the song’s immense popularity—the assurance of time to work out our humanity, our crying and our laughing, our living and our dying.

What do you need time to work on in your life?

What wise or foolish assurances do you crave from God?

Kelley serves Mount Pleasant and O’Neal Street United Methodist churches in the Greenwood District, volunteers at God’s Abundance For All People Food Pantry, serves on the District Committee on Ministry and is a member of the Advocate Board of Trustees.

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Henry-Crowe reflects on almost 50 years of ministry

By Kathy L. Gilbert

Reprinted courtesy UM News

The Rev. Susan Henry-Crowe's worldview started when she was 16 and attended a United Nations seminar focusing on the Middle East. The youth group from Buncombe Street United Methodist Church in Greenville, South Carolina, spent six months studying the Middle East before traveling to New York City to attend the seminar.

The trip coincided with the Six-Day War in the Middle East. The war was fought between Israel and a coalition of Arab states



Henry-Crowe

in 1967.

"The trip was my entrée into a larger world influenced by the church," she said.

While part of the youth group, she spent two summers on Johns Island, South Carolina, working with an ecumenical ministry program for migrant workers picking tomatoes.

"It was hotter than you can imagine," she recalled, "and the housing for the migrants was terrible."

Those formative experiences, which she credits to Olene Civils, a deaconess who was

director of Christian education at Buncombe Street, led her to a life of service to The United Methodist Church and took her around the world.

Henry-Crowe retired on Dec. 31, 2022, after eight years as the top executive of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society. An elder in full connection, she is a member of the South Carolina Annual Conference and served pastoral appointments from 1976 to 1985.

She was dean of the Chapel and Religious Life at Emory University (1991-2014) and director of the United Methodist South Carolina Annual Conference Council on Ministries.

She served on the United Methodist Judicial Council (1992-2000 and 2004-2012).

Her combined years of service add up to almost 49 years of active ministry in The United Methodist Church.

During her tenure with Church and Society, Henry-Crowe was instrumental in the major rewriting of the United Methodist Social Principles, said Bishop Sally Dyck, president of the executive committee board of directors for the agency.

The agency has offices in the United Methodist Building situated across the street from the U.S. Supreme Court. The building also has apartments, and Henry-Crowe lived there during her tenure.

Living in the United Methodist Building became challenging during COVID-19 when people were working remotely, Dyck noted. It became even more isolating during and after the protests at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, which left protective fencing around many of the buildings.

"In spite of these challenges, the agency is in a strong position as a result of her leadership," Dyck said. "She will be greatly missed as a leader in this position but undoubtedly will continue to work for justice, peace and faith in the years to come."

John Hill, interim top executive for the agency, said Henry-Crowe brought a "profound sense of joy to our work."

"Under her leadership," he said, "Church and Society sharpened its focus on key issues impacting our communities and more clearly communicated our shared United Methodist vision for living faith, seeking justice and pursuing peace in God's world."

The Rev. Sharon G. Austin, director of Connectional and Justice Ministries for the Florida Conference and a member of the board of directors, said Henry-Crowe is well-known on "the Hill" in the nation's capital and has represented the church in many places worldwide.

"Susan has always done the hard work of ministry and speaking truth to power by cultivating relationships," Austin said.

"Over the years, from Washington, D.C., to Berlin, Germany, to the Democratic Republic of Congo to Montgomery, Alabama, we traveled through cities and towns, and we dreamed about what could be done and all that we needed to learn as we gave thanks for the places we saw God at work," she said.

On a trip to the DRC to teach and talk about the revised Social Principles, Austin said she witnessed Henry-Crowe's "gracious spirit, respect and gratitude across the lines of race, culture and language."

Raúl B. Alegría, a member of the board of directors, said he will always remember Henry-Crowe's commitment and advocacy for immigrants seeking asylum at the U.S. and Mexico border.

"Susan was vocal and vigilant about The United Methodist Church caring for those persons and their families," he said. "She saw the need of The United Methodist Church to express advocacy for immigrants, not as a political issue, but as a direct expression of the gospel to love our neighbors."

The Rev. Michelle Beadle was hired by Henry-Crowe as her executive assistant and served with her for five years.

"I came to the Board of Church and Society because I was drawn to the ministry. I love the church, and I love society — and their intersection is where miracles happen," said Beadle, ordained clergy with the United Church of Christ.

"For Susan, seeing the potential within that intersection is innate. Her appreciation for how the gospel touches the ground isn't something she does; it is who she is."

Henry-Crowe has returned to her home in Atlanta and is reconnecting with friends both in the city and at Emory University.

"I am fundamentally Methodist in the way we love connections," she said, laughing.

She is also working on local issues such as voter suppression and justice work.

She continues to have a conference relationship in South Carolina and is currently "itinerating" between churches in Atlanta and Durham, North Carolina, where her daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren live.

"I have so much gratitude for people I worked with over the years. I do feel hopeful about the church and the wisdom of generations that have gone before," she said. "The church still has vital presences in the world that I hope we will continue to pull on."

"These seem like hard days, but I see many hopeful things happening."

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