

# South Carolina United Methodist Advocate

CONNECTING METHODISTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA SINCE 1837



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November 2023

## Doing ministry with less money

### UMCSC financial leaders expect leaner budget for 2025, urge ministries to prepare

By Jessica Brodie

South Carolina Conference financial leaders are asking ministries to take a hard look at their essentials in crafting their budget, as they anticipate a leaner budget for the conference as a whole.

Given the 113 South Carolina churches that separated from The United Methodist

Church in 2023 and in anticipation of more separating churches in 2024, the Conference Council on Finance and Administration held two budget planning meetings in October to help ministries prepare for new budget realities.

Those who attended are ministries who receive apportionment dollars from the

conference, from clergy services and campus ministries to congregational development.

The discussions were intended to help ministries prepare not only for the 2025 budget year but to think about the long-term future of these areas and how they deliver their mission and ministry through apportioned funds.

“It won’t be business as usual into the foreseeable future,” said the Rev. Wayne Smith, chair of CF&A’s budget committee. “We anticipate a hard reset regarding funding.”

The meetings were held Oct. 4 and 11 and led by Smith with Conference Treasurer Beth Westbury and other CF&A members:

See “Doing Ministry,” Page 12

## Aldersgate to open fifth house for special needs adults

By Jessica Brodie

COLUMBIA—Another house to help special needs adults live independently is now ready for operation in South Carolina.

On Sept. 13, supporters of Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry gathered for a dedication ceremony at Tommy’s House, a home that will accommodate four men with special needs.

Tommy’s House, located in the Coldstream area of Columbia near Irmo, was purchased in the spring and will be the fifth house operated by the United Methodist ministry.

“We feel incredibly blessed to have the opportunity to serve more people with special needs,” said Kim Thomas, Aldersgate executive director. “God has truly blessed our ministry.”

They hope to have residents move into the new home by November.

See “Aldersgate Home,” Page 11

## Apportionments ahead of last year

By Jessica Brodie

As the South Carolina Conference gears up for the close of another budget year, conference financial leaders are hoping to achieve as close as possible to the 2023 budgeted goal of \$15.6 million.

As of Oct. 17, the total apportionment percentage is 65.97 collected this year, compared to last year’s 62.42 percent.

See “Apportionments,” Page 24



Photo by Dr. Luke Rhyee

### Healing Guatemala helps amid protests

After October political protests caused road blockades in Guatemala, many people in poverty faced serious food shortages because relief workers could not access their job sites to deliver food. So United Methodist-supported mission Healing Guatemala stepped up, delivering bags of groceries to families in need. Here, a woman smiles after she receives her food bag.

## Life Together: Videos explore what UMC means to people

By Jessica Brodie

What does The United Methodist Church mean to you personally?

That’s the focus of a new initiative from the South Carolina Conference of the UMC, which is putting together brief videos sharing reflections from United Methodists on the church and how it impacts their lives and ministry.

Titled “Life Together,” the initiative comes at a time when many

are feeling disheartened by the ongoing conflict in the denomination. None of the reflections are political statements but rather personal contemplations of why people appreciate the UMC, both in their youth and today.

The videos address everything from grace, acceptance and diversity to the ability to bring people around the table in conversation amid differing opinions.

See “Life Together,” Page 11

## New chapter

### Killingsworth to showcase real-life resident stories to foster a heart for the ministry

By Jessica Brodie

COLUMBIA—After a four-year hiatus because of the pandemic, one beloved women’s ministry is gearing up for a big return this month with a gala designed to open hearts and inspire many.

Killingsworth, a United Methodist-founded home for women emerging from crisis situations,

is well known for its annual November gala, considered by many to be the official kickoff of the holiday season. Not only does the gala raise needed funds for the nonprofit residence, but it also helps the faith and philanthropy community know more about the work of its leaders and residents as they strive to shine light into dark

circumstances. Yet COVID prevented ministry supporters from gathering in-person—until now.

“I’m just delighted,” said Azilee Dickey, Killingsworth board president who is excited about the opportunity the return of the gala will have

See “Killingsworth,” Page 14

## Salkehatchie announces 37 service camps planned for 2024

By Jessica Brodie

When it comes to loving others in Christ’s name, the more the merrier.

That’s why Salkehatchie Summer Service is gearing up now to release the names and dates of all 37 Salkehatchie camps planned for next year—in the hopes that earlier notice will enable more people to plan for summer

service and register. Six camps are returning for the first time since the pandemic, and all will work to repair and rebuild homes for people in need, many of them living in poverty situations without the ability to fund the work on their own.

See “Salkehatchie,” Page 14



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#### Submissions

The *Advocate* encourages readers to submit for publication items of interest to South Carolina United Methodists. There is no charge for running items involving activities or announcements. Items should be submitted as far as possible in advance of the event's date or the date of requested publication. Since there is no charge for these items, they appear in the newspaper on a space-available basis. Deadlines are the 10th of each month for the following month's paper.

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#### Photographs

Photographs can be submitted to the newspaper for publication. High-resolution digital images are preferred. Photographs should be in focus and should have proper exposure. Color or black and white photographs are accepted. People in photographs should be identified with names and ages, and a contact person with a phone number should be included in the information.

#### Accuracy Policy

The *Advocate* strives to produce error-free news reports. When mistakes occur, it is our policy to correct them as soon as they are brought to our attention. To request a correction, call Jessica Brodie at 803-786-9486, ext. 338 or 803-807-0018, or email [jbrodie@umcsc.org](mailto:jbrodie@umcsc.org). In the event of errors in advertisements, the *Advocate* will be responsible only for the space occupied by the actual error. The publisher assumes no financial responsibility for omissions.

#### Back Issues

The *Advocate* maintains copies of back issues for sale for up to one year, as long as the supply lasts. When requesting by mail, back copies are \$2 each, to cover postage and handling. To research or review articles published more than one year ago, bound copies of the newspaper are available for review at the Advocate office, Wofford College in Spartanburg and the South Caroliniana Library in Columbia.

## Alston Wilkes Society to host 61st annual meeting

On Nov. 16, Alston Wilkes Society will host its 61st annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony, honoring top professionals from the fields of law enforcement, corrections, social services, youth services, and veterans' services.

The event—a luncheon—will be held from 12-2 p.m. at Seawell's Restaurant in Columbia.

Andy Broughton and The Messengers Motivational Speaking Group will deliver the keynote.

The Messengers was originally formed at South Carolina's Youth Correctional Facility. This group has traveled the state of South Carolina and spoken to countless youth and adults about making better

choices, choosing positive friends and the power of communication.

After building new lives after incarceration, the speaking team has banded together again to continue offering their stories of change, hope and inspiration.

The team, which comprises speakers all over the U.S., meets together regularly to strategize, encourage and motivate each other in their mission of restoration. By telling their stories, their goal is to encourage others to see change is always possible through positive communication and caring relationships.

All are welcome. For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.alstonwilkessociety.org/events>.

## New 'Herbert the Hippo' children's book released

### 'Herbert the Hippo In the Moment' authored by the Rev. Meg Sweeney Cook

The second book in the Advocate Press's Herbert the Hippo children's book series is now on sale.

Called "Herbert the Hippo In the Moment," the book is authored by the Rev. Meg Sweeney Cook and illustrated by P.A. Sweeney. Cook pastors Cayce United Methodist Church, Cayce.

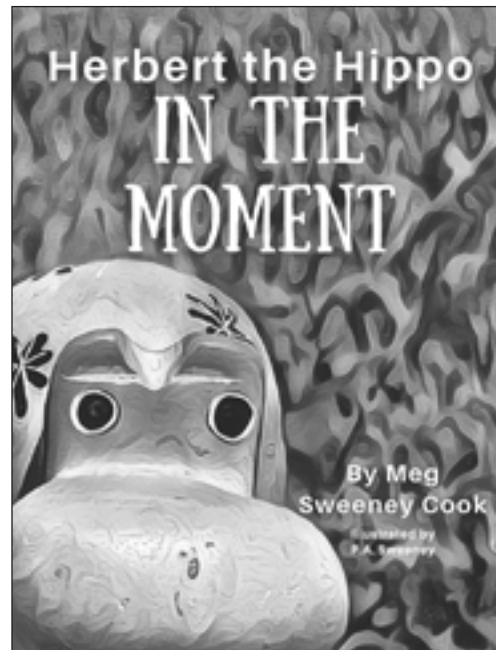
Designed for preschoolers (ages 3-5), the book focuses on helping children embrace mindfulness, or being present in the moment, something that has powerful physical, emotional and cognitive benefits as well as faith elements.

"Mindfulness matters, and it is a skill that can be learned and nurtured," Cook said.

Good for both children and adults, mindfulness helps improve emotional regulation, increase focus, reduce stress, enhance



Cook



self-awareness, improve social skills, improve sleep, reduce symptoms of ADHD, increase resilience, improve academic performance,

and set a foundation for long-term well-being, Cook said.

"It also matters because we are embodied. We are not just brains carried around by bodies. Instead, we are whole people with eyes, ears, hearts, hips and more," Cook said.

She hopes the book will not only impact young children but also, perhaps the adults who read the book with these children.

Book one, "Herbert the Hippo," introduces readers to Herbert, a small pink hippo figurine who was made in South Africa. He's so small he can fit in the palm of someone's hand. But even though he's small, he's a great big reminder that everyone can make a difference in the world, and everyone is God's special work of art.

Both books are available on Amazon, or from the *Advocate* directly at <https://advocatesc.org/books>. You can also purchase the book by sending a check (payable to Advocate) for \$10 plus \$2.50 shipping/handling; mail to Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203.

## Advocate Press mental health book now on sale

A new book from the Advocate Press hopes to shine light into the darkness of mental illness while providing the hope of Jesus.

Released last month, "Darkness to Light: Finding Jesus in the Valley of Mental Illness" features 14 stories offering a look at the personal mental health journeys of a number of people, sharing in many cases how faith helped them on their road to wellness.

Authors include Kelly Black, Bill Barnier, David Bryant, Avery Connor, Penelope Wesley, the Rev. John Jordan, the Rev. John Culp, the Rev. Sheera Yates, Linda Kidd, the Rev. Elizabeth Sullivan, Erica Whitt, the Rev. Jamie McDowell and the Rev. Charles Wilbanks.

Connor is the teenage daughter of *Advocate* Editor Jessica Brodie; Brodie compiled and edited the book.

Brodie said she hopes the book helps people with mental health issues realize they are not alone and that mental illness is not their fault, just like cancer and diabetes are not someone's fault. She said as more people feel comfortable



express their own mental health challenges, counseling, therapy and mental illness in general are becoming destigmatized.

"As a Christian, I feel strongly that the church can be a resource and a support system for people with mental illness. I've known so many people who have reached their lowest, lost all hope, only to realize Jesus was right beside them the whole time," Brodie said. "Whether you are struggling with your own mental and emotional health or you are supporting someone who is, I hope these stories offer hope and inspiration in what can be a dark, dark world."

"Together, we can journey from darkness to light—the light of Christ."

"Darkness to Light" is available as a paperback for \$12 or an ebook for \$3.99. You can buy it on Amazon, from the *Advocate* website at <https://advocatesc.org/store/books/darkness-to-light>, or by sending \$12 plus \$2.50 shipping/handling to *Advocate*, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203 (note that it is for "Darkness to Light").

## UMVIM assembling Christmas stockings for children in Haiti

Children in Haiti will be getting Christmas stockings from some special friends this year: the members of South Carolina United Methodist Volunteers in Mission.

The stockings will be filled with hygiene items and a small toy and delivered directly to the children courtesy of UMVIM's Dr. Hal Crosswell, who has a way to get the stockings to the children through the Methodist Church of Haiti. The project hopes to share hope and the love of Christ with the children.

The project is open not only to UMVIM members; other churches, men's and women's groups, Sunday school classes, small/life groups and individuals are welcome to assemble the stockings and bring them.

All stockings can be brought to the Nov. 7 meeting of UMVIM-SC at Grace United

Methodist Church, 410 Harbison Blvd., Columbia. The meeting starts at 6:00. If they cannot be brought to the meeting, contact Crosswell at 803-609-3285 or [hcrosswell34@yahoo.com](mailto:hcrosswell34@yahoo.com) or Cathy Trevino at [umvimsec@gmail.com](mailto:umvimsec@gmail.com) to make arrangements for drop off.

All stockings are due to UMVIM no later than Nov. 20.

#### Assembly instructions

Package in a one- or two-gallon Ziploc bag the following:

- 4.6 oz. or larger tube of toothpaste
- One medium sized toothbrush
- One bath size bar of antibacterial soap (such as Dial)
- One 11 oz. or larger plastic bottle of shampoo

- One washcloth
- One comb
- One small toy (a Hot Wheels car, miniature doll, small coloring book and pack of crayons, etc.)
- \$1 with each bag to help cover shipping expenses



# Bishops serving in Africa pledge to stay in The United Methodist Church

LUBUMBASHI, Democratic Republic of the Congo—United Methodist Church bishops serving the church in Africa issued a statement Sept. 7 declaring their intention to stay in the denomination despite differences on the issue of human sexuality.

“Notwithstanding the differences in our UMC regarding the issue of human sexuality, especially with our stance of traditional and biblical view of marriage, we categorically state that we do not plan to leave The United Methodist Church and will continue to be shepherds of God’s flock in this worldwide denomination,” said the bishops in the statement.

The bishops indicated that while some of their colleagues and friends have left or intend to leave our UMC, “we have prayerfully discerned that we will continue to be part of this denomination which has nurtured us throughout our lives. We will continue to work in ministry with all our brothers and sisters throughout the world, remembering not to forsake the fellowship of our sisters and brothers.”



The bishops also voiced support the ongoing discussion for regionalism.

The bishops also voiced support the ongoing discussion for regionalism, which would ensure that Africans would be accommodated in the way and manners in which Africans want to worship the Lord.

They voiced support as well for the decision by the Council of Bishops to request

General Conference sessions in 2026 and 2028.

“This will be necessary for smooth transitioning as our denomination emerges from the disruptions of COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of disaffiliations.”

Bishops who signed the statement were

as follows: Bishop Eben Nhiwatiwa, president of Africa Colleges of Bishops; Bishop Gabriel Unda, president of Congo Central Conference College of Bishops; Bishop Daniel Wandabula, president of the Africa Central Conference College of Bishops; Bishop Benjamin Boni, president of the West Africa Central Conference College of Bishops (was not present but approved the statement); Bishop Mande Muyombo, North Katanga-Tanganyika-Tanzania; Bishop Daniel Lunge, Central Congo Area; Bishop Joaquina Nhanala, Mozambique Area; Bishop Jose Quipungo, Angola East Area; Bishop Gaspar Joao Domingos, Angola West Area; Bishop Warner Brown, Sierra Leone Area (interim); Bishop David Yemba, retired; and Bishop Nkulu Ntanda Ntambo, retired.

Three of the 14 bishops in attendance did not support the statement: Bishop Owan Tshibang Kasap, South Congo Area; Bishop Samuel Quire, Liberia Area; and Bishop John Wesley Yohanna, Nigeria Area.

To read their statement, go to <https://advocatesc.org/articles/africanbishops2023>.

# United Methodists among those petitioning governor to halt executions

By Jessica Brodie

United Methodists are among those who gathered at the South Carolina Statehouse in October to speak out against state-mandated executions after news that South Carolina has been able to secure a supply of the lethal injection drug pentobarbital.

Several have signed a petition launched by South Carolinians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, a nonprofit with a mission to abolish the death penalty and reform criminal justice in South Carolina.

The petition, which urges Gov. Henry McMaster to halt executions, comes after a brief filed with the South Carolina Supreme Court by Gov. McMaster and the South Carolina Department of Corrections notifying the court they now have pentobarbital and asking for a resumption of executions.

The death penalty is legal in South Carolina, but the state had been unable to purchase the drugs needed to carry out lethal injection executions since their supply expired in 2013.

Officials blamed the lack of shield laws for their inability to acquire drugs, as pharmaceutical companies typically do not sell to states that do not conceal their identities.

While South Carolina law specifies lethal injection as the default method of execution, it gives those sentenced the option of choosing death by firing squad or electric chair if those methods are available. All three methods outlined in law are now available to carry out a death sentence, though the firing squad and electric chair methods are being challenged, cited as “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited under the United States Constitution.

Last May, McMaster signed into law new legislation passed by the South Carolina General Assembly concealing the identities of lethal-injection drug suppliers and execution team members. The law also hides the cost of the drugs and the procedures for storing and administering the drugs. Now they have procured the needed drug.

“Justice has been delayed for too long in South Carolina,”

McMaster said in his press release Sept. 19. “This filing brings our state one step closer to being able to once again carry out the rule of law and bring grieving families and loved ones the closure they are rightfully owed.”

There are currently 36 prisoners on death row in South Carolina, according to Justice 360 (34 on death row, and two housed off of death row). The state’s last execution, of Jeffrey Motts, was in 2011.

“We believe in the power of dialogue and cooperation among different faiths to make a meaningful impact on our society,” said Rev. Hillary Taylor, a United Methodist and the SCADP executive director.

Taylor called the death penalty “premeditated, state-sponsored murder.”

“By coming together at this interfaith press conference, we hope to send a powerful message to Governor McMaster that there is a growing consensus among South Carolinians against the death penalty, especially among faith leaders.”

# Church court finds Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño not guilty

By Heather Hahn

Reprinted courtesy of UMNews

A church court found Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño—The United Methodist Church’s first Latina bishop—not guilty of four charges.

Carcaño, who has served as bishop of the California-Nevada Conference since 2016, stood trial before a jury of 13 racially diverse clergy members from the North Central Jurisdiction.

The trial, which began Sept. 19, took place at the offices of Wespeth Benefits and Investments in Glenview, Illinois, a Chicago suburb.

The bishop faced accusations under church law of disobedience to the order and discipline of the church, undermining the ministry of another clergy person, harassment and fiscal malfeasance.

After a few hours of deliberation on the evening of Sept. 21, the jury—called a trial court in The United Methodist Church—rendered a verdict acquitting her on all counts.

Retired Bishop Alfred W. Gwinn, the presiding officer or equivalent of a judge in the case, announced the verdict to a silent and prayerful church court shortly after the gathering came to order early Sept. 22. This was the first trial of a bishop in The United Methodist Church and its predecessors in nearly a century.

Carcaño, who has served in ordained ministry for 47 years and as a bishop for nearly 20 years, has been under suspension with pay and benefits since March of last year. The situation, she testified during the trial, left her feeling “banished” from her family of faith.

After the verdict was announced, she said she felt “great joy.” With the resolution of the trial process, her suspension also has

concluded.

“My banishment has ended, and I feel like I can step back into the family, get back into the circle of this beloved community that I call—with many, many others—‘my church,’” she said. “I feel like a tremendous burden has been lifted; the door has been opened; the table has been set.”

She said she looked forward to taking Holy Communion in a United Methodist church for the first time in 18 months this coming Sunday. She plans to attend Chicago Temple (First United Methodist Church of Chicago).

But she also acknowledged much healing will need to be done as she resumes her duties as a bishop of the California-Nevada Conference.

“The woundedness we feel is real,” she said, noting that not only she but also those who filed complaints against her were feeling hurt right now.

But, she added, “I believe we can overcome it because of the love of Christ, the love of God that binds us together, I believe we can overcome it.”

The charges she faced stemmed from three complaints filed by a total of seven members of the California-Nevada Conference. Those complaints dealt with three very different situations, but they shared accusations that the bishop had overstepped her authority and acted retributively against her critics.

The 13-member jury of United Methodist clergy unanimously found her not guilty on all specifications in the charges. The jury remained anonymous throughout the proceedings and stayed in a hotel sequestered from all parties and observers in the case.

“It was interesting to hear that we were all very much of a very same mind coming into the room,” said the jury forewoman,

who spoke to United Methodist News on condition of anonymity.

She added that the jurors agreed that the evidence presented by the counsel for the church, the equivalent of a prosecutor, “did not give a clear and compelling case that the bishop was outside of her authority to make the decisions that she did.”

The jury included seven men and six women. The racial breakdown was four Asian American, three Black, three White, two Hispanic and one who is of mixed race.

Twelve of the jurors are ordained elders and one is an ordained deacon.

The Western Jurisdiction—which encompasses seven conferences, or regional bodies, in the U.S. western states and territories—elected Carcaño as the denomination’s first Latina bishop in 2004. Prior to the trial, the jurisdiction handled the adjudication of the case.

You can read more at <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/church-court-finds-bishop-not-guilty>

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# Viewpoints



## Editorial

by Jessica Brodie

### Yes, we can

In this month's front-page article, "Doing Ministry With Less Money," we learn South Carolina Conference financial leaders are urging ministries who receive conference funds to take a hard look at their operations and prepare now for leaner times. The Conference Council on Finance and Administration warned that we are in "a new reality" and that we must make do with less given the financial implications of churches leaving The United Methodist Church.

We applaud their foresight and their honesty.

We think Budget Committee Chair the Rev. Wayne Smith spoke plainly and correctly when he reminded ministries CF&A can only give what they receive.

But take heart: If we're wise, thoughtful and God-led about how we do ministry, we can do this.

See, it's not about how much money we bring in—it's about how we let God move through what we have. Jesus showed us the way when he fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish in Matthew 14:13-21.

It's the same for us today. Yes, our budget as an annual conference is getting smaller. Ten years ago, the 2014 budget was \$17.3 million. Now, in 2024, our conference budget is \$13.2 million. For 2025, the conference treasurer expects the budget could be \$10 million; planning is going on now.

But it doesn't matter how small the pool is. When God is our lifeguard, we can surely swim. And with the Lord as our guide, directing our swim strokes, our opportunities are infinite.

It's a good idea for all ministries to reassess their budgets and take a fresh look at how they deliver their mission and ministry through apportioned funds. It allows us to be intelligent and considerate stewards of God's money, and it enables us to make innovative new choices about Spirit-led ministry.

So don't despair, friends.

God will make a way. Together, we can do this.

### Letters Policy

We welcome letters to the editor. We urge brevity, as succinct writing often produces clarity. Letters should be no more than 450 words. All letters are subject to editing as needed to meet standards of grammar, space and interest. We will not publish anonymous letters, letters praising or criticizing businesses by name, endorsements of or letters from political candidates, fundraising appeals, or letters containing inappropriate language or personal attacks. All letters will be verified, so you must include a name, daytime phone number, church membership and hometown. Letters should be sent to The Advocate, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203 or e-mailed to [advocate@umcsc.org](mailto:advocate@umcsc.org). Deadlines are the 10th of each month.



## Bishop's Corner

by Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

### Extravagant generosity

*"The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work .... You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"—2 Corinthians 9:6-15*

Across the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, we have spent more than a decade together seeking a more excellent way in ministry and mission as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Together, we have achieved "God-sized" dreams that seemed beyond reach without relying on each other.

We have worked together to make real what would otherwise be impossible, achieving more together than we could ever do apart. We are developing leaders, engaging our communities, connecting

with and growing disciples and measuring and evaluating current realities and missional possibilities.

We look forward this month to Thanksgiving, a time filled with traditions, celebrations and opportunities to practice extravagant generosity. As we enter this season of the year, I want to express my deep appreciation for your commitment to the building up of the kingdom here in South Carolina. Thank you for the ways that you work to meet the tangible needs of your neighbors. Thank you for all of the ways you give from what you have sown as an act of thanksgiving to God.

So often, "giving" is directly associated with money.

But the reality is that the gospel demands more than our money. It demands our life, a commitment of who we are, as well as what we have. It demands a way of life characterized by gratitude and generosity.

Giving is about a joy so great we can't contain it and want to share it. It's about the ministry made possible through the gifts we offer and the transformation that giving makes possible in us. It is about trusting that God is, indeed, able to provide every blessing in abundance.

Giving is about connecting with United Methodists across the globe in mission and ministry. It's about serving with the generous people of the South Carolina Conference who prove time and again your willingness to be challenged to achieve "God-sized" dreams. It's about using our gifts and talents for the common good.

Indeed, it is an extravagant blessing and privilege to serve God together!

## Correction

In the article "2022 and 2023 Apportionments from Separating Churches Dispersed" (October *Advocate*), the phrasing caused some confusion about exactly where this money was dispersed.

The article stated, "In September, the conference treasurer's office dispersed apportionments collected from the 113 separating churches, which were recorded in a lump sum in August. These went to any entity approved as part of the conference budget."

To clarify, this means the money went to the normal budgeted line items that normally receive apportionment dollars, which are approved every year as part of the conference budget approved at annual conference. It was simply a lump sum of apportionments dispersed as normal to entities—from campus ministries to congregational development, all listed in the 2023 approved annual conference budget—who typically get these funds each month. See the conference journals for more detail at <https://www.umcsc.org/journals>.

We apologize for any confusion and strive to set the record straight.

## Letters to the Editor

### All

The history of racism and segregation in The United Methodist Church is not a pretty picture. In 1972, the Black conference and the White conference merged, and it was a celebration and Holy moment. The call was to love one another and to show all of South Carolina our commitment to an inclusive society.

This past annual conference 2023, 112 White churches left the United Methodist church. No Black church left except one church that had a different agenda. Several Black ministers said they could not trust this new denomination. Is racism a part of this movement?

The Bible was used as a weapon during

slavery. Today the Bible is being used to treat the LGBTQ people as not children of God. Discrimination is a sin. Jesus said we should love our neighbor. He meant all of human-kind—the rich and poor, the red and yellow, the Black and White, the homosexual. All.

*Rev. John Culp, retired  
West Columbia*

### Let us dream

In compliance with doctor's orders, I no longer drive. Rather than let my Buick rust out sitting in the garage, I gave it to my granddaughter. This happened during the pandemic, in which most business activities



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To inform and connect South Carolina United Methodists by independently reporting relevant news, engaging readers, providing a forum for dialogue and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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# LETTERS: Readers sound off issues

From Page 4

were shut down. It was also the time when major shortages of electronic devices required in automobiles were in short supply. These developments pushed the market for used cars to record highs. Prior to these events, my car was worth maybe \$3,000. My granddaughter sold it for \$11,770. She graciously deposited \$3,000 in my bank account.

In telling me I should not drive because of cognitive impairment, the doctor was apologetic and caring. He was aware of the difficulty of suddenly becoming dependent upon others for routine transportation for daily needs.

It did indeed require major adjustments in my daily routine. But, with time and near-unbelievable support from family and friends, I am discovering afresh the beauty and wonder of nature present along our streets and highways. The varied shades of green this spring have been refreshing, even inspiring! It is amazing how much more is seen by passengers than is seen by drivers of our automobiles.

There is an important lesson here. It is not that drivers should take more notice of the landscape they are driving through, but that we should be more mindful of the beauty that surrounds us.

Our problem as Americans is not that we are too hurried, but that we are too insensitive to the glories of creation about us. Much of that creation is man-made, but that makes it even more remarkable. Our creator is all powerful, but we human beings, though gifted and creative, remain limited in our intellectual and physical abilities. Yet all about us are inspiring tributes to human ingenuity: cloverleaf intersections, internal combustion engines, vertical flight, giant trees and forests, self-driving automobiles, medical and surgical technologies, architectural oddities, textile and fashion surprises, art and literature, earth-moving equipment, tractors, hay bailers, excavators, telescopes that give us never before seen views from deep space, rockets that carry us to the moon and beyond, medications that add years to our lives, etc. The list is endless!

Pope Francis reminds us of the biblical view of creation: "And God saw that it (the created order) was good" (Genesis 1:1-2). He also speaks of the damage to planet Earth by our loss of gratitude, what he says is "too much owning and too little thanksgiving." His language is powerful: "existential myopia, selective vision, the virus of indifference, armor-plated souls." Yet his view is not pessimistic but hopeful. He prays that the bonds of trust, communion and fraternity might be rekindled.

Our human family faces a choice: to heal the earth or see it lose the capacity to support life as we know it. Let the healing of our planetary home become our dream!

*Rev. Mickey Fisher, retired  
Spartanburg*

## Please use faith and reason

Dear friends in churches considering disaffiliation from the UMC, please use faith and reason and not fear and unreasonable/improbable situations as you deliberate your decisions. Remember that nobody is going to rewrite the Bible; no one wants to do away with or alter our United Methodist core beliefs.

Remember that those who become pastors in the UMC are examined and approved by his or her local church and by district and conference committees, which examine a person's character, beliefs and mental/emotional health. Members of these church bodies are your neighbors, people of South Carolina, people you have helped to choose.

Also remember that appointments of pastors are made in consultation between the bishop, district superintendents and the local church. Most churches are well aware of how to initiate a reconsideration of an appointment, and the Cabinet wants to make successful appointments and none that are going to fail.

Consider the strength you have by being connected to other UM churches who will rush to your aid in times of crisis. It is wonderful to have the security of our connection!

For many decades, conservative, moderate and liberal UM churches have coexisted peacefully, being served by pastors who are conservative, moderate and liberal. Pastors and churches are not expected or mandated to be all alike. You have a lot more autonomy in the UMC than in "independent" churches in certain associations and conventions. Those groups are quick to kick your church out of their convention if you don't follow their strict guidelines to the letter of the law.

Remember that quite often we United Methodists have disagreed with one another, but we have always found a way to continue to live as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Please consider all that you will be giving up if you

choose to disaffiliate. You will be weaker; we will be weaker. You will be missed!

*Rev. Arthur Holt, retired  
Boiling Springs*

## From doctrine to greed and power

Many local churches are trying to decide if following the 113 churches who disaffiliated in 2023 is an option. We are among them. With a little bit of research, you will find that 55 of the churches that left had apportionments under \$10,000 and fully 107 had apportionments of less than \$40,000. So thus far it has been the smaller, rural churches who have opted out. The fact that more churches did not seek to disaffiliate can be attributed to the punitive measures the bishop, with the approval of the so-called UMCSC leadership, put in place. Of course, the fact that the pathway to disaffiliation for South Carolina UMCs was not even decided on until late December 2022 also played a major role.

Now in mid-September, the conference has moved the goal posts. We received the "new" five-page document titled "Checklist for Closure and Separation in 2024" from our district superintendent on Sept. 18. There are 28 bullet points detailing items that must be submitted to the Annual Conference trustees by Dec. 1. Some of the items on the checklist require expenditure of funds even before discernment or disaffiliation are voted on. My first thought is that no one with a sense of fair play could concoct such a timeline. But then I remembered who we're dealing with.

Our church has held two town hall meetings to inform and educate the congregation. These were information-only meetings where our folks were asked to submit questions that would be compiled and answered at a subsequent town hall. As the lay leader, I moderated these meetings and have reviewed the questions, received emails and phone calls as well as had face-to-face conversations with those who attended.

Here is the surprising result of those encounters: No matter how passionate these folks may have been about the issue of human sexuality (pro or con removing language from the *Book of Discipline*), it has become a secondary issue. The primary concern of our congregation is the greed and dearth of leadership in the worldwide United Methodist Church and the South Carolina UMC in particular.

None of our folks graduated from Duke Divinity School or are Rhodes Scholars, but they do possess common sense.

What Bishop Holston and the SCUMC leadership have done is shot themselves in the foot.

*Ralph Johnson  
Memorial UMC, Greer*

## St. Joseph

Kiss your babe for me, oh Joseph,  
Kiss his holy feet—  
Those which will march in lowly pomp  
For me at Calvary.  
Hold your babe for me, oh Joseph,  
Hold him to your breast.  
Feel his breath against your skin  
And know that you are blessed.  
Keep your babe for me, oh Joseph,  
Keep him in your heart.  
Hold a place there for your child  
Even when you are apart.  
Do not weep for him, oh Joseph,  
Let not your tears fall down—  
For he marches on in victory;  
In death he wins his crown.

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

*Autumn Leigh Waite  
Bluffton UMC, Bluffton*

## Fellowship, freedom, fun

Regarding the Ministers' Spouses Retreat Sept. 22-24, I have attended many of the Ministers' Spouses Retreats, and this one was one of the best with very creative fellowship for the spouses. It was enjoyed by all who were there.

Kudos to Debra Friday and her staff—awesome! Yes, this is a new beginning.

Meeting the spouses, exchanging ideas, shopping and having meals together are something to cherish. The entertainment for Saturday's dinner was spectacular, fun, fun and then some.

I'm looking forward to the March 2024 retreat—I want to see if you can top this year's activities. May the spirit of love rest and abide with you until we meet again.

*Johanna A. Washington  
Columbia*



## Guest Commentary

by David Bryant

## Jesus in the Starting Blocks

I recently celebrated my 70th birthday, promptly followed by my semiannual physician visit. It seems I am in relatively good health for my age and in spite of my youthful transgressions. However, my physician said I needed to exercise more and lose some weight. I decided to lose a few pounds of resentments and exercise my spirituality a bit.

Starting several years before entering a life free from alcohol, I have been on a path of enlightenment into the life and teaching of Jesus and the awareness of his grace in my life. My passion before, during and since that time has been social justice.

With the current split in our churches and denomination, I have discovered how different my views of the meaning of Scripture and pertinence of Jesus Christ is from so many others. My personal locus is found in the New Commandment and the overwhelming enormity of Christ's love for us. And yet, I have become intolerant of those with whom I disagree, proving my abject failure at loving others as Jesus loves me.

So for whatever time I have on earth past my "three score and ten," I hope to surrender myself to the pursuit of spiritual justice with the same fervor as social justice. I believe that the primary belief that distinguishes my core belief system is that, for me, the realization of John's text(s) on being "born again" comes into reality somewhere between Jesus' description of the second Greatest Commandment and the New Commandment.

John Wesley addresses this in his sermons on rebirth. For me, rebirth is not a static event of salvation but the process of spiritual growth after one accepts Jesus as Lord and Savior. I like Wesley's concept—that as we rightly use the grace granted to us, we prepare ourselves to receive even greater grace, growing toward perfection through a process of sanctification. As Wesley says, "justification and the new birth are, in point of time, inseparable from each other, yet are they easily distinguished, as being not the same, but things of a widely different nature" (Sermon 19, "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God").

So, if I am to increase, I must become a conduit of grace to those with whom I totally disagree on the purpose and use of grace. I must love others who refuse to love others as Jesus loves. Easy peasy. Like saying playing a piano is easy—one just mashes those black and white keys! However, where to start? Most Scripture related to running the race of faith, hope and love begins during the race and finishes with victory, emphasizing perseverance, endurance and commitment along the way.

But Jesus, being Jesus, always began before the beginning. Jesus began effortlessly, folding himself into the starting blocks. Jesus began with compassion, empathy, kindness, inclusion and forgiveness. And Jesus routinely started with forgiveness and followed, if at all, with "sin no more" repentance. Jesus didn't start with logistics, inventories, data or barriers. Jesus started with love—agape love.

Got Questions Ministries describes "agape love" as involving "faithfulness, commitment and an act of the will." It continues, "God loves because that is his nature and the expression of his being. He loves the unlovable and the unlovely, not because we deserve to be loved or because of any excellence we possess, but because it is his nature to love, and he must be true to his nature." It follows then that if we are actually born again, or reborn in the Spirit, that degree of loving must become our nature, too. Got Questions continues, "Agape love as modeled by Christ is not based on a feeling; rather, it is a determined act of the will, a joyful resolve to put the welfare of others above our own."

Where one starts, I believe, is the evidence of spiritual rebirth that John calls "born again." Do we start with granting forgiveness or demanding repentance? Do we start with the traits of agape love or only grudgingly granting conditional love if our conditions are met? Do we accept as our due the unearned grace of Jesus but impose obedience to the law on others?

I think, in my new journey, there are two critical considerations. First, everyone may start at a different place and progress at a different pace in their individual race. Second, there is no possible way I, as a human, can possibly love as Jesus loves except by surrendering my inadequacy to Jesus and asking that he direct my thoughts, remove my self-centeredness and show me his will and guidance in every interaction and relationship. It also involves asking that Jesus might "pour into my heart through the Holy Spirit" that nature of love for others.

I think my morning prayers and meditations will include not that I may be accepting of others wherever they are on their journey and recognize them as a beloved child of God—in essence, "allowing" God to sort out his grace to whomever he chooses, even if they, using the name of Jesus, steadfastly refuse to do the same. I think my prayers will simply acknowledge that my nature be reborn to start with love as expressed through compassion, empathy, kindness, inclusion and forgiveness.

*A member of Bethesda UMC, Easley, Bryant is among the authors included in the recent Advocate Press book, "Darkness To Light: Fighting Jesus in the Valley of Mental Illness."*



## Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Leonard Huggins Jr.

### Pray for our children and our schools

*“Never stop praying.”—1 Thessalonians 5:17 NLT*

Back-to-school last month was exciting for our children, teachers and parents. It is also a crucial time in the lives of our children. And they need you, the church, to be a part of their lives.

It's a crazy world out there. It is not like it was when you and I went to school.

When I was in school, there were some problems with alcohol, cigarette smoking, cutting class, cussing and some boys carrying switchblade knives, and occasionally someone would get into a fight.

But today it is worse—popping bills, smoking weed, crack cocaine, same-sex dating, cell phones. Children bring guns to school, killing other children and the teacher, too. Social media has more impact on the children's behavior than the parents and teachers.

Our children need you and the church to be a part of their lives.

I know you've heard of drive-through banking, drive-through eating, drive-through pharmacies. Well, I would like for you to try another: drive-through praying!

Pray to God Almighty for our children. Pray for them when you drive by the school. Pray for them when you drive by the bus stop. Pray for them when you see them walking to school and on the bus.

Pray that our children may be delivered from wicked and evil children; not every child has faith to do the right thing.

Be friendly with our children, not their friends. Love our children. Take time to talk to them. Take time to visit the school. Go to sports events and other school activities.

Let the parents know you are praying for their children. Pray for our children in the morning, at noon and before you go to bed.

Let the teachers know you are praying for them, too.

Pray for the bus drivers, custodians and

cooks. Don't forget to pray for secretaries, coaches, counselors, school nurses and the principals.

Please pray for the school board trustees and the school superintendent to have a successful school year.

Again, let the parents know you are praying for their children because we must have the same mind working together to get the job done.

I want you to encourage our children to pray and go to church. Never stop praying. Just keep on praying, for the Lord is thine and he will hear you cry. Just keep praying. Great things happen when we pray to God Almighty.

For example: Shania Muhammad, a 16-year-old Black girl from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who already has three college degrees, has become America's youngest full-time salaried teacher. She is currently teaching the third grade at a school in her hometown.

I believe we who are in Christ should pray constantly, as the Scripture tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17. The more we pray, the more we'll serve, tell others the good news, teach and be protected from evil.

My sisters and brothers, when you do these things and more, you are having a spiritual impact on their lives that you might never imagine until you make it to heaven.

Our goal is someday in heaven walking the golden street with satisfaction because you see them there, too.

“Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.”—2 Chronicles 7:14

Have a blessed school year in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Huggins pastors Shady Grove United Methodist Church, St. George.*



## Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Tony Rowell

### The old outhouse

*Author's note: This story was hatched during a short visit Mary and I made to my childhood haunt of Willis Landing. Willis Landing was halfway between Wewahitchka and Port St. Joe on the Panhandle of Florida. The landing has gone, but the memories are faithful.*

The old outhouse is gone. It used to be right over there resting under that timeworn cypress.

I don't know why its absence struck me so. It isn't as if I enjoyed using the old outhouse. Use was born of necessity, not desire. Yes, going in there was an adventure in many ways, but I can't say I was fond of it. I contend that on any given day in mid-July the vapors, were they to be properly concentrated, could be weaponized to good effect. Not to mention the winged inhabitants of the place and the fear of being carried off to who knows where that drifted into a young boy's mind while he was in there. Lord, have mercy, the bees and the yellow jackets and the blow flies and the nameless creatures that lived in that place!

It's strange that there's pain in its passing, but there it is. I do have a lot of old memories and old stories with that outhouse in the background; perhaps that explains this inward aching. A precious privy—go figure. Honestly, I never really have had any philosophical fondness for that particular outhouse, any port in a storm, you know. But Lord, I do love the memories in which that rickety old place now resides.

The hogs have moved on, as well. I've mentioned them before. They weren't regular hogs. They were boat landing hogs, and they were bred for the purpose. This particular brand of hog, the Willis Landing hog, had a hankering for anything nasty and slightly rotted. They were forever chewing on something you didn't want to know about. They were panhandlers and general nuisances as well, with breath like Satan and little beady eyes like a demon from hell.

As a young boy, I quickly learned that boat landing hogs weren't good company and were best avoided, if you knew what was good for you.

And no, I didn't always know what was good for me. One of these days, I'll tell you about it.

Yeah, those old hogs would spend the heat of the day up underneath the porch over there. They would grunt and squeal and make all sorts of racket. If you got too close, they invited you to dinner, but not in a good way. More as a side dish than as a visitor, but they were part of the scene, so you didn't mind all that much. As long as you watched where you stepped, there was no real harm done.

Well goodness gracious, the porch is gone! So is the old store, for that matter. I mean, there's nothing left, not even a foundation. There's just a patch of grass,

some tidbits of the past scattered about and one old glass bottle with just the shadow of Old Milwaukee clinging to it. It was way off in the woods. I figure some teenage boy must've tossed it over there when Mama got too close. Things could get hopping on a Saturday night, or so they said.

I wonder how time missed that old bottle; it must've gotten distracted somehow looking for some other old man's memories to mess with.

That old store was where I had my first taste of Tupelo honey. Man, that was some good stuff.

With the flood of memories rushing my way, my eyes moistened a bit, but about that time my mind brought back that Tupelo taste to my lips, and I had to smile. It was then that I turned to look at the old river, and it was like coming home.

The sorrow of loss and the longing for the way things once were succumbed to the joy of the untouched. Yes, the store has vanished, the outhouse and its kind are all but extinct, the hogs have long since become side meat and sausage. But the river—the river remains the same.

Just around that bend to the right, right past that little seductive curve, is where Whiskey Slough can be found. Somehow simply knowing that place of my childhood, with its coffee-colored water and ever-present shade, was right over there like always lifted my heart from the doldrums into the morning light of years gone by. What a gift that was. What a blessing.

We live in a time that is ever-changing, it seems. As things change around us, as the things of the past are cast aside, as new realities raise their heads, it can be very frightening. As the age-old institutions upon which our stability rests are shaken by new generations with new ideas and new beliefs, fear and sorrow can overtake us.

As this world changes around us, many have a sense of loss and longing for the way things once were. I number myself with those people.

But as a child of God, I must allow my sense of loss and longing to succumb to the joy of knowing the untouched, the unchanged and the unchangeable.

Let the world change around me, if it wishes; I will rely upon the steadfast sameness of my God and of his Word, and in so doing, I will find true peace, stability and joy.

I pray that you do the same.

Revelation 1:8: “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty” (NIV).

*Rowell pastors Beulah United Methodist Church, Gilbert. He is also the author of “What Would Granny Say,” an essay collection from the Advocate Press available at <https://www.advocatesc.org/books>.*



## Guest Commentary

by Deborah Len

### God with us always (Part 7, the end)

I was speechless. George openly wept.

Daniel said, “We will all know moments of suffering and pain in this lifetime. We also know that God was resurrected to show us that we have a hope in Jesus Christ.”

Then I remembered Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.”

There is more, and at that moment we all knew that Grandma Dot gave her three children and their children a legacy like no other family had ever had.

We decided to tell our parents about this wonderful legacy.


May all of us continue to honor the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit as Grandma Dot taught us.

*Len is a member of Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, Lancaster.*



### Did You Know?

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



### Kindness for Killingsworth

The Myrtle Strange Circle at Manning UMC, Manning, presents a check Sept. 18 to support Killingsworth, a United Methodist home for women in crisis seeking transformation.



## Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr.

### Son of a sharecropper goes home

For this sharecropper's son, July and August have been especially tough this year. My mom was born July 1; my dad on July 7; my youngest brother, Robert Lee, July 9; I was born July 27; my second son and child, Milton Keith, was born July 30; and my eldest brother, Theodore, was born Aug. 19.

Yet each of these has passed on, with Theodore being the last, one year ago, 15 days before his birthday. This year marks my first as the only sibling and brother of five left.

Even though this is a challenging time of year, it is also an exciting time of year. It is the time of year that I am reminded how blessed I am to be alive and part of the ministry of Africa University that is impacting our world positively.

It begins with the fall meeting of the Africa University Board and Advisory meeting. This year's meeting was held in my home state and culminates with what is termed "Saturation Sunday," wherein a group of preachers and laity are dispatched to various churches in the host area to share the AU story and the story of Jesus.

This year's meeting was held in Myrtle Beach, in the heart of the Marion District, and it was my lot to be assigned to a church in my hometown of Marion: First UMC. This son of a sharecropper had the dubious honor of going home to share this great story with my fellow Marionites. It's a story that has transformed not only those we serve, but those of us who serve.

What an amazing Homecoming and Family Reunion this turned out to be! The world needs to know that this prophet received honor in his hometown among his own people. It began with gracious words of welcome from Pastor Lyerly before the visit. Next, a senior member called to extend her personal welcome and to revisit the treasured relationships and memories of my parents and family. I tried, as best as I could, to hide the emotion in my voice and the tears in my eyes as she recounted the past.

Even though they had their own version of the story I came to share, they kindly allowed me to tell it, again, as they listened attentively, cheering me on with their approving smiles like doting parents would their own child.

My wife was so taken by the gracious hospitality that she pressured me to pledge to bring her back for a visit in the future. It was my pleasure to introduce my home folks to the newest addition to our family, my JoAnn (Da'lady).

This church hosted the homegoing services of my late brother, Fredrick Sr., and my wife, Mildred, and is hosting, presently, another congregation in their chapel while its edifice is being restored.

I found myself whispering to my maker, "Thank you, Lord, that the tears that the bishop, I and others shed at Annual Conference was not for First United Methodist Church of Marion."

First UMC, you remind me why I am United Methodist: The connection works! You have made me proud to be United Methodist and to call The Swamp Fox City of Marion my home.

Abram, a retired pastor, lives in St. Matthews.



## Guest Commentary

by the Rev. Robert Cox

### What is a member?

With the recent church conference meetings to vote on disaffiliation, many churches have discovered the importance of complete, accurate and up-to-date membership rolls.

As district superintendents have led these church conferences, they have been in unfortunate circumstances of having to tell folks who thought they were members of the church that they were ineligible to vote because the church rolls did not have them listed as a professing member.

So what is a professing member? A professing member is a baptized person who professes their faith in Jesus Christ and promises to live as his disciple and takes the vows of membership in Para. 217 of the *Book of Discipline* and in the *Hymnal and Book of Worship*.

While there are other types of member-

ship in the church—including baptized, constituent, affiliate and associate—only professing members may serve on the Church Council, Charge Conference or vote at church conferences.

Important information that is required to be recorded for professing members includes:

- Date received;
- How received (profession, reaffirmation, transfer from another UMC, transfer from another denomination);
- Date removed; and
- How removed (death, withdrawn, transfer to another UMC, transfer to another denomination, removed by charge conference).

For more information and help in keeping proper membership records, go to [www.church-admin.org](http://www.church-admin.org), or email [rlcox@umcsc.org](mailto:rlcox@umcsc.org).



## Guest Commentary

by Glenn Williams

### A love poem

*"But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love."—1 Corinthians 13:13*

I am taking poetry at Lander University this semester. I am writing and reading poems and loving it. Writing poetry and sharing one's poems in workshop is so therapeutic! It's fun for this 69-year-old trying to get into the minds of 20-year-old poets and finally see what they are trying to convey through their poems. I feel a certain peace when I study and eventually understand a poem.

I have learned about different forms of poetry, and one of my favorites is the Haiku. It is a three-line poem with five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second line; and five syllables in the third. It sounds easy, but this, my first Haiku, took three hours to create.

My prompt for this poem was a favorite photograph that I took of my wife, Allie, on Dec. 31, 2020, at Hilton Head Island. She posed with her arms outstretched, lining up with the streaks of clouds.

Here is the poem:

"Praise"  
Her arms rise in praise  
A beach sunset she directs  
Her power is love

When I took the photograph, I did not notice the clouds were in alignment with her outstretched arms. I am not sure the clouds did not actually align at the moment she raised her arms in praise! My poem assumes that she did in fact, direct the scene.

Her power to direct the sunset came from the love she felt at the time of the pose. Her love of humanity, her family, her friends, the beach and, most of all, her love of God was the source of the power—that even Allie could direct a sunset.

Can a heart full of love be this powerful?

The 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, if studied closely, will provide the answer. This is probably my favorite poem ever.

Like reading any poetry, the "love chapter," 1 Corinthians 13, should be read several times to interpret its meaning. The goal is to line up your interpretation with that of the author, who in this case is God himself. I believe God wrote this love poem, and Paul only took dictation.

Let's examine and see if we can get close to what the author intended to convey.

The first stanza ends with: "I am bankrupt



without love" (v. 3-7). God is clear in stating that nothing in creation can satisfy humanity unless the human possesses love. My favorite example in this stanza is that a martyr can die for a just cause, but without love, he dies in vain. Jesus, before he died on the cross, asked God to forgive us because we don't know what we are doing. That is love.

The next stanza tells us what love does: "Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, doesn't have a swelled head, doesn't force itself on others, isn't always 'me first.' Doesn't fly off the handle, doesn't keep score of the sins of others, doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, puts up with anything, Trusts God always, always looks for the best, never looks back, but keeps going to the end. Love never dies" (v. 3-7). Love puts up with anything. I must go back to the cross. Jesus allowed us to kill him so he could save us. That is love.

The next stanza reveals God's grace. He lets us know that we humans will never understand love completely, and he still loves us with a love we can't understand and certainly can't imitate. "We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete" (v. 8-10). But even our incomplete love has tremendous power.

The last stanza charges us: "But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love" (v. 13). If we can do the first two, it is possible to do the most important: Love extravagantly. Extravagant love is love that fills your heart to nearly exploding, with the only release to lift your arms in praise.

I took the photograph on our 44th wedding anniversary. The beachcombers were all out gazing and photographing the last sunset of 2020. At that moment in time, I believe Allie came as close as one can come to complete, extravagant love. At that moment in time, when God's love filled her so completely, she actually directed the sunset.

Williams is a lifelong member of Main Street UMC, Greenwood.

St. Paul (Camden) United Methodist Church  
511 Knights Hill Rd., Camden SC 29020  
Rev. Dr. James P. Smith, Pastor

"Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre." Psalm 33:2

**WE DEEPLY APPRECIATE OUR AMAZING MUSICIANS!!!**

Thank you, **Vance Alexander** (Keyboard/Piano) and **Gloria Hayward** (Percussions), for enhancing our services with your musical and spiritual gifts as well as your dedication and involvement in numerous other activities at St. Paul. Words of appreciation are also extended to **Janet Potts**, pianist, for blessing us on several Sundays!

The St. Paul (Camden) UM Church Family

KILLINGSWORTH GALA RETURNS!

KILLINGSWORTH transforming women

November 9 at 6 p.m.  
Seawell's Restaurant, Columbia  
Tickets \$65 (Table of 8, \$500)

Testimonies by Killingsworth ladies

Deadline: NOV. 3

Killingsworth.org

## Letters to the Editor



### Serving better

Lay Servant Ministry's Fall Session was held the last three Sundays in September at Beaumont UMC, Spartanburg. They had four classes: Preach, Polity, Worship and Spiritual Gifts. "We had a wonderful and energetic group of persons who were eager to learn and willing and ready to be of service to the Lord and The United Methodist Church," said Annie R. Crocker, district director of Spartanburg LSM.

Photos by Annie R. Crocker



Fairfield Outreach and Sponsors Association and Epworth Children's Home are collaborating to serve the children of Fairfield Children's Home and the students and clients of Old Mutare Mission in Zimbabwe, Africa.

### Epworth in Africa

Fairfield Outreach and Sponsors Association and Epworth Children's Home are collaborating to serve the children of Fairfield Children's Home and the students and clients of Old Mutare Mission in Zimbabwe, Africa.

The Rev. John Holler, Epworth's president emeritus and FOSA board member, reports that great progress is being made in missional activity at Old Mutare in spite of the crippling inflation and high unemployment that plague the nation of Zimbabwe.

Both Epworth and FOSA have significant stakes in the life-changing activities that take place at Old Mutare.

Epworth adopted Fairfield as a sister children's home in 2001 after a mission team from Trenholm Road UMC spent 10 days working there and witnessing the great needs of the children. Epworth, during the "Every Child is a Miracle" financial campaign, pledged to tithe 10 percent of the total raised to help support God's work at Fairfield and Old Mutare. FOSA has for many years worked to strengthen and sustain Fairfield and the associated mission at the school, church and hospital at Old Mutare.

For FOSA, providing a safe nurturing environment for Zimbabwean children to live and grow into productive adults is paramount. This organization strives to present every child at Fairfield with the means to accomplish his or her dreams.

Rev. Holler reports that the need is great, but the work is most rewarding.

At the annual retreat in September, the FOSA board approved a document to create a permanent endowment and also receive its initial contributions for the endowment. The board also approved the purchase of a midsize tractor that will be used by Fairfield and by Africa University, which is located on the same tract of land, to prepare fields for planting for both institutions.

The FOSA board has also authorized a grant application and evaluation process for the institutions to access funds for high needs projects. The initial emphasis will be on cottage upgrades and roof repair on residential cottages, and educational enhancements for youth who are on the college and career tracks at Fairfield. Part of the work is the strengthening of ties between the schools at Old Mutare and Africa University.

Dr. Jim Salley and the new Vice Chancellor, the Rev. Dr. Peter Mageto, are aiding in this initiative.

FOSA is seeking additional sponsors to help support the cost of the room, board and educational needs of the children and families at Fairfield Children's Home. Sustainability is at the core of both Epworth and Fairfield Children's Homes in order to grant the children and families who are served at these institutions the gift of opportunity.



## United Women in Faith

by Sonja Benjamin

### Water: Not a luxury but a necessity

**W**ater is source of all life on earth. All living beings, like humans, animals and plants, need water to develop, grow and live. Without water, life on earth is impossible.

We need water for everything, including bathing, cooking, washing clothes, watering plants and feeding animals. Most importantly, human beings need water to keep a normal temperature, lubricate and cushion joints, protect the spinal cord and other sensitive tissues and get rid of wastes through urination, perspiration and bowel movements.

It is recommended that women drink 11 cups of water daily.

We as United Women in Faith work tirelessly to support and implement our belief that love in action can change the world. This means that we work to change injustice in the world in all situations.

Recently we learned that Jackson, Mississippi, is not the only state facing water pollution problems.

Unfortunately, more than 1,150 water ways in South Carolina are considered impaired: too polluted to meet water quality standards, according to Carolina Clear, a Clemson Extension program that provides storm water education and outreach.

On June 24, the South Carolina Conference United Women in Faith Charter for Racial Justice Committee held a Racial and Environmental Justice Workshop. Our guest speaker, Ben Cunningham, represented the South Carolina Environmental Law Project.

The organization's mission is to use legal expertise to protect land, water and communities across South Carolina.

We were informed that small, rural, low-income and racially diverse communities are experiencing failing water infrastructure. During this time, we learned that in Denmark, South Carolina, the city used a pesticide called HaloSan for 10 years to treat one of the city's groundwater wells. DHEC approved the use of this chemical in 2008 to treat pools. However, the product is not approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to disinfect drinking water. The town is no longer using this product.

According to Bamberg County County Administrator Joey Preston, a large community in Bamberg known as "Family Circle" has complained for more than a decade about their well water, including smelly brown water that stained their clothing and damaged appliances (Times and Democrat). Many of the residents also have health issues.

In South Carolina about 80 percent of public water systems use surface water as their source of drinking water and about 20 percent use groundwater.

Please get informed about South Carolina water. When you know better, you do better. Water is an essential requirement for life. Whatever we put in our bodies can help it or destroy it.

Let us help make and keep our water safe for everyone.

*Benjamin is president of New Covenant UMC, Bowman, United Women in Faith.*

## Annual community Thanksgiving dinner to feed 1,500+ in Lowcountry

Set for Thursday, Nov. 23, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

HILTON HEAD ISLAND—This Thanksgiving, members of St. Andrew By-The-Sea United Methodist Church will once again join with Hudson's Seafood House to provide a community meal for their neighbors.

The 24th annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be held on Thursday, Nov. 23, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Hudson's Seafood House on the Docks on Squire Pope Road in Hilton Head.

"This free Thanksgiving Dinner is open to everyone, from individuals who don't have family in the area to entire families," said Gloria LaCoe, who leads the volunteer team and organizes the event with her husband, Allan, each year.

The family-style meal is served to more than 1,500 Lowcountry residents and visitors annually.

The concept for the Community

Thanksgiving Dinner began with a 1998 article in the Island Packet that described lonely locals who had no place to go on Thanksgiving Day.

Early the following year, Brian Carmines, then-owner of Hudson's, Allan LaCoe and Betsy Doughtie, the former executive director of the Deep Well Project, met to discuss opportunities to organize a community-wide event. St. Andrew By-The-Sea UMC soon signed on to spearhead the volunteer organization, and Hudson's offered to host the first dinner.

Five hundred meals were served that Thanksgiving Day in 1999.

More than 300 volunteers now contribute their time by assisting with parking, welcoming guests, serving the meals and engaging in a variety of other tasks.

Complete information is available at <https://communitythanksgiving.com>.



# And the winner is .....

## Bible Study Quiz Bowl helps Canaan-Sand Hill youth grow in God's Word

By Paige C. Roper

In an effort to share God's Word with their youth, the Canaan-Sand Hill Charge launched a Youth Bible Study program. Now in its second year, the program is bearing much fruit.

In the Christian race, it seems obvious certain winners should advance through the finish line. However, in Ecclesiastes 9:11, the author states, "The race is not given to the swift or the strong." When we ponder these words, we are left to wonder who will rise to be victorious in a world inundated with uncertainties. In times perplexed by unpredictability, United Methodists of diverse backgrounds have one who is faithful, unchanging and sure—God and his eternal Word/son, Jesus the Christ (John 1:1; Hebrews 4:12). As Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

As God's Word will never cease to exist, the Canaan-Sand Hill Charge embarked upon a mission to give God's Word as spiritual food that will never spoil or perish. It is the goal of the charge to help young persons develop the perseverance needed to finish life's race as a victor in a world where true winners are not always evident.

To share God's word with their youth, the Canaan-Sand Hill Charge started a Youth Bible Study Program in 2022. Participants in grades six to 12 just completed their second year.

Students met monthly for seven months from March through September 2023. Their studies focused primarily on topics outlined in Lifeway's Gospel Foundation Series and were centered on Old Testament accounts concerning creation, the Abrahamic covenant, Joseph's adversity, the exodus story as well as God bringing his people into the promised land of Canaan.

Students culminated their studies with a Youth Bible Study Quiz Bowl on Sunday, Sept. 24. This was a fun-filled event held in Canaan United Methodist Church's Family Life Center, and it gave participants an opportunity to demonstrate their learning, comprehension and application of biblical knowledge and content.

A total of 55 questions were asked from various categories reflective of subjects taught during Bible study, and after a contested battle of brilliant minds, the Canaan-Sand Hill Charge's Green Team emerged as the clear winner.

The Green Team comprised the following members:



2023 Canaan-Sand Hill Charge Youth Quiz Bowl participants along with Deanna Goodwine, coordinator (far left), and Paige Roper, facilitator (far right). Ethan Mitchell, the winner, is at center.

Ethan Mitchell, Franklin Fogel, Isabella Dos Santos and Gavin Spells. Ethan Mitchell, the son of Gervis and Kwamina Mitchell of Canaan, and the grandson of the Rev. Mark D. Mitchell, an ordained UMC elder and current pastor of the Lake City Circuit, was the grand-prize winner who answered the most questions correctly.

Although every race and competition has champions who emerge, members of the Canaan-Sand Hill Charge congratulated all student participants for a job well-done. The charge considers every young person a winner who is willing to undertake a disciplined and in-depth study of the Holy Bible. Every parent, guardian or mentor who has supported them in doing this is also considered a winner.

For God said in Isaiah 55:11, "When my word leaves my mouth, it will not return to me void, but it will accomplish all that I desire and shall prosper wherever I send it."

Knowing that God's word reaps success, let us continue to plant its seed into our children, and let us continue to read, study and apply it to our daily lives as well.



The Rev. Jeffrey Salley, pastor, Canaan-Sand Hill Charge, with Ethan Mitchell, grand-prize winner of the 2023 Canaan-Sand Hill Charge Youth Quiz Bowl.

## St. Paul's celebrates organist's 39 years of music ministry

By Bill Barnier

Sept. 25 marked the last Sunday church service at St. Paul's Methodist Church, Ridgeland, for retiring organist and pianist Sarah Baxter Morgan. With her upcoming 92nd birthday in October and 39 years at the keyboard, Morgan decided it was time to make room on the organ bench for someone else to praise God in music.

Morgan began her interest in church music as a young girl sitting in the choir loft next to St. Paul's organist, Dale T. Crosby. Her love of music came naturally from her mother, who was also a pianist and music teacher. By the time Crosby retired, after 45 years as the St. Paul's organist, Sarah was already able to read music and be comfortable at the piano. She taught herself to play the two-level organ keyboard, though not the foot pedals, and jumped right in playing for Sunday services.

"I felt powerful sitting at the front of the church," Morgan said. "I was, and still am, proud of what I've been able to achieve. I wanted so much for God to like how I played for him and the church. Piano is my first love, though. I actually played a bit of violin as a girl, but demands of life forced me to put it aside."

Morgan, also lovingly known as Ms. Sa (Say), also serves as a mentor for her granddaughters, Emory and Emmiline.

"I try to take their interest in what I've learned and grow a passion in them for the joy of music," she said. "I've passed along my violin to Emory because she feels a natural comfort in it. Emmiline is sticking with the keyboard for now. She'll continue to play the hour chimes for Sunday services."



Sarah Baxter Morgan

Morgan confessed her happiest duties at the organ have been for weddings.

"The happiness is contagious," she laughed. "But I also played my best for funerals because people need reassurance at those times."

Though the church organ will be silent until another organist is found, Morgan will continue to keep up her skills at home by meditating with music and by helping her grandchildren with their musical gifts. Her favorite hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," will no doubt be heard often by the Morgan's neighbors.

St. Paul's hosted a retirement luncheon for Morgan following their Oct. 1 Sunday service where she received a plaque in recognition of her service to the church.



### A Yankee visits with Manning men

The United Methodist Men of Manning UMC, Manning, hosted a supper Sept. 11 with guest speaker Bobby Richardson. Richardson is a former New York Yankee. From left are Scott Wannamaker, Bill Brewer, Richardson and Manning pastor the Rev. David McManus.

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# Marion men gather Sept. 30 to 'Grow in the Spirit'

The Marion District men held a districtwide meeting Sept. 30 at Surfside United Methodist Church.

The theme for the day was "Growing in the Spirit," and 46 people attended.

The day started with music by Michael Geiger and Robert Blair with the church band "Revolution."

Speakers led on a variety of topics: Prayer by the Rev. George Donigan (retired); Faith, by Lay Speaker Napoleon Smalls of The Brook UMC; Bible Study by the Rev. Joel Makin of First UMC, Myrtle Beach; Fruit of the Spirit by Lay Speaker Mike Carle, Belin Memorial UMC, Murrells Inlet;

Christian Fellowship by the Rev. Charles Wilbanks, Herbert Memorial UMC, Georgetown; and Spiritual Gifts by Lay Speaker Bruce Reese, Surfside UMC.

Each speaker was asked to focus not only on information about the topic but also how to grow in the Spirit in that area.

"This was a very well-delivered event, as each speaker challenged everyone to think deeper, study more and grow closer to God," said Kenny Bingham of United Methodist Men.

The final speaker of the day was District Superintendent the Rev. Steve Brown.

"He did a masterful job of bringing all these topics together to help each and every one there grow in the spirit in our daily lives," Bingham said. "Thanks to the many men who helped plan our event, with several district churches involved and our own Surfside UMC men."

He also lifted thanks to South Carolina Conference Bishop L. Jonathan Holston for his words of encouragement, Conference UMM President Marvin Horton, National Conference of UMM Presidents President Herman Lightsey for attending and the Revs. Mary Teasley and Tae Park of Surfside UMC.

## Ruth Haley Barton to speak at November Clergy Orders

Ruth Haley Barton will be featured at the 2023 Fall Clergy Orders, an in-person gathering.

Set for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 16, the focus is "Strengthening Your Soul to Lead."

Barton is a seasoned spiritual director, speaker, preacher and founder of the Transforming Center. She holds a doctor of divinity from Northern Seminary and authored "Life Together in Christ," "Sacred Rhythms" and numerous other books, including "Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership," the focus of the November talk.

Clergy Orders will be held at Lexington United Methodist Church, 309 E Main St., Lexington.

Registration will close on Friday, Nov. 10.



Ruth Haley Barton

To register, go to <https://www.umcsc.org/clergyordersregistration>.



## View from the Pews

by Bill Barnier

### We are one

In our journey on this life path, we all have opportunities to reach into our hearts to find the essence of the reason we were placed here by God. For the most part, every method of reflection, worship, connection and enlightenment embodies the quest to learn God's way so we may move on to our next existence. No matter which brand of worship we embrace, the basic tenants of innocence, love, spiritual enrichment, freedom, connection and truth are found somewhere in that belief system. We are one with our Creator.

When searching for at least some of these truths, one might come to realize that we have, and continue to practice, an ungodly pattern of all things not remotely related to good. We learned to kill each other before we understood it was wrong, yet we've continued to do it for millennia even as we learn nothing good will come of it. We humans continue to be selfish, continue to judge, to project false images of ourselves, to consume with abandon and to ignore the results of such inequities our arrogance brings to our beautiful world. We will destroy our spaceship and her crew upon which we must rely for our existence because we shortsighted humans think we know best.

I know, y'all must think I've lost my mind. Using what incredibly small measure of common sense I have tells me that recorded histories of all kinds document the quests for escape from our mortal existence to something or somewhere better than our home. But humans can't put aside all that humans do to achieve power and control. We suck the life energy out of everything because we refuse to believe or simply forgot it's not necessary.

Are we much different than Judas or Peter? As much as they loved Jesus, their words of loyalty rang hollow under test. Judas allowed his human weakness to rise up in betrayal, while Peter became selfish and cowardly. Betrayal is one of the lowest of our weaknesses. But were their fateful actions unavoidable? Without their transgressions, the teachings of Jesus to demonstrate the love of the father may not have been so powerful, so everlasting. One could argue that even the pain of the murder of Jesus, and the lessons he tried to remind us of, lasted only a short time. Humanity quickly filed those lessons into history books and went right on doing all the horrible things humans do. Not a single one of us are exempt, even today.

Religious texts, scholars, spiritual leaders, mystics, philosophers, astronomers, astrologers—the list goes on—are coming to a common agreement that life as we've known it for thousands of years is in the meaningful stages of change. Forces, the power of which we cannot imagine, seem to be at a point in space and time when the predicted new chapter may have already begun (John 4:21).

People from all walks of life are beginning to feel something in their hearts: that we humans and our beautiful earth are changing, and our old ways of stealing power don't work. They are realizing the lessons of innocence, love, spiritual enrichment, freedom and connection are where our truth and our future must be found. It's through our deep loving trust in our Creator and all of creation that we will see how wrong we've been.

Many will finally step onto the path they must travel with courage and commitment. Those who will not open their hearts and see truth as Spirit meant us to see will be left behind.

For more, read Revelation 21:1-11.

Barnier is a member of St. Paul's Methodist Church, Ridgeland.



Photos courtesy of the Rev. Pattie E. Gordon

## Johns Island Parish walks to fight cancer

The Johns Island Parish United Women in Faith participated in the "We Fight Together" annual cancer awareness walk Saturday, Oct. 14, from 8 a.m. to noon. Participants from Bethlehem, St. James and New Webster UMCs included MOV (Men Of Vision) Car Club, We Ride Together (Orangeburg Motorcycle Club), New Bethlehem Baptist Church, NFL Fans (Pittsburgh and Dallas) and AKA and Delta sororities. All funds collected help persons fighting cancer.



# LIFE TOGETHER: Focusing on what the UMC means to them

From Page 1

The Rev. Smoke Kanipe, pastor of Shandon UMC, Columbia, said he felt honored to contribute a video to the effort.

“I’ve been a Methodist all my life,” Kanipe said. “I grew up in a Methodist Church that became a United Methodist church in 1968 when I was 10, and the UMC has essentially made me who I am.”

Kanipe says everyone has a different slant on why they chose to become or remain United Methodist, and for him, he feels rooted in the church from his days as a camper at the United Methodist Asbury Hills summer camp to his time participating in conference youth work.

“The UMC is not a perfect church. No church is,” Kanipe said. “But in these times of uncertainty and anxiety, we don’t want to lose sight of all the good that goes on.”

Dr. George Ashford, senior pastor at Journey UMC, Columbia, also contributed a video, and he said he hopes it helps inspire and encourage people during a time of transition in the denomination. He said the opportunity to reflect on the church and the call God placed on his life helped him restore his own passion in ministry, and he hopes it does the same for others.

Ashford said his late father, also a pastor, once told him that at one time in his life he needed the church, but we all get to the point when the church needs us, too.

“I have lived that on both ends,” Ashford said, noting how as a young pastor in his first year of seminary, he was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s disease, yet his church still allowed



Above, the Rev. Angela Marshall, pastor of St. John’s UMC, Lugoff, shares her reflections on what The United Methodist Church means to her. Below, the Rev. Morris Waymer, pastor of New Francis Brown UMC, North Charleston, describes what the church means to him personally.



him to pastor the congregation and was very supportive, even compensating him when he was out for several Sundays. “It meant a lot. Now on the back end of that, I want to make sure I’m responsible and accountable to that same institution.

“What we have begun is still worth fighting for and dedicating our lives toward.”

The Rev. Geneva Stafford, pastor of Francis Burns UMC, Columbia, shared how much it means to her that her church is in her corner, offering love and support from the time she joined. Stafford switched to the UMC from the African Methodist Episcopal Church 40 years ago, after she got married.

“When I tell you this church is a connectional church, I mean that in all sincerity,” Stafford said.

The Rev. Gene Aiken, pastor of Trinity UMC, North Myrtle Beach, said that for him, the UMC is home. In his latest appointment, at Trinity, he said he’s especially learned that the things that bring us together as a church are much greater than the things that divide us.

“I have people here who completely disagree with each other, and yet they come together Sunday morning and they worship the same God and they feel togetherness is more important than anything that can divide us,” Aiken said.

For him, that’s critical.

All said they appreciated being able to express positive and encouraging thoughts about matters of faith—thoughts they hope will inspire and encourage others in turn.

To see the videos, visit <https://www.umcsc.org/together>.

## ALDRERSGATE HOME: Cont’d

From Page 1

The Rev. Stephen Taylor, senior pastor of Union United Methodist Church in Irmo, officiated the ceremony, attended by supporters and Aldersgate families all excited about the newest endeavor.

The four other Aldersgate homes for adults with special needs are The Oaks, in Orangeburg at The Oaks, which accommodates six men; Columbia Builder’s Care Home, in Columbia near Epworth Children’s Home, which accommodates six women; Rick’s House, at The Manor in Florence, which accommodates four men; and Sunshine House, also at The Manor, which

broke ground in March and will accommodate four men.

Thomas said there is a vast need for homes for people with special needs in South Carolina, particularly as their caregivers—typically parents—age.

Enabling these men and women to have a Christian home where they can live relatively independently can be a huge relief for these families.

Aldersgate’s mission to provide quality homes in a Christian environment for people with special needs that enables them to be as independent as possible.

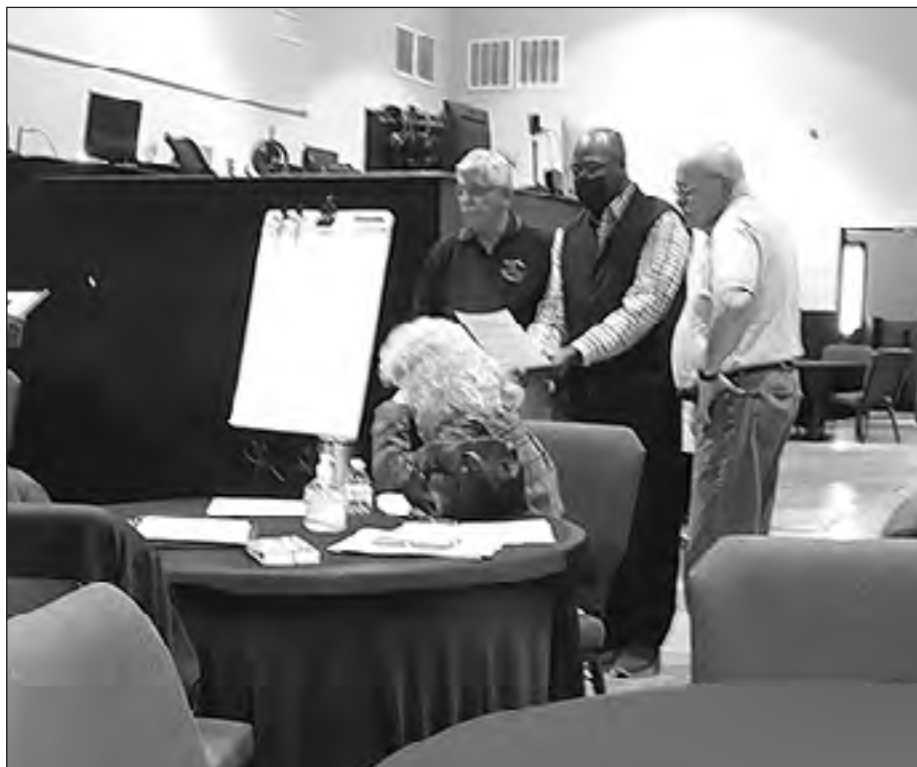
To learn more about Aldersgate, visit <https://www.aldersgatesnm.org>



The Rev. Milton and Betty Moss McGuirt are longtime supporters of Aldersgate.



The Rev. Stephen Taylor officiates the ceremony dedicating the home.



### New officers for UMMen

South Carolina Conference Men in Ministry held its annual business meeting Saturday, Oct. 14, electing three new officers. Kenny Bingham will serve as president, Dyron Anderson as vice president and Bob James as secretary. Charles Shipman will continue to serve as treasurer.

### Zin Bronola

Thank you for your years of serving as the choir/music director for Cornerstone UMC. We are truly blessed to have such a talented and devoted musician to bless us with beautiful music every week!

Cornerstone United Methodist Church



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Alston Wilkes Society 61st Annual Meeting Nov. 16, 12-2 p.m. Seawell’s Restaurant, Columbia

featuring Peter Broughton, founder and Chris Thompson, member, of The Messengers speaking group.



# DOING MINISTRY: Westbury speculates 2025 budget might be \$10K

From Page 1

Smith Patterson, the Rev. Stephen Taylor and Katie Woodfin. Smith said CF&A is hoping ministries will take a new look at their operations and explore their priorities. He noted that often groups come before CF&A with the same budget every year like it's a blank check, but things will be different now with a smaller amount available to give.

"You need to look at your ministry and what is essential," Smith said.

The 113 churches that left the UMC this year were required to pay 100 of their apportionments upon leaving, which amounted to roughly \$2.4 million. That led CF&A to recommend the 2024 budget be reduced by \$2.4 million. For the 2025 budget year, conference leaders know the overall budget needs to be even less than 2024. But with more churches discerning now whether or not they also wish to leave the UMC, as well as an economic downturn for the nation in general, they know they need to be conservative in their expectations.

"We have to project for 2025 but we're still in 2023, so it's hard to do that, but be ready—we're projecting a reduction," Smith said. "As

with any nonprofit, we can only give what we receive."

"This is a moving target," added Patterson.

CF&A wants ministries to begin having uncomfortable conversations about how to pivot given the less apportioned funds they will receive, as well as to explore funding outside of apportionments, such as grants or individual donations.

For instance, the *Advocate* receives some conference apportionments but also subscriptions, advertising revenue, revenue from book sales and tax-deductible donations from newspaper supporters.

"Be prayerful about this, please," Smith urged. "We want to keep doing ministry, but we're going to have to do it with less. That's the new reality. It may not be a comfortable reality, but that's where we are: to do the most we can with what we have."

To accomplish this practically, CF&A leaders encouraged ministries to start with exploring what two-thirds of their current

“

## This is a moving target.

—Smith Patterson

ministry might look like.

While numbers are nowhere near ready, Westbury speculated that the conference will be looking at a \$10 million budget for 2025.

The 2024 budget is \$13.2 million, while the 2023 budget is \$15.6 million and the 2022 budget was \$15.9 million.

Patterson reminded all that before the next annual conference, the UMC will finally be holding its long anticipated—and long postponed—General Conference.

"Who knows what financial repercussions will come out of that," Patterson observed.

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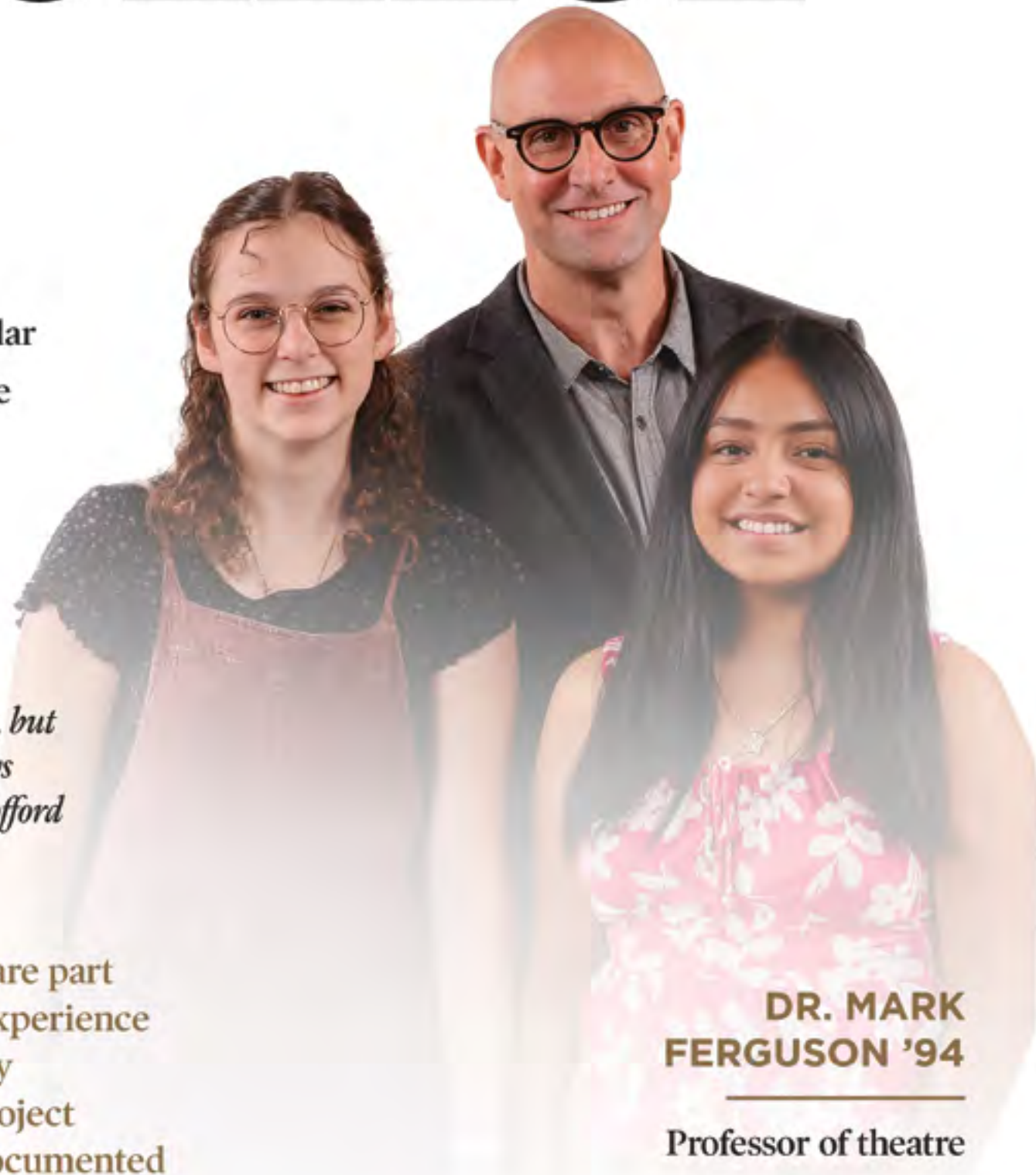
# WOFFORD COLLEGE

## ANNEKA BRANNON '27

Rosalind Sallenger  
Richardson Fine Arts  
Scholar, Gateway Scholar  
Humanities and theatre  
double major from  
Spartanburg, S.C.

*"I've always had big ideas, but not always the means," says Brannon. "Experience Wofford is changing that!"*

Villeda and Brannon are part of the college's first Experience Wofford cohort, led by Ferguson. Villeda's project involves helping undocumented youth navigate the education system. Brannon will be working this summer to bring American Sign Language theatre to the stage for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.



## DR. MARK FERGUSON '94

Professor of theatre

## LAILA VILLEDA '26

Golden Door Scholar  
Finance and French double  
major from Cumming, Ga.

Where thought leads. To accessibility.

# KILLINGSWORTH: 'We all want to feel safe and secure'

From Page 1

in the lives of Killingsworth's women, as well as in reminding others of their own redemption stories and the transformative power of the love of God at work through God's people.

The gala will be Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. at Seawell's Restaurant in Columbia.

"I've been in love with Killingsworth and its story since the first day I heard of it," Dickey said, noting she is personally encouraged and inspired by women who call Killingsworth home. "I love these ladies, and when we get to know them and show them nothing can separate them from the love of God, it really makes a difference not only in their lives but also our lives."

Susan Sirmons, Killingsworth interim director, said she is especially excited about the opportunity to help people learn about their critical work—many for the first time.

"What surprises me the most is people often have very little knowledge of what we do at Killingsworth and the women whose lives we save and the families we help put back together," Sirmons said.

This is why, echoing the theme "A Night to Remember," two Killingsworth women will share their powerful testimonies at the gala, one a current resident who is thriving in her journey to overcome, and the other a former resident.

Brooke Costner, a Killingsworth resident for more than a year, will share about her successful recovery journey, as well as the ways she has found hope and a second family through Killingsworth. Not only is she the manager of a popular Columbia restaurant, Travinia's, but she is a top student at Midlands Technical College studying underwater welding.

Sheneka Corbin-Boyles, who left Killingsworth five years ago, will share about her journey and the work she does now at LRADAC, a nonprofit addiction prevention, intervention and treatment center in the Midlands. Corbin-Boyles has also launched her own business, serving as CEO and founder of the self-care organization Unapologetically No.

"There women are heroes, too," Sirmons said. "They have fought a battle, just like fighting cancer or diabetes, and the more the

## Want to go?

Killingsworth Gala is Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. at Seawell's Restaurant, Columbia. Tickets on sale through Nov. 3 at <https://www.killingsworth.org>.

public is educated and our work is celebrated, it empowers them to continue to overcome."

The Rev. Millie Nelson Smith, a pastor and director of Connectional Ministries for the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, will also serve as a speaker for the evening.

There will be no fashion show this year, a longtime staple of the event, but the popular silent auction will return, featuring a host of items including a painting, "Water Lily of Lake Murray," valued at \$850, a teeth whitening package from The Art of Dentistry and a handmade hummingbird cage.

Dinner and other entertainment will round out the evening, and all proceeds benefit Killingsworth and the women they support.

Sirmons said it is incredibly heartening to

hear the real-life stories of past and current residents, many of whom were once in a very dark place and now have a tremendous testimony.

"I really want people to see where their money is going," Sirmons said. "A lot of people send donations for Killingsworth to the district, and then it goes to national and then to Killingsworth, but they don't really know how it helps. But these are real women with real stories, and new chapters are written in their lives every day."

Dickey agreed, noting that learning more about Killingsworth and the real women they help is both inspiring and relatable.

"Let's be for real," Dickey said. "We all want to feel safe and secure, to feel we have value and merit and that we are not alone—there are others in the world who have encountered what we have. I'm just grateful to be a part of it."

The Killingsworth Gala is Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. at Seawell's Restaurant, Columbia. Individual tickets are \$65, and a table of eight sponsorship is \$500. Deadline for ticket sales is Friday, Nov. 3. Buy at <https://www.killingsworth.org>.

# SALKEHATCHIE: Registration will open in February for service camps

From Page 1

Founded in 1978 by the Rev. John Culp, Salkehatchie brings youth, young adult and adult volunteers together for a weeklong home repair mission event. Over the years, hundreds of homes have received new roofs, ramps, flooring, ceilings, bathrooms, kitchens and improvements in accessibility thanks to Salkehatchie.

Summer 2023 saw 920 Salkehatchie volunteers participate in camps that ran from June 10 through July 29, ultimately repairing more than 80 homes for families in need. Salkehatchie staffer Kathy Hart said she hopes to see even more volunteers next summer.

"Another definition of 'home' is the place where we feel most comfortable, loved and protected. But what if your roof leaks in the storms or your feet fall through the cracked floors or your front steps are dangerously wobbly?" Hart said. "Salkehatchie Summer Service LLC wants everyone to live in a home where they feel most comfortable, loved and protected, and we spend weeks repairing houses to make them homes."

Volunteers must be at least 14 years old,

and all adult volunteers must do a background check. Cost is \$250 per volunteer and covers the cost of shingles, building supplies and other materials. Lodging and meals are included. Campers are accepted from all denominations and geographic locations.

Culp said Salkehatchie is especially meaningful to young people, helping them to truly understand poverty and to be in service.

"A young person needs to know more about life than sports," Culp said. "Many of the young people have found their careers by going to Salkehatchie. They help their own lives by participating and seeing what they have, the opportunities they have."

He urges people to encourage youth and parents at their churches and their community to sign up.

Registration will open in February for the camps (see box this page).

"Please encourage the youth and adults in your church, as well as your family and friends, to experience the many blessings of a week at Salkehatchie, a week to put faith into action," Hart said.

For questions, contact Salkehatchie at 803-691-6606 or [salkehatchie@umcsc.org](mailto:salkehatchie@umcsc.org).

## Salkehatchie 2024 Camp Dates

Sumter, June 8-15  
 New Hope (Chesterfield), June 8-15  
 Winyah Bay (Georgetown), June 8-15  
 Baker Creek (McCormick), June 15-22  
 Penn Center (Beaufort), June 15-22  
 Jenkinsville, June 15-22  
 Laurens County, June 15-22  
 Catawba (Fort Mill), June 15-22  
 Union, June 15-22  
 Lancaster, June 16-22  
 JET (Johnston, Edgefield, Trenton), June 22-29  
 Sandriver (Aiken), June 22-29  
 Bishopville, June 22-29  
 Summerville, June 22-29  
 Piedmont, June 22-29  
 Marlboro-Flowers, June 22-29  
 Rock Hill, June 22-29  
 Lake City, June 29-July 6  
 Foothills (Pendleton), June 29-July 6  
 Bamberg, July 6-13  
 Circuit Rider (Johnsonville), July 6-13  
 Edisto Island, July 6-13  
 Moncks Corner, July 6-13  
 Santee (Manning), July 6-13  
 Fairfield (Winnsboro), July 13-20  
 Black Swamp (Hampton County), July 13-20  
 Columbia Camp, July 13-20  
 Emerald City (Greenwood), July 13-20  
 Lake Murray, July 13-20  
 North Augusta, July 13-20  
 Harvest (Dillon), July 13-20  
 Newberry, July 14-20  
 Calhoun County, July 20-27  
 Clover, July 20-27  
 North Strand (North Myrtle Beach), July 20-27  
 Dalzell, July 20-27  
 Creekfront (Murrells Inlet), July 21-26



Campers work at the 2023 Columbia Camp.

The congregation of Tabernacle UMC wishes to thank our Music Director and Choir for faithfully sharing their talents with us each Sunday. We are blessed to have such talented and dedicated musicians.



## Un-Covered

### Wesley Chapel to host 'Un-Covered: Black Church Trauma and Mental Health Workshop' Nov. 11

Mental health and church trauma are the topic of a gathered slated for Nov. 11 at Wesley Chapel UMC, Lake City.

Called "Un-Covered: Black Church Trauma and Mental Health Workshop," the event will be held 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the church, located at 112 Deep River St. in Lake City.

Black churches will come together led by qualified mental health professionals to educate congregations and the broader community about mental health and trauma's effects as well as ways to offer support.

Dr. Mike Bowie said, "If there were ever a sense of urgency for the African-American church, it is now.

"I look forward to partnering with you to offer transformative ministry as we together strengthen Black churches in the UMC."

Sponsors are Wesley Chapel UMC, other area UMCs, the South Carolina Advocacy Ministry Area, FSD# and the Florence District of the UMC.

For more information: 843-217-3020 or [hookology@gmail.com](mailto:hookology@gmail.com).

# Columbia College ranked in U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges for 2024

COLUMBIA—U.S. News and World Report releases their “Best Colleges” lists each year to aid the next generation of college students in selecting the institution that best suits their needs.

As a regional university, Columbia College’s 2024 rankings were compiled based on the 13 measures of academic quality of more than 1,500 institutions nationwide. For the 2024 academic year, Columbia College was ranked on four of those lists: Best Regional University in the South, Best Regional University for Veterans, Best Value School in the South and Top Performers on Social Mobility in the South.

“The U.S. News and World Report rankings offer a moment of recognition for how far Columbia College has come, and they also provide the opportunity for us to commit ourselves to realizing a stronger future, continuing the profound impact our college has on the lives of the countless students who walk through our doors,” said Columbia College President John Dozier.

Columbia College tied for a ranking of 33 out of 135 in the Best Regional Universities in the South category. Variables considered include retention and graduation rates, class sizes, student-to-faculty ratios and acceptance rates.

Columbia College tied for a ranking of 29 in the region for Best Colleges for Veterans.

On the Best Value Schools list in the southern region, Columbia College ranked 19 for 2023. Institutions that can maintain academic quality while prioritizing affordability are ranked in this category. Columbia College was one of 47 schools in the southern region that were recognized.

Tying for third out of 135 as a Top Performer on Social Mobility in the South, Columbia College was identified for the impressive graduation rates of students who received federal Pell Grants.

## SMC names Maslennikova dean of online instruction

SPARTANBURG—Spartanburg Methodist College has hired Dr. Lena Maslennikova as the college’s new dean of online instruction to oversee the school’s growing online degree program.

“President Scott Cochran and the executive leadership have a strong vision for the future of online education at SMC, and I’m excited to contribute to bringing that vision to fruition,” Maslennikova said. “I truly look forward to seeing how we can collaboratively grow, strengthen and expand SMC Online.”

Maslennikova joins SMC from North Greenville University, where she was instrumental in developing six programs and launching the school’s College of Adult Professional Studies.

“We are honored to have Dr. Maslennikova join us to continue building SMC Online,” said Dr. Curt Laird, provost and executive vice president at SMC. “Her experience building these programs will be invaluable in assuring that we expand our offerings deliberately and successfully.”



Maslennikova

Maslennikova, originally from Kharkiv, Ukraine, found her passion for online education as a student. After earning her degree remotely, she served as an instructional designer and professor before moving to the administrative side to develop online programs.



### The WOO lead for Power Hour

The students from the Wesley of Orangeburg, #TheWOO, enjoy Power Hour at Clafin University. The WOO was responsible for opening worship for Clafin University with more than 100 students in attendance. For the past four worship services, students have been experiencing God in a mighty way. Power Hour is a mid-week worship service for students at Clafin University and South Carolina State University. This year, Power Hour is led by students, who lead worship each week. Clafin’s DREAM Choir provides the music each week.

Photos courtesy of the Rev. Shirley P. Gordon



### Manning youth in action

Manning UMC, Manning, youth continue to stay active and involved in their communities. The youth held a yard sale Oct. 7 (pictured above), ultimately raising more than \$5,000 for the church’s thriving youth program. The previous month, two athletes from Manning, Hunter and Ryleigh (below left), participated in the Clarendon County behavioral health 5K run Sept 30, doing exceptionally well. Pictured below right, the Sunday prior, Ryleigh, was baptized at Manning, and that day, Hunter became a member of the church.



## Job Opening: Director of Communications

Supervisor: Senior Pastor Date Revised: September 30, 2023

**Purpose:** The Director of Communications at Church of the Palms will have responsibility for delivery of the church’s comprehensive communication strategy. Working with the help of other professional staff, the Communications Committee, and the Church Council, the Director of Communications will further Church of the Palms’ purpose and vision of making disciples of Jesus Christ by promoting its ministries, programs, and events to the church membership and the wider community through a variety of communication channels.

**Qualifications:** College degree and 3+ years of professional communications experience or comparable experience. Up-to-date knowledge of electronic forms of communication, appropriate software, and social media platforms. Experienced in writing, editing and graphic design for a wide variety of church publications, press releases, and the integration of multiple live and virtual platforms. Good interpersonal skills in interacting and working with staff and volunteers.

**Desired attributes:** Ability to manage multiple projects and volunteers. Ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a wide range of people, groups, and communities. Ability to manage and operate website and social media. Confidentiality and dependability. Solution-based team player. Awareness of industry standards. Creativity.

**Job Duties:**

- Manage and prepare all regular church-wide communications, printed and electronic, including various weekly and monthly newsletters
- Maintain a consistent brand usage throughout all communication efforts through the development of brand standards and guidelines in line with current branding efforts
- Preparing and editing timely communications and church event announcements
- Working with the Senior Minister to develop a new website initiative through an outside agency
- Managing and updating content of the church’s website and other social media outlets
- Support church ministries, programs, activities, and events with creation of print and electronic communications including online webforms
- Knowledge of HTML and email management to aid in internal and external communication efforts
- Knowledge of Google Advertising, social media advertising, and traditional advertising to assist in outreach and outreach efforts when opportunities arise
- Create print communication materials for internal and external distribution
- Monitoring and analyzing the impact of all communication efforts and recommending driving approaches to administration/church leaders based on what is learned from feedback and communication research of congregational members/staff
- Developing and coordinating in-house communications for all staff information shared from the Senior Minister and church leaders
- Overseeing church-wide announcement strategies for events
- Recruits and manages AV technicians (both paid and volunteer) assisting with services and other events
- Meeting regularly with Communications Committee, team leaders, and Church Council to review progress and discuss strategies
- Coordinating contacts between the congregation and community media
- Developing and producing video/educational resources for internal and external ministry and outreach
- Collaborating with all missions and ministries and maintaining the most effective ways to promote each within the church as well as within the community
- Attend Church Council meetings as requested

**Benefits:** Salary commensurate with role and experience, medical, dental, and vision insurance; vacation accrual; church pension plan through a 401(k) plan with matching contributions

May be further known that Church of the Palms is a United Methodist Church with close proximity to Hilton Head. Our church is a growing church in a growing community seeking creative talent.

Please send a resume and cover letter to Rev. Shannon Bullion, Church of the Palms, 1425 Okatie Highway, Okatie, SC 29909. shannon@palmsumc.org. No phone calls please.

### Leave A Legacy To Change Lives

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scumf@bellsouth.net



Camp Creek pastor the Rev. Mike Catoe leads worship lifting up the 225 years of the church's existence.



Camp Creek United Women in Faith recognizes Amanda Stegall with a pin during the celebration.

## Camp Creek celebrates 225 years

By Becky Ammons

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—Matthew 18:20

More than two or three gathered together in the Lord's name Sept. 17 as Camp Creek United Methodist Church celebrated Homecoming, Heritage Sunday and the 225th birthday of the church.

The church was nearly full as members celebrated Camp Creek's 225th birthday in spite of the rain.

As the congregation gathered, a presentation from Karen Yarborough featuring old church photos projected on the large screen in the church. The call to worship by the choir was "O What a Happy Day."

The Rev. Mike Catoe welcomed the congregation and led in the church motto.

Catoe then had the children come help him light the candles on Camp Creek's birthday cake. The congregation then sang "Happy Birthday" to the church.

The opening congregational hymn was a medley of 10 old hymns of the church. Members sang the first verse of each as the words were projected on the screen in the church.

Next, the church remembered departed members of the congregation and other loved ones. Members of the congregation called out names as Yarborough rang a bell for each. Catoe then led a prayer of thanksgiving for each of these saints.

Next, the Rev. David Inman led in prayer, with the congregation joining in on the Lord's Prayer. Tony Cunningham and Claude Snipes served as offering ushers. Following the Doxology, they presented the offerings to Catoe, who presented them to the Lord. The choir special was a beautiful rendition of "I'll Meet You in the Morning" with Linda Matthews featured on the alto part.

Jan Cunningham presented the inspirational message on "The Unpardonable Sin" from a devotion book by Charles Stanley given to her when she joined the church.

J.C. Dawkins, who mows the grass in the church cemetery, spoke on the numerous veterans who are buried in the old cemetery—at least 24. George Bell served in the Revolutionary War, and his grave may be oldest in the cemetery. There are also veterans of the War of 1812, the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War buried there.

Yarborough recalled wonderful memories of growing up at Camp Creek and said

Camp Creek would always be her home church.

Ammons spoke about all the pastors that she could remember during her long life, from the ministry of Rev. Ralph W. Atkinson (1946-1950) to Catoe, who has served since 2008. She was just 4 years old when Atkinson began his ministry there. She shared a little information about each of the 24 preachers she remembers.

Hope also shared memories of Camp Creek from her young life. Hope loves her church so much and often prays like a preacher at the close of the children's sermon on Sunday mornings.

Cherie Hulse told how she first became acquainted with Camp Creek when the Camp Creek-Fort Lawn Charge was formed in 2004.

Christopher Dawkins shared how he had been touched by the people of Camp Creek, especially the late Rick Cook who served as Camp Creek's choir director at one time.

Ann Gainer Caskey, a former member of Camp Creek, shared how Camp Creek would always be her "home" church. She related how she was influenced by the Sunday school teachers and others at Camp Creek when she was growing up.

Jason Starnes shared how he grew up at Camp Creek. His mother, grandmother and great-grandmother were all members here and now he brings his children. His life has been influenced by the people of Camp Creek.

Inman, one of Camp Creek's former pastors, shared some memories from his ministry at Camp Creek, such as "Miss Susie" Turner, who would make items all year long for the church bazaars.

Brian Snipes shared how Camp Creek has influenced his life through the years. Because of the Sunday school teachers he had growing up, he was influenced to become the schoolteacher he is today. He also told how his mom, who sang in the church choir, would give him "that look" if she noticed him misbehaving in church. He said Sandra Dawkins had been known to give him those looks, too.

Clara Steele, president of the United Women in Faith at Camp Creek, informed the congregation that Camp Creek had numerous awards for their active participation in the UWF and also presented Amanda Stegall with a pin for her dedication to the group.

Catoe then pronounced the benediction.



## Women's Day at Smyrna

Smyrna UMC, Bennettsville, United Women in Faith (above) celebrated Women's Day Sept. 24 during the morning service.

Linda Sanders, the unit's president, brought the morning message: "Black Women, What Makes You So Strong?" The United Women in Faith recognized two members, Katherine Monroe and Dr. Carolyn Jenkins, for their dedication and service. The pastor of Smyrna UMC is the Rev. Maurice McZeke.



## Surfside explores 'Extravagant Generosity'

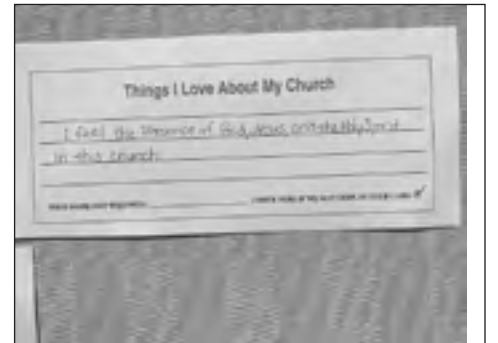
SURFSIDE—Every year, every church has their stewardship drive. This year, Surfside United Methodist Church found a unique way with a campaign of "Extravagant Generosity: The Heart of Giving" based on the book by Michael Reeves and Jennifer Tyler.

The campaign was designed to help the church teach and practice a biblical way of giving that focuses on the abundance of God's grace and on all Christians' need to give, rather than on the church's need for money.

The church was involved each week as the pastor asked everyone to fill out a questionnaire. Week one's question asked people to list "Things I love about my church." Week two's question asked people to list "People who made a difference in my spiritual life." Week three's question asked people to share "What are your hopes and dreams for our church?"

The responses were posted on the hallway walls for all to see.

"This was a different approach and is believed to be a very successful campaign," said Kenny Bingham, Surfside UMC stew-



The church was involved each week as the pastor asked everyone to fill out a questionnaire.

ardship chair. "Pastor Mary Teasley and Pastor Tae Park did a great job of preparing our hearts with each week's message. As stewardship chairman, I know people enjoyed being included as we had numerous responses to the weekly questions. This was a novel approach and was thoughtfully designed. We are always looking to find a better way of presenting our yearly stewardship drive.

"I highly recommend this one."



## Grandparents Day in Sumter

The Mechanicsville UMC, Sumter, Older Adult Ministry held their annual Grandparents Day Celebration Sept. 10. Two of their members won the title of "Grandparents of the Year" and were crowned king and queen by the Rev. Kenneth Middleton, pastor. Carrie L. Gass received a gold crown accompanied with a matching arm bouquet. Clyde Wilson received a gold and royal blue crown and plaque. Additionally, a young adult and lay servant, Terrence McCants, received a plaque in appreciation for his dedicated ministry and faithful service to the church. The plaque was presented to him by the Rev. Roberta Josey, chairperson of the Older Adult Ministry.



### DARBY K. WARD, MUSIC DIRECTOR KINGSTREE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

"Patient, bubbly, thoughtful, energetic, inspiring, cooperative, adaptable, crafty, dedicated, hard-working, creative, talented, playful, warm-hearted, organized, delightful, generous, joyful, genuine, helpful, honest, dependable, kind, committed, passionate, positive, effective planner ..."

These are thoughts from her Children's Choir Mothers and from her Adult Choir Members and their accompanist!! Clearly, they all love Darby - as does the entire KUMC Congregation, which looks forward to the Adult Choir Anthems and to the Children's songs during Worship and at the annual Christmas Play, which Darby writes and directs. An effective teacher, a talented soprano, a trained musician, and an accomplished guitar player - Darby, in her two plus years as Music Director, has won the hearts of our congregation with her musicality and dedication to her Christian faith!





**Clergy Day in Hemingway**

Hemingway elementary, middle and high schools have identified the first Wednesday of each month during the academic school year as "Clergy Day." Area pastors are invited to the schools to interact with the students in a variety of ways from reading to gymnastics to learning about the military with the ROTC. The administration's goal is to foster healthy relationships among clergy, staff and students. Pastors from around the community participated.



It was the church's second women's conference.

**St. Stephen hosts women's conference exploring spiritual anchoring**

Women at St. Stephen United Methodist Church, Orangeburg, learned more about what it looks like to be anchored in faith as they gathered Sept. 15-17 for a women's conference.

The United Women in Faith at St. Stephen hosted the conference, which lifted up the theme "Godly Women Spiritually Anchored: Anchored with Spirit and Truth" and drew from 1 Corinthians 2:10-16.

The purpose was to help women look within, examining and rating their own spiritual health.

The session started Friday with a drop-in from 6-8 p.m. JoAnn Abram greeted and welcomed everyone.

Next came a moving and Spirit-filled time of praise and worship. Cynthia Green led the women in ice breakers before a fellowship meal.

Saturday morning began at 8:30 with a continental breakfast. Officers greeted the women, who then enjoyed table fellowship as they got to know each other better. Women from other churches in the area attended, as well as people outside the area.

After breakfast, all moved into the sanctuary. Dr. Lillie H. Britt was the expediter for the morning. The women began with Praise and Worship, then Latrina P. Holmes led all in a beautiful rendition of "Oh How I Love Jesus."

Rachel Sistrunk introduced the facilitator for the morning, the Rev. Nina Washington, pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Manning.

Washington told the women to "check yourselves," urging them to be sure to find time to nurture their bodies spiritually and

physically. "We cannot pour into someone or something if we are drained," she taught. "Do not look at the other person—start with ourselves. We wear so many hats as women. We need to be always prepared for whatever comes."

Britt urged all gathered not to let anything steal their dreams and visions for themselves. A question-and-answer session followed.

Next, three members of the gospel group Appointed—Keisha Lawrence, Latrina Holmes and Anjani Robinson— were in attendance and blessed the room with "Blessed and Highly Favored."

Those gathered honored their youngest guest, age 15, as well as the mother of the church, also a United Woman in Faith: Ruthel Johnson. Abram, president of the unit, was honored as well.

The women solicited her husband, the Rev. Joseph Abram Jr., to coin a tribute to her from them. She said she was so surprised, overwhelmed and at a loss for words, but she really appreciated it.

The session closed with lunch.

On Sunday, the women were included in the regular worship service. They opened with a monologue "African Mother" by Fredis D. Smith. The Rev. Shirley S. Nichols was the speaker.

The Women's Mass Choir, under the direction of Latrina Holmes, rendered the music. The choir celebrated their first anniversary in June.

This was the church's second conference.

As the song says, "Every round goes higher and higher," to which all who participated said they could truly attest.



This fall, more than 3,500 pumpkins of all shapes, sizes and colors returned to NEUMC.

**Northeast UMC pumpkin patch shares Christ with community**

COLUMBIA—This year marks the 25th anniversary of the youth at Northeast United Methodist Church hosting an annual pumpkin patch, which has grown into a place to pick the perfect pumpkin in Northeast Columbia.

"We actually began the celebration back in April," said church pastor the Rev. Antoinette Gaboton-Moss. "We launched our first annual Spring in the Patch, which featured community organizations and first responders, a mobile petting zoo, a bounce house, as well as food and an array of crafts and activities to connect with families in our community."

The occasion provided an opportunity to get residents excited about the pumpkin patch and events scheduled in the month of October.

In the fall, more than 3,500 pumpkins of varying shapes, sizes and colors returned to Northeast's campus, located on Hard Scrabble Road.

The annual youth fundraiser is used to offer scholarships for students to attend church retreats, to defray the cost of youth events and to purchase equipment for youth activities. Additionally, each year the youth select a mission project to donate a portion of the earnings.

This year's events included food truck nights, Sunday Funday square dancing, Movie Night in the Patch, Pet Day in the Patch, Trick or Treat in the Patch and ample opportunities for fun family photos.

"Every October we welcome families who may be visiting for the first time or the 20th time," says NEUMC youth director, Weston



Keon Rice, above, displays a pumpkin. Below, Weston Cheatham, youth director, enjoys some of the fun.



Cheatham. "We have celebrated weddings in the patch as well as birthdays and family gatherings. We have had generations return every year because it has become their family tradition. We also offer story time to local schools and daycare groups.

"The pumpkin patch is more than just a fundraiser. It is an opportunity to share the love of Christ with everyone we meet."

For more about Northeast UMC, visit <https://neumc.com>.

**Around the Districts**

**Spartanburg District**

Congratulations to the Rev. Cam Treece on the birth of his granddaughter. Ryleigh Raye Watson was born Oct. 1 to Hanna Treece Watson and Dakota Watson. Rev. Treece is the pastor of Central UMC, Spartanburg.



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### Susan Arlene Powell Bannister

HONEA PATH—Susan Arlene Powell Bannister, sister of the Rev. Richard Powell, died Sept. 27, 2023. Rev. Powell is the pastor of the Sharon-Smyrna Charge, Abbeville.

Funeral services were held Oct. 1 at Mount Bethel Baptist Church with a private burial.

Memorials may be made to Hospice of the Upstate, 1835 Rogers Road, Anderson, SC 29621; or to Touched by ALS, 1140 Woodruff Road, Suite 106-247, Greenville, SC 29607.

Mrs. Bannister is survived by her husband, Larry Dale Bannister, son and daughter.

### Rev. James Craig Bigelow

DeSOTO, Texas—The Rev. James Craig Bigelow, a retired honorably located pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Aug. 25, 2023.



Bigelow

Prior to his retirement in 2010, Rev. Bigelow served the Marlboro Circuit and St. Matthews Circuit charges. He was a communications officer and chaplain in the U.S. Air Force and was honorably located in 1995.

Funeral services and burial were held Oct. 16 at the DFW National Cemetery.

Memorials may be given to Friends Place Adult Day Care (Alzheimer's/Dementia Unit), 1232 W. Beltline Road, DeSoto, TX 75115.

Rev. Bigelow is survived by his wife, Carol Snyder.

### Rev. Donald Eugene Cavin

SURFSIDE BEACH—The Rev. Donald Eugene Cavin, a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Sept. 26, 2023.



Cavin

Prior to his retirement in 2000, Rev. Cavin served the Bath, Greenwood-Trinity, Greenwood-St. Mark, Irmo-Salem, Clover-First, Marion-First, Lee Road, Memorial and Berea Friendship charges.

A memorial service will be held Nov. 11 at Salem UMC, Ballentine.

Memorials may be made to the South Carolina United Methodist Conference, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203; or to any of the local United Methodist churches Rev. Cavin served.

Rev. Cavin is survived by his two sons and two daughters.

### Elizabeth Jamieson Clark

GREER—Elizabeth Jamieson Clark, sister of Dr. Cathy Jamieson, died Sept. 20, 2023. Dr. Jamieson is the pastor of Grace United Methodist Church, North Augusta.

A memorial service was held Nov. 18 at Memorial UMC. A private family service will be held at Pretty Place Chapel.

Memorials may be made to Rainey Hospice House, 1835 Rogers Road, Anderson, SC 29621.

Ms. Clark is survived by her daughter and son.

### Polly Collins

FORT MILL—Polly Collins, sister of the Rev. David Ervin, died Sept. 21, 2023. Rev. Ervin is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Sept. 24 at St. John's UMC with burial in Unity Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to St. John's UMC, P.O. Box 1298, Fort Mill, SC 29716; or to Agape Care of South Carolina, 1069 Bayshore Drive, Rock Hill, SC 29732.

Mrs. Collins is survived by her two brothers.

### Carolyn Gibson

MORROW, Ga.—Carolyn "Bobbie" Gibson, sister of the late Betty Strother, died Aug. 30, 2023. Mrs. Strother was the wife of the Rev. Robert Strother, a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Sept. 7 at Thomas L. Scroggs Funeral Directors with burial in Bethel Campground Church Cemetery, Carrolton, Georgia.

### Herman Harrington

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.—Herman Harrington, brother of the Rev. Maye Malachi, died Sept. 25, 2023. Rev. Malachi is the pastor of Level Green United Methodist Church, Bennettsville.

Funeral services were held Oct. 5 at Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, with burial in Sandhill State Veteran Cemetery.

### Vivian Patricia Gunter Jennings

MYRTLE BEACH—Vivian Patricia Gunter Jennings, wife of the Rev. Charles Jennings, died Oct. 10, 2023. Rev. Jennings is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Oct. 18 at McMillan-Small Funeral Home with burial in the Florence National Cemetery, Florence.

Memorials may be made to Aldersgate Ministries, P.O. Box 203, Ballentine, SC

### 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.

29002.

Mrs. Jennings is survived by her husband, four sons and daughter.

### Mary Singleton Johnson

NEW YORK—Mary Singleton Johnson, sister of the Rev. Pernerva Thomas, died Sept. 17, 2023. Rev. Thomas is the pastor of St. Paul-Elliott United Methodist Church, Lynchburg.

### Debra Ann Josey

SUMTER—Debra Ann Josey, daughter of the Rev. Roberta Josey, died Oct. 5, 2023. Rev. Josey is a retired member of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Oct. 21 at New Fellowship Baptist Church.

### Rev. Robert Paul Keely

FOUNTAIN INN—The Rev. Robert Paul Keely, a retired local pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Oct. 2, 2023.



Keely

Prior to his retirement in 2020, Rev. Keely served the Monaghan and Green Pond, Gray Court, charges.

Funeral services were held Oct. 8 at Simpsonville UMC, Simpsonville, with burial in Cannon Byrd Memorial Park.

Rev. Keely is survived by his wife, Celeste Keely, daughter and three sons.

### Arnold Talmadge King

SPARTANBURG—Arnold Talmadge King, father of the Rev. Steven King, died Sept. 25, 2023. Rev. King and his wife, the Rev. Sandra King, are both retired members of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Sept. 30 at Mount Zion Baptist Church with burial in Mount Zion Baptist Church Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Spartanburg Regional Hospice, <https://www.regional-foundation.com/ways-give/hospice>.

Mr. King is survived by his two sons.

### Otis Dewitt Livingston

NORTH—Otis Dewitt Livingston, a former local pastor of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Oct. 2, 2023.

Mr. Livingston served as the Springfield Charge Assistant and was appointed to the Springfield Charge.

Funeral services were held Oct. 5 at Livingston UMC, Neeses, with burial in the church cemetery.

Memorials may be made to Livingston UMC, 222 Westside St., Neeses, SC 29107.

Mr. Livingston is survived by his wife, Jane Livingston, and daughter.

### Rev. Franklin Oscar Smith Jr.

CHARLOTTE, N.C.—The Rev. Franklin Oscar Smith Jr., a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Sept. 19, 2023.



Smith Jr.

Prior to his retirement in

1994, Rev. Smith served the West Kershaw, Twitty Chapel, Bethune, Shandon Associate, Lancaster-Hopewell, Charleston Grace, Walterboro and Rock Hill-St. John's charges. He also served as director of Conference Council on Ministries and as the district superintendent of the Columbia District.

A private service was held.

Memorials may be made to the Oscar and Peggy Smith Endowed Scholarship Fund, Wofford College, 429 Church St., Attn: Office Philanthropy and Engagement, Spartanburg, SC 29303; or to the Aldersgate Guardian Angel Fund, <https://aldersgateliving.org>.

Rev. Smith is survived by his wife, Margaret Smith, and four sons.

### Rev. Talmadge Stanton Sr.

JOHNS ISLAND—The Rev. Talmadge Stanton Sr., a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, died Oct. 14, 2023.



Stanton

Prior to his retirement in 2007, Rev. Stanton served the Anderson Circuit, Clover Charge, Sea Island Parish and Johns Island Parish charges.

Funeral services were held Oct. 21 at Old Clio UMC with burial in the church cemetery.

Rev. Stanton is survived by his wife, Mary H. Stanton, son and daughter.

### Abraham Washington

DORCHESTER—Abraham "AJ" Washington, brother of the Rev. Jimmy Washington, died Oct. 5, 2023. Rev. Washington is the pastor of Canaan United Methodist Church, Cope.

Funeral services were held Oct. 11 at Greater St. Paul AME Church.

Mr. Abraham is survived by his wife, Barbara J. Washington, two daughters and son.

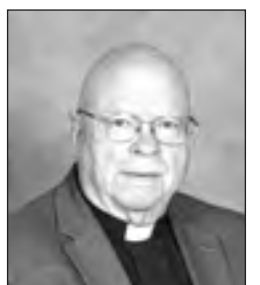
### Vernon Washington

SUMMERVILLE—Vernon Washington, brother of Sarah Bozier, died Sept. 30, 2023. Ms. Bozier is the administrative assistant for the Charleston District of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Funeral services were held Oct. 8 at the Brownsville Cemetery.

### Rev. John McKinley Williams Jr.

GREENVILLE—The Rev. John McKinley Williams Jr., a retired elder of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church and father of the Rev. John M. Williams III, died Oct. 14, 2023. Rev. Williams III is the pastor of Fair Lawn UMC, Columbia.



Williams Jr.

Prior to his retirement in 2002, Rev. Williams served in the Alabama West Conference and the following charges in South Carolina: Townville, Aiken-Charles Wesley, Lugoff, Charles Wesley-Trinity, Georgetown-Wayne, Pacolet-White Stone, Saluda-St. Paul, Rock Hill-Friendship, Church of the Good Shepherd, Loris-First, Knightsville, Charleston-Grace and Bethel, Chester. He served Oak Grove-Sampit as a retired pastor.

A memorial service will be held Nov. 4 at Covenant UMC, Greer. A second service will be held Nov. 19 at Wayne UMC, Georgetown.

Memorials may be made to Tunnel to Towers, 2361 Hylan Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10306; or to the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission-South Carolina, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203.

Rev. Williams is survived by his wife, Virginia "Ginny" Culler Williams, three daughters and son.

### Salem United Methodist Church LOVES our Music Ministry Team!

### Sarah Elizabeth High, Miriam Lovett, Will Byrd & James David Linder

We honor and truly appreciate your incredible endless energy, your many special talents and your unwavering dedication to our Music Ministry here at Salem UMC. You help us all bring a joyful noise to our sanctuary every week and we love you!

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

*Blessings and Love  
from your Salem Choir, Ringers & Church Family*



**Singles Symposium a success**

Under the leadership of Dr. Carlton J. McClam Sr., St. Mark UMC held a Singles Symposium Oct. 7 with an outstanding showing in attendance. Ernest Jefferson, chairperson of this ministry, along with McClam did a television interview on Dove TV inspiration network. The Vessels of Praise performed musical selections.

**Global Briefs**

**Letter urges UN help for ethnic Armenians**

WASHINGTON—An ecumenical collaboration, including the United Methodist Council of Bishops, has sent a letter to the United Nations secretary-general urging international action after Azerbaijan's recent military assault on Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. The letter seeks humanitarian relief in the contested region as well as help for Armenian refugees fleeing Azerbaijan's attacks.

**Arnold to depart United Methodist Men**

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Greg Arnold, top executive of United Methodist Men, is resigning from that position as of Nov. 10. Retired Bishop James Swanson, who currently serves as vice president of the board of United Methodist Men, will step in as the interim top executive. Arnold served in the post for two years. "I'm satisfied that we are leaving the commission better than we found it, prepared for 2024 and beyond as an organization," Arnold said.

**Continued progress for agriculture initiative**

ATLANTA—With severe grain shortages looming because of the Ukraine war and other factors, the Yambasu Agriculture Initiative continues to grow in importance as a way to ensure food security in Africa. The initiative was launched by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries to help central conferences transform their land resources to support church programs and communities. Enterprises including cash crops, animal raising, fish farms, honey production and seed banks have met with measurable success across the continent.

**Bishop Swenson honored for ecumenical work**

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—At the 2023 Christian Unity gathering, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA honored retired United Methodist Bishop Mary Ann Swenson with the President's Award for Excellence in Faithful Leadership. Her co-recipient was the Rev. Renita J. Weems, a Presbyterian biblical scholar who also helped start the United Methodist Women of Color Scholars program.

**Holy Land Christians call for day of prayer**

JERUSALEM—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem called for Oct. 17 to be a day of prayer and fasting in support of all those who have suffered in the Israeli-Hamas war and for the war's de-escalation. The Christian leaders also called for addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The World Council of Churches, which includes The United Methodist Church, joined in the prayers and fasting.

**Doing church after a disaffiliation vote**

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—After losing a chunk of the congregation because of a painful disaffiliation vote, it was time to discern a new future for Memorial United Methodist Church in Michigan. With the help of a book about navigating conflict in church, the congregation is moving forward as members step up to replace church leaders who have left.

**A call to pursue peace in the Middle East**

WASHINGTON—The United Methodist Board of Church and Society joins other faith communities calling for a cease-fire, de-escalation and restraint amid the violent conflict between Israel and Hamas. Citing the denomination's stance that war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ, the board asks United Methodists to contact their representatives and urge the U.S. government to pursue peace in the Middle East.

**Agency aims to help delegates with useful data**

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The General Council on Finance and Administration launched a new campaign, "Data-Driven Discernment: Charting Hope at General Conference." Through the campaign, the denomination's finance agency hopes to help delegates and members make data-informed decisions. The first educational video is "Strengthening the Episcopal Fund." The fund supports the work of bishops.

**Conference files suit against church**

CHICAGO—The Northern Illinois Conference filed a lawsuit on Oct. 10 against the Naperville Korean Church, alleging that it unlawfully took possession of property and funds rightfully belonging to The United Methodist Church. The conference contends that the congregation has not been following the denomination's disaffiliation process.

**Agency releases third-quarter giving report**

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—The General Council on Finance and Administration released a short video showing apportionment collection rates are only slightly different compared to the same time last year. Apportionments are shares of church giving that support denomination-wide ministries. U.S. collection rates are slightly up, while overall collection rates from Africa, Europe and the Philippines are slightly down.

**Forum planned for African delegates**

LUANSHYA, Zambia—The United Methodist Africa Forum, a new advocacy group promoting church unity, plans to host a forum Jan. 4-7 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for African delegates to next year's General Conference. This forum is exclusively dedicated to delegates committed to preserving the unity of The United Methodist Church.

**United Methodists still at work for Ukraine**

ZURICH—United Methodists in various European countries continue to minister to Ukrainian refugees as the war in Ukraine goes on. Bishop Christian Alsted notes that United Methodists within Ukraine are doing "amazing" work on behalf of internally displaced persons.

**Apply to be Global Mission Fellow**

ATLANTA—Applications are being accepted for Global Missions fellows in the U.S. and overseas. The Global Ministries program places fellows in social justice ministries for two years. Applicants should be between ages 20 and 30. The program is open to non-Methodists. The deadline to apply for the international track is Jan. 17 and the U.S. track on April 9.

**General Conference delegates urged to save date**

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Delegates for the postponed 2020 General Conference are encouraged to mark their calendars for a livestreamed orientation and briefing taking place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. U.S. Central time Feb. 29-March 1. United Methodist Communications and United Methodist News will host the online event, which also will be recorded for future viewing.

—Courtesy of the United Methodist News Service

**Abram lifts up Africa University by preaching at First UMC, Marion**

The Rev. Joseph Abram Jr. was the guest preacher at First United Methodist Church in Marion on Sunday, Sept. 10.

The Africa University Development Committee met in Myrtle Beach the week-end of Sept. 8-10. On Sept. 10, this group of bishops, clergy and lay people made themselves available to serve as guest preachers or share brief remarks during worship about Africa University.

Abram has been an avid supporter of Africa University for more than 17 years and he preaches across the United States twice annually to share the Africa University story. Abram's message from Matthew 25 was titled "Settling Up Day: What Will Be Your Report?"



Abram, left, was the guest preacher at First UMC, Marion, Sept. 10.

A native of Marion, Abram and his wife, JoAnn, reside outside of Orangeburg.



*Resource Center*

by Betty Stalnaker

**Children's gratitude resources**

Being greedy makes you grumpy, but a thankful heart is a happy heart. The following DVDs are helpful in teaching children to be thankful in all things:

**Cherub Wings: #2 Gratitude Attitude—Thankfulness**  
(DVD1550C)

Children will learn that God wants us to be thankful in all things. Episodes include "The Grateful Leper," "Thank You For This Bright and Sunny Day," "The Garden," "From the Time the Sun Comes Up" and "Royal Trouble." (English and Spanish tracks) 25 min.

**Squanto and the First Thanksgiving**  
(DVD1114C)

Discover the moving true story of the Native American named Squanto, who is captured from his beloved Pawtuxet tribe, taken to Spain and sold into slavery. Years later, Squanto regains his freedom and embarks on a miraculous journey back to his homeland where he teaches the Pilgrims how to survive the difficult early years in the Plymouth colony—culminating in the first Thanksgiving celebration. A touching drama about trust, faith and renewal. 30 min.

**Veggietales: Thankfulness**  
(DVD1493C=)

In "VeggieTales: Thankfulness" Sunday school lessons, kids learn from Madame Blueberry, the very blue berry who wants more stuff. They'll learn alongside Madame Blueberry that "being greedy makes you grumpy, but a thankful heart is a happy heart!" 23 min.

**William Bradford**  
(DVD2429C)

William Bradford fled with the pilgrims to the new world, where he discovered that the price for religious freedom was hunger, sickness and death. As a peacemaker, he befriended the Native Americans, who taught the struggling pilgrims how to survive. By the end of the first year, William Bradford became governor of the new land. After their first critical harvest, he set aside time for the pilgrims and their new Native American friends to feast together and express their thanks to God. Thus, Bradford became the father of Thanksgiving Day. 26 min.

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

## Dunton to mark 153 years with luncheon, anniversary worship service

Dunton United Methodist Church, Gaffney, will hold a celebration luncheon to commemorate their 153rd anniversary.

The luncheon, set for Saturday, Nov. 11, at 2 p.m., will feature the Rev. James Lane as speaker.

Tickets are required.

The luncheon will be held at the nearby Buford Street UMC Family Life Center, located at 120 E. Buford St., Gaffney, SC 29340.

An anniversary worship service will be held the next day, Sunday, Nov. 12, at 2 p.m. at Dunton UMC with South Carolina's Resident Bishop L. Jonathan Holston preaching. A fellowship dinner will follow the service, and all are welcome.

Dunton UMC is located at 323 E. Buford St., Gaffney, SC 29340.

The theme is "A Celebration of 153 Years of God's Faithfulness: Reflecting on the Past, Rejoicing Today and Sustaining Hope for the Future."

Masks are required. A block of rooms has been reserved for the weekend for those traveling from out of the area at the Holiday Inn Express in Gaffney.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$35 and can be reserved by calling Dr. Audrey McClary at 864-619-2438.

For questions about the weekend celebration, contact Hermenia T. Gardner at 864-487-3922 or 864-838-2042.

Gardner, who is anniversary chair, said that beyond honoring Dunton's visionaries and distinguished history of leadership, education and service in the Gaffney community, the purpose of the seven months of pre-anniversary events and the anniversary worship service is to excite the members again. It is to experience what she called "that high joy of our first encounter with Christ," worshipping, thanking him and praising God while sharing the good news with others.

"We want to restore what time and the pandemic may have taken," Gardner said.

### About Dunton

Dunton UMC can trace its origins to 1870 Dunton Chapel Methodist Church when the Rev. J.R. Rosemond began preaching in the home of Milton Hardy. The church was built circa 1878 and has undergone many renovations, including being brick veneered in 1937. Originally known as the "Church of Gaffney," it was named Dunton Chapel in 1888 to honor Dr. Lewis M. Dunton, presiding elder of the Greenville District of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1879-1882).

The first school for African-American students in Cherokee County was opened at Dunton Chapel Methodist Church in 1899 under the direction of the Rev. R.C. Campbell. By 1920 it remained as one of only 10 schools in the county that served African-American students. A public night school serving adult students was also operated at Dunton Chapel. The grade school remained in operation into the 1920s.

During the century, Dunton built not only a dynamic fellowship but a new edifice in the 1970s. The church supported the training of young ministers, the day-to-day work of ministry, worshipping, teaching, christening babies, performing marriages, holding the hands of the grieving and burying their loved ones. Dunton became a source of leadership and contribution to the community.

Early in the 21st century, Dunton was recognized as a South Carolina historical site.

Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic forced many Dunton members to their knees. It isolated many from each other and the corporate worship experience. At times, members were overwhelmed by the loss of life and the hostile currents in society. However, Gardner said, the church is rising with the assurance that they are in God's care, conceptualizing new and expanded patterns of worship and study (virtual, conference call, etc.) and paradigms of service.

"In looking to the future, we know that God still gives faithful men and women dreams and visions," Gardner said. "While planning, we will pray, read and study the sacred texts, pursue righteous living, be open to relevant research, observe and listen to the young and old. Intentionality will be ever-present in our strategic planning for our mission is clear."

Dunton UMC's mission is to share the good news that God loves you and to exemplify fellowship in service to members, individuals, families and the community. Through compassion, Christian faith and outreach, they strive to grow and uplift God's community.

"We are excited about the challenges that may lie ahead," Gardner said. "We will move forward with faith, love and energy. We solicit your prayers and invite you to join us."

Liberty Hill UMC in Greer, SC,  
appreciates our musician/choir director,  
*Kerry Davis.*



## Conference Historical Society

by the Rev. Meredith M. Dark

### Belles of liberty

The author of "Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina," Linda Beatrice Brown, referenced her book during her lecture to the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society this past summer in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Dr. Brown's book was published in 2013. During the Civil Rights Movement, the president of Bennett College was Dr. Willa B. Player. Dr. Player is most notable as a character in the Civil Rights Movement because she allowed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to speak at the Annie Lerner Pfeiffer Chapel when, as the book said, "The presidents of the other four colleges and universities in town, all the churches Black and White, and all other agencies had refused the NAACP's request for a venue for Dr. King" (p. 10).

Having Dr. King speak at Bennett was important for the Bennett Belles because he shared his heart and information with them, which undoubtedly led to their participation in the Civil Rights Movement.

In the book, Brown discusses how the Bennett Belles are often left out of the historical discussions of the Civil Rights Movement, and their being "invisible" may be attributed to how the college wanted to develop the character of the students. In Chapter 2, "The Respectability Factor," Brown explains how respectability is characterized by femininity.

As president of Bennett, Player was described as "feminine" and "liberated," which helped to give her voice gravitas, and also played a role in her being invisible. The respectability that Player had is what she wanted developed in the Bennett students because "it was strongly connected to survival and coping mechanisms in the Black community" (p. 16).

However, there is a sense in which the characteristics of the ladies also leads to their invisibility within the words of history. In addition to inviting King, Player also

invited figures to campus such as Thurgood Marshall and Benjamin Mays, among others. Player herself is often overlooked as the president of Bennett. The book notes, "As late as 2007 an article by Gerri Bates in the *Journal of Negro Education*, entitled "These Hallowed Halls, African American Women College and University Presidents' names a woman appointed in 1970 as the first African-American woman college president since Mary McLeod Bethune. Player became president of Bennett in 1956 and was president until 1966. Incredibly, she is completely omitted from Bates' list of African-American College presidents, a case of total invisibility" (p. 31).

Brown aims to "lift the veil of invisibility so that the role of our activist sisters is more accurately seen and understood" (p. 25). The book is a must-read, because it opens one's mind to more issues surrounding the Civil Rights Movement than one may realize. More than 200 students were incarcerated for demonstrating in Greensboro, and many of these students were Bennett Belles. The Belles were a part of the lunch counter sit-ins, the desegregation of Woolworths and public accommodations including restaurants and movie theaters. There is an entire portion of the book dedicated to personal recollections of the Belles.

Two hundred and fifty graduates were asked to give their recollections of their experience in the Civil Rights Movement. Jewel Merritt Johnson, a 1966 graduate, recalls that Player visited her students in jail to tell them their "parents received personal telegrams from her telling them not to worry and that the college would be behind [the students] 100 percent" (p. 113).

This personal touch is important as Brown succeeds in lifting the veil in order to show the reader a more complete view of history.

*Dark is chair of the South Carolina Conference Historical Society and pastor of Socastee United Methodist Church, Myrtle Beach.*



Fabian and Vincent (far right) are among those helping to save Trinity UMC, Charleston.

## Operatic talents help Trinity restoration

CHARLESTON—Nationally renowned operatic talents in town for a show lent their talents to help save one of the Holy City's signature religious landmarks, Trinity United Methodist Church.

Ashley Fabian, originally of Goose Creek and now singing with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, visited family and showcased her operatic soprano talents along with guest Los Angeles Philharmonic baritone Ethan Vincent at the 11:15 a.m. service Oct. 8. Fabian also rejoined with Trinity on Oct. 15 and 22 and will be there once more Oct. 29 at the 11:15 service.

Fabian has enjoyed great success among the bright lights of Los Angeles and Hollywood, singing and acting in a variety of roles and appearing on game shows. She and Vincent accompanied the talents of the Trinity Methodist Songbirds, including current and recently graduated College of Charleston students Jasmine Crowder, Meleana Cabales and Lauren Funkhauser with flutist accompaniment by Swati Linder. All of this is under the direction of Fabian's early singing coach and Trinity Musical Director George Hiatt.

Fabian will perform as Gilda in the Holy City Arts and Lyric Opera's performance of *Rigoletto* on Nov. 1, 3 and 5 at the Festival Hall at 56 Beaufain St.

Bagpiper Amanda Gibson will salute All Saints Day Nov. 5 at Trinity, and the following month, Fabian and Vincent will return to Charleston as part of the Christmas Eve extravaganza at 11:15 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Trumpeters Kyle Lane and Todd Smith will help Fabian, Vincent and piper Gibson herald the Savior's birth.

The historic Trinity UMC, home to Charleston's oldest serving United Methodist congregation, is located at 273 Meeting St., Charleston. All are welcomed at Trinity for the 11:15 traditional service each week.

For more information: <https://www.trinityumcharleston.com>



**Help the Advocate with a Year-End Tax-Deductible Gift**

It's not going to be easy getting through these next few years as a denomination, and a number of ministries across the connection will undoubtedly face financial challenges. The Advocate is no different. While we are an independent newspaper, we do receive a substantial amount of revenue—about a third of our operating budget—from conference apportionments. Like other ministries, we're doing our best to keep expenses down and come up with innovative ways to drive up income.

One huge way you can help the Advocate in this time is with a tax-deductible donation to our nonprofit 501(c)(3) ministry.

**Give at [advocatesc.org/donate](https://advocatesc.org/donate)**

Or mail a check to Advocate, 4908 Colonial Dr., Columbia, SC 29203



From the Archives

by Dr. Phillip Stone

South Carolina Methodists in the 1920s

As October turned to November a century ago, South Carolina Methodists were getting ready for their annual conferences, learning about the work that they'd undertaken in the previous year and thinking about crises in other parts of the world.

Since the schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the 1840s, some Methodists had dreamed of, or worked toward, reunification. In the years immediately after Reconstruction, reunification seemed impossible. Relations between the two denominations were too unhappy. Nevertheless, by World War I, serious conversations were taking place about reunion. A commission in 1923 had proposed some form of reunification, and the *Advocate* reported on it. The editor, who clearly was reading other conference newspapers, reported that the plan proposed by a commission meeting in Cleveland had not gathered much support. While the commission passed it with just three dissenting voices, the consensus was that it really did not unify the church. It would be another 16 years before a reunification commission produced a plan that brought the churches back together.

Within the conference, the church at Saxon, near Textile Industrial Institute in Spartanburg, reported that they closed a 10-day revival on Oct. 17. Their guest preacher came from nearby Bethel, Spartanburg. One wonders how the church (and the college community) felt about 10 straight days of revival services, or what the minister found to say on each night. The minister, who was leaving that church at conference, reported that the ladies of the church had called at the parsonage (which the Saxon Mill had built for the church during his tenure) and presented him with a gift of \$80 toward the purchase of a car.

The *Advocate* also noted that a resolution of the Upper South Carolina Conference observed the rapid growth of the population in textile centers demanded

attention and called it the "greatest home mission problem" in the conference. While perhaps they should have called it an opportunity rather than a problem, the conference did recognize textile workers as a population that the church should give some attention.

The *Advocate* printed some of the combined statistics reported at the Upper South Carolina Conference in 1923. The conference had gained a total of 3,716 members, with a total of 71,291 members in 420 congregations in the upper part of the state. Clergy had performed more than 3,600 baptisms, including 2,100 adult baptisms. The upper conference raised a grand total of \$978,000 in 1923, a pretty impressive sum considering the general poverty in 1920s South Carolina. A calculator estimates that would be worth \$17 million today—and again, that's less than half of today's conference.

Wofford Professor David Duncan Wallace, who had a regular column in the *Advocate*, filled an entire page of several issues on troubles in Germany. Following their defeat in World War I, Germany experienced a severe economic crisis, ending in extreme hyperinflation. Wallace noted the efforts America and the allies undertook to help stabilize Germany, to deal with hungry people and to try to help restart its economy. An interesting note Wallace points out is the desire of some Bavarians to rebel against the rest of Germany.

While it did not come up in some of his earlier articles, the Beer Hall Putsch where a young Adolf Hitler attempted to launch an insurrection against the German government happened 100 years ago this Nov. 8.

World affairs as well as local affairs were on the minds of South Carolina Methodists 100 years ago this fall.

*Stone is archivist for the South Carolina Conference and Wofford College. Read his blog at [blogs.wofford.edu/from\\_the\\_archives](https://blogs.wofford.edu/from_the_archives).*



Established in 1854, Kellybell UMC recently celebrated its 169th anniversary.

Kellybell celebrates 169 years of ministry

Kellybell United Methodist Church, Hartsville, celebrated its 169th church anniversary Aug. 27.

Lifting up the theme "On Christ the Solid Rock We Stand," the 3 p.m. celebration featured guest speaker the Rev. Walter Strawther, congregational specialist for the Columbia and Hartsville districts of the UMC and for African-American Ministries.

The focus Scripture was Matthew 16:13-18.

Members said it was the first church anniversary celebration held in their memory. Guest choirs also were in attendance.

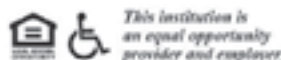
Kellybell's annual revival was Aug. 21-23, which led up to the anniversary Aug. 27. It was the church's first revival since 2019. The Rev. Mary B. Burnell serves as church pastor.

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**October**

September 15-October 15:  
Hispanic Heritage Month  
UWF Special Emphasis Month:  
Bethlehem Center, Spartanburg

- Oct 1-31—Pumpkin Patch, Disciples UMC, Greenville. M-Sat. 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun. Noon-7 p.m. <https://mydisciplesumc.org/2023-pumpkin-patch>
- Oct. 28—LSM School (Hartsville District) II, Trinity UMC, Darlington, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. \$20. <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Hartsville-District-LSM-Fall-School-2023.pdf>
- Oct. 28—Holiday Showcase, Leesville UMC, Leesville, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Oct. 29—Concert by Ashley Fabian, Trinity UMC, Charleston, 11:15 a.m.
- Oct. 29—Fall Festival, Washington Street UMC, Columbia, parking lot, 4-6 p.m. Free. Bounce house, pumpkin carving, games, prizes, face painting and a trunk or treat.
- Oct. 31—Halloween

**November**

Native American Heritage Month

- Nov. 1—All Saints Day
- Nov. 2—All Souls Day
- Nov. 3-5—Immerse 2023, Asbury Hills Camp and Retreat Center, Cleveland. <http://scmyp.org/immerse/>
- Nov. 4-5—LSM School (Rock Hill District), St. John's UMC, Rock Hill, Saturday, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2-5:30 p.m. \$30. Register: <https://www.umcsc.org/rockhillonlineregistration/>
- Nov. 5—All Saints Choir Concert, John



Photo courtesy of Wendy Zwart

**Holiday Showcase in Leesville**

Leesville UMC, Leesville, will host a Holiday Showcase on Saturday, Oct. 28, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. That day, The Challengers Sunday school class (above) is also showcasing God's love through the making of chunky blankets to sell at their "Mazie Booth." Their prayer is to help offset the cost of medical expenses for Mazie, a youth in the community, through the sale of their arts and crafts.

- Rutter's Requiem, Shandon UMC, Columbia, 4 p.m.
- Nov. 5—Bagpiper Amanda Gibson performance, Trinity UMC, Charleston.
- Nov. 5—Daylight Savings Time ends
- Nov. 7—Election Day
- Nov. 9—2023 Killingsworth Gala, Seawell's Restaurant, Columbia, 6-9 p.m. Register: <https://www.killingsworth.org/gala>
- Nov. 11—Veterans Day
- Nov. 11—UWF District Officers Training
- hosted by Columbia District, 9 a.m.
- Nov. 11—Un-Covered, Black Church Trauma and Mental Health Workshop, Wesley Chapel UMC, Lake City, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 843-217-3020.
- Nov. 11-12—LSM School (Charleston District), Cokesbury UMC, Charleston, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (Sat.); 2:30-5 p.m. (Sun.). <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/Charleston-District-LSM-November-School.pdf>
- Nov. 12—Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday
- Nov. 16—2023 Fall Clergy Orders Gather-

- ing, Lexington UMC, Lexington.
- Nov. 16—Alston Wilkes Society 61st Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony, Seawell's Catering, Columbia, Noon-2 p.m. <https://www.alstonwilkessociety.org/events/>
- Nov. 17-18—LSM School (Columbia District), Trinity UMC, Blythewood, 5-9 p.m. (Fri.); 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Sat.). <https://www.umcsc.org/wp-content/uploads/COLUMBIA-LSM-SCHOOL-LSM-FALL-2023-V3.pdf>
- Nov. 19-25—International Bible Week
- Nov. 20—Universal Children's Day
- Nov. 23—Thanksgiving Day
- Nov. 23—24th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Hudson's Seafood House on the Docks, Hilton Head, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. St. Andrew By-The-Sea UMC is a co-sponsor. <https://communitythanksgiving.com>
- Nov. 23-24—United Methodist Center closed.
- Nov. 26—Reign of Christ Sunday

**December**

- Dec. 1—World AIDS Day
- Dec. 2—UWF Limitless Event, virtual, 10 a.m.
- Dec. 3—150th Anniversary Homecoming Celebration, Lebanon UMC, Newberry, 11 a.m.
- Dec. 5—UMVIM, Grace UMC, Columbia, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 11—Sing-Along Messiah, Washington Street UMC, Columbia, 7 p.m.

**'Sing-Along Messiah' returns to Columbia Dec. 11**

COLUMBIA—Washington Street United Methodist Church's annual choral production, "Sing-Along Messiah," will return for the first time since the pandemic on Monday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary.

The only sing-along version of Handel's Messiah in the Midlands, the event is free and open to the public.

The "Sing-Along Messiah" was founded in 2002 by Arletta Raley on the principle that everyone in the metropolitan Columbia area, and anyone willing to travel to Columbia, should have an opportunity to sing some part of Handel's Messiah at least once a year. "Messiah" is perhaps the best-known and most popular sacred oratorio ever written. In its entirety, it is comprised of 53 individual selections presented as orchestral symphonies, choruses, recitatives and arias all divided into three sections. The "Sing-Along Messiah" includes all of Section 1 and "Hallelujah" from Section 2.

Until the Covid breakout in 2020, WSUMC hosted the "Sing-Along Messiah" each year since 2002. The "Sing-Along Messiah" has become a highly anticipated holiday tradition in the Midlands, and Washington Street is excited to be able to bring it back

to the community. Each year the sanctuary fills to capacity and a pre-performance buzz of anticipation can be felt by the participants. Many regular participants have said that their Christmas season is not the same without it.

The service lasts approximately an hour. The "Sing-Along Messiah" will feature an orchestra of talented local musicians through the dedication and hard work of Columbia's own Dick Goodwin. Also featured is a core choir to lead the singing of the choruses. Singers in the core choir have historically represented many local choirs and groups.

A live orchestra will provide the music.

The program will again be led by long-time conductor Dr. Lillian Quackenbush. Featured soloists include Mezzo Soprano Rachel Calloway; Soprano Ashley Emerson; Tenor Dominic Armstrong; and Bass-Baritone Craig Price. WSUMC is located at 1401 Washington St. in downtown Columbia.

Reservations are highly recommended as seating is limited. You may reserve a seat by going to [www.wsmethodist.org/sam](http://www.wsmethodist.org/sam).



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# The peace and comfort of home

by the Rev. Meg Cook

Home. This word unites each of the four texts this month. It's not the physical structure of a home but more the intangible feeling you get in a location or group of people. The feeling of welcome, peace and comfort.

God promises the Israelites that they will know that I am the Lord their God and I will make a home among them (Exodus 29:46). David's Psalm 27 contains the confident declaration that "I will dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life!" (v. 4). The words of the apostle John, that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), and later Jesus' promise that "he prepares a room for us" (John 14:2) also point to this.

Each text can direct us toward the importance of home and the truth that, ultimately, wherever God is, that's home.

I was to write these devotions in July when I was in "Salkehatchie mode," so the theme of home and God's presence just begged to be explored through Salkehatchie stories. So for the next four weeks, the devotions will include Salkehatchie stories from all over the state.

A special thank you goes to Laurel Irving, Dylan Brieghner and Brent McDonald for sharing your stories.

## Nov. 5 Home is where God is

Lesson Scripture: Exodus 29:42-46

Key Verse: Exodus 29:46, "They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt so that I could make a home among them. I am the Lord their God."

"When you know what home is, you want that for others, too."—Laurel Irving, Sandy Creek Camp

Culture shock is one of the most common experiences at Salkehatchie. Laurel Irving told a story of culture shock about his first job site. It was a trailer, he said, and "the only part that was good was the shell."

The family lived under a leaky roof, walked on the floor joists instead of the floor and had to use the bathroom in the woods. The trailer was not the kind of home he knew, just like the wilderness was not the promised land the Israelites expected. Yet, in following God, the Israelites did reach the promised land. And, over the course of a week, through persistence and teamwork, the trailer at Salkehatchie was transformed. A family experienced God making a home among them through the ministry of a few adults and a bunch of teenagers.

Irving said, "When you know what home is, you want that for others, too." When we as Christians know God, we want everyone to

know the love of God.

During the Israelites' sojourn through the wilderness, home was not a place on a map. Home was a relationship, a fellowship between the Lord and the people. Home is where God is no matter the culture shock!

## Nov. 12 Help in God's name

Lesson Scripture: Psalm 27

Key Verse: Psalm 27:4, "It's all I seek, to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life."

"I know how to do that! I can help!"—Dylan Brieghner, Columbia Camp

Psalm 27 is a prayer for help and a reminder of God's presence. When my nephew Dylan turned 14, we made a big deal of it being his "Salkehatchie birthday!" Fourteen is the age a youth can start attending Salkehatchie Summer Service. So this summer he came from Ohio to join his Uncle John at the Columbia camp and spent most of the week working on floors. They used peel and stick tiles, which are simple but come together beautifully.

Dylan was justifiably proud of their work and said that the floor will last forever. We, as adults, know the floor will not last forever, but I suspect the family in that home will remember that flooring forever, and the work done by teenagers and adults in the name of God's love. God gave help! Several weeks later, my sister called to tell me a story about Dylan. She was lamenting her stained carpet and making plans to replace it. Dylan said to her, with great confidence, "We can fix that, Mom, and we're not going to put down more carpet. We'll put down tiles. I can do it, I learned at Salkehatchie. You can help me!"

Oh, the confidence gained by our students at Salkehatchie! This desire to help is just another way to see the goodness and help of the Lord.

## Nov. 19 God among us

Lesson Scripture: John 1:1-14

Key Verse: John 1:14 "The Word became flesh and made his home among us."

"Strangers, teenagers and God doing God's thing."—Brent McDonald, Lake City Camp 1996

Incarnation, God becoming flesh, is a radical idea if you really think about it. God came to earth to live and make home among us. Amongst humanity. God made vulnerable. It's unexpected.

Many of our experiences of Salkehatchie are unexpected. Brent McDonald grew up

at Cayce United Methodist Church, where I now serve. Brent attended Lake City camp as a teenager in the 1990s. While he was there, he wrote a song with Donna Harris called "Window Stranger." This song highlights the unexpected connection formed at Salkehatchie between the homeowners and teens. The song goes, "I'm just a window stranger looking from the outside in, trying to be a friend, a storyteller wondering how it will end? Window stranger, won't you let me in."

In talking to now-adult Brent, he marveled at the bravery of folks to allow strangers into their lives. It's uncomfortable and vulnerable—both emotions that make room for God to dwell among us. They are spaces that allow God to do God's thing.

## Nov. 26 Building a home

Lesson Scripture: John 14:1-14

Key Verse: John 14:2, "If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?"

When I served as the chaplain at Epworth Children's home, I had the privilege of taking several teams to Salkehatchie camps. I remember a few timid conversations before we loaded up. Fears about using tools, food and new settings. Fears that echo Thomas's wondering, "How can we know the way?" The youth and staff had lots of questions and

(praise God!) lots of enthusiasm for the opportunity to serve. How empowering to have an opportunity be the people serving! To help make a place for others!

It may be prideful to share, but I heard countless praises for the teens about how hard they worked and how much they understood the importance of both the work and connecting with the homeowners. The teens understood how important it was and what it felt like to have a place—a place that was just for you.

Out of those camp experiences, two of those students chose trade professions as their adult jobs! Home building, place building, continues! God is the way, the truth and the life!

It is my prayer that these devotions inspired you and perhaps recalled memories of your Salkehatchie Summer Service camps. For more about Salkehatchie, whether to support the ministry or get involved, visit <https://salkehatchie.org> or see the article on Page 1.

Cook, an elder in the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church, pastors Cayce UMC, Cayce. She's also the author of two children's books from the Advocate: "Herbert the Hippo" and the newest release, "Herbert the Hippo: In the Moment." You can find both on Amazon or at [www.advocatesc.org/books](http://www.advocatesc.org/books).

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# UMVIM-SEJ confirms all churches—including those disaffiliating—can partner in mission and use UMVIM resources

The Southeast Jurisdiction of United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, an agency of The United Methodist Church, recently announced that all churches—even those who have chosen to disaffiliate—can still be part of UMVIM and utilize UMVIM resources.

In a statement, the Rev. Matt Lacey, executive director of UMVIM-SEJ, said, “As many Annual Conferences look to the close of 2023, many churches have decided or taken steps to disaffiliate and leave the United Methodist Church. Though United Methodist Volunteers in Mission remains an agency of the United Methodist Church, we are also committed to showing God’s love through volunteers, regardless of denominational affiliation.”

Lacey said that over the last several months, some churches who chose to disaffiliate have called and emailed asking if they could still register for mission team insurance.

Lacey said, “As long as churches agree to UMVIM’s best practices and the spirit of mutuality in mission, volunteer mission teams are welcome to continue to utilize UMVIM’s resources, including insurance, team leader training and the team leader handbook.”

Anyone with questions about how a church can engage with UMVIM-SEJ can reach out to Lacey at 205-453-9480 or matt\_lacey@umvim.org.

# APPORTIONMENTS: Cont’d

From Page 1

“The reason we are ahead of last year at this point is because the churches that separated as of June 30, 2023, had to pay 100 percent of their 2023 apportionments as part of the separation fee,” said Beth Westbury, treasurer and director of administrative services for the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church.

“The apportionments were recorded in August,” she added. “Thus, all the separating churches had paid 100 percent of their 2023 apportionments as of August. Under different circumstances, these churches would not have been at 100 percent so early in the year.”

Westbury noted the Columbia District is leading the conference’s districts in percentage collected as of Oct. 17 with 74.95 percent.

The Walterboro District is in second place, with 69.2 percent, and the Greenville

District is in third with 68.2 percent.

Westbury said she expects the conference will achieve around 90 percent collection of apportionments in 2023, as the percentage in recent years has been in the high 80s to the low 90s.

Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024, is the last day to pay apportionments. Payments must be in the treasurer’s office by 4 p.m. that day. If the church is paying electronically through Vanco, the payment must be initiated by 3 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024 to allow time for payments in process to clear and for staff to prepare for the 2024 year.

The treasurer’s office strongly encourages churches to make all apportionment payments using Vanco because of the recent postal mail delivery problems it has experienced.

Information about paying apportionments by Vanco can be found at <https://www.umcsc.org/apportionments>.

The 2024 budget is \$13.2 million.



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**All Saints Choir Concert is Nov. 5**

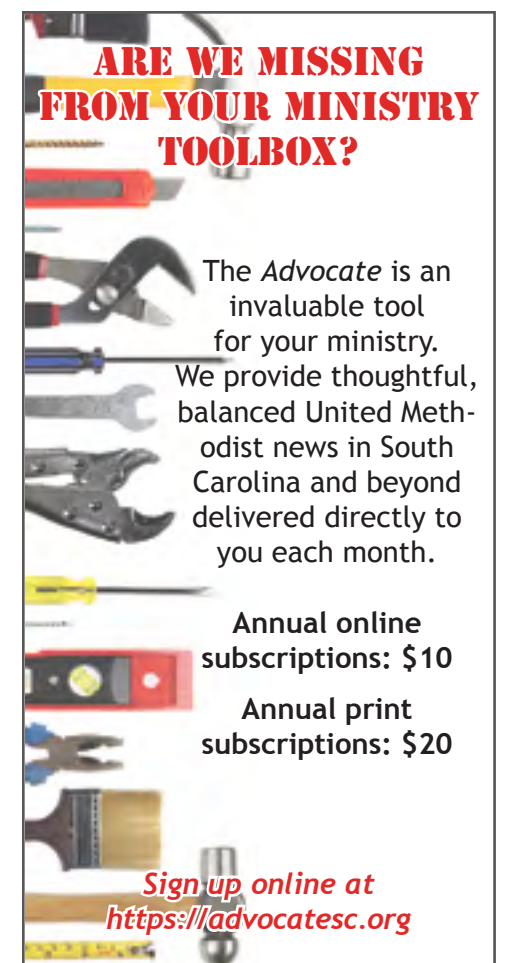
The choirs of Shandon, Trenholm Road, Union (Irmo), Cayce, Mount Hebron and Salem United Methodist churches in the Midlands will present John Rutter’s “Requiem” on Sunday, Nov. 5, at 4 p.m. at Shandon UMC, Columbia. The program will be accompanied by an orchestral ensemble with soprano Anna Flynn, conducted by Eddie Huss. Members of the represented churches who have died since All Saints Day 2022 will be included in the programs. The church is located at 3407 Devine St. in Columbia. Childcare will be available by reservation at 803-256-8383, ext. 104. All are invited. Learn more at <https://shandonumc.org>.



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