

## RESOLUTION 2026-01

Received by the deadline (8:30 am, Sunday, March 1, 2026) in the proper format and signed by lay or clergy members of the conference. ACTION: Under Standing Rule 70a, this resolution has been referred to the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. The Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits will report on RESOLUTION 2026-01 at the 2026 Annual Conference

### Exploring Pension and Health Benefit Coverage for Provisional and Ordained Deacons

WHEREAS The United Methodist Church “call[s] upon United Methodists around the world to accept responsibility for modeling health in all its dimensions” and to do so “we call upon specific entities within our United Methodist connection to take steps toward health and wholeness” and “encourage annual conferences to: ...undertake specific actions to promote clergy health, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual” (Book of Resolutions 2020/2024, pp. 538-41); and

WHEREAS deacons are often appointed by the bishop to extension ministry settings within the United Methodist connection, which may or may not provide health benefits; and

WHEREAS *The Book of Discipline 2020/2024* paragraph 331.6c – *Support for Deacons and Provisional Deacons Appointed by a Bishop* states that “Deacons and provisional deacons shall participate in the denominational pension and benefit plans and programs of the annual conference subject to the provisions and standards of those programs as established by the annual conference when health benefit coverage is not provided from another source”,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the South Carolina Annual Conference establish a task force to explore the necessary provisions and standards to allow provisional and ordained deacons to participate in the denominational pension and benefit health plans and programs of the annual conference, including family health coverage, when appointed as an employee of the annual conference or a local United Methodist church;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this task force be convened by the Conference Board of Pensions and Health Benefits and include at least the following additional personnel:

- at least one deacon
- a member of the cabinet
- the Conference Benefits Officer
- a member of the committee on Equitable Compensation

And that this task force consult with the conference Chief Financial Officer, Committee on Finance and Administration, Wespeth, and others whose expertise may inform the work of this task force;

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this task force conduct appropriate research to address the following questions:

- Who are the individuals under appointment who need access to the denominational pension and benefit plans and programs of the annual conference, and what circumstances prevent them from accessing these benefits?
- How can the annual conference address these barriers to access?
- What constraints related to participation by the health insurance carrier (Healthflex) are present?
- Who would pay the employer portion of the health benefit and how would it be funded?
- What would be the cost to the annual conference to provide access?
- Any other considerations necessary to draft a report in the following manner:

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this task force prepare a report on possibilities to address the above concerns and establish necessary provisions and standards to allow provisional and ordained deacons to participate in the denominational pension and benefit plans and programs of the annual conference, including family health coverage, when appointed as an employee of the annual conference or a local United Methodist church.

Submitted by

Rev. Meg Bryce Jiunnies, Chair of the Order of Deacons

## **RESOLUTION 2026-02**

Received by the deadline (10:33 pm, Saturday, February 28, 2026) in the proper format and signed by lay or clergy members of the conference. **ACTION:** Under Standing Rule 70a, this resolution has been referred to the Conference Connectional Ministries. The Conference Connectional Ministries will report on RESOLUTION 2026-02 at the 2026 Annual Conference.

### **Resolution to Develop and Expand Campus Ministries in the South Carolina Annual Conference**

WHEREAS John Wesley was the original Methodist campus minister, and Methodism was first a campus ministry,

WHEREAS college campuses remain a vital arena for disciple making among young adults,

WHEREAS Millennials and Gen Z Christians are attending church more frequently than before and much more often than are older generations,<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS the proportion of young clergy (under 35) in the United Methodist Church has been on a sharp decline since 2017, including the number of elders, deacons, and local pastors,<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS many clergy recognize campus ministry as playing significant a role in the development of their call,

WHEREAS the 2025 Special Called Annual Conference received a report from the Missional Priorities Jeremiah Team which named Campus Ministry as one of the conference's top five priorities for the future,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference recognizes Campus Ministry as vital to the future of its mission and ministry,

THEREFORE the Board for Higher Education of the South Carolina Annual Conference will develop a 10-year plan to be presented to the 2027 Annual Conference, including a strategy for expanding campus ministries to all colleges or universities in South Carolina with a minimum threshold of student enrollment, including resourcing for and cooperation with local churches for engaging in campus ministry,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference aspires to fully fund salaries as well as annual operating costs for established Wesley Foundations of South Carolina,

AND THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference aims to be a leader in the United Methodist Church for Campus Ministry.

<sup>1</sup> New Barna Data: Young Adults Lead a Resurgence in Church Attendance, September 2, 2025, barna.com

<sup>2</sup> Number of Young Elders in The United Methodist Church Reaches a Record Low Number in 2023, Lovett H. Williams, Jr., Lewis Center for Church Leadership

Signers:

Rev. Matthew Alexander – Full Member

Rev. Mallory Forte – Full Member

Rev. Rachel Headden – Provisional Member

David Salter – Lay Member (**Langley-Warrenville-Capers Chapel UMC, Greenwood/Conference Lay Servant Co-Director**)

Rev. Dr. J. Christopher Greene – Full Member

Rev. Shirley Peterson Gordon – Full Member

Rev. Morgan Byars – Full Member

Sandra Shaffer – Lay Member (**Tranquil UMC, Greenwood/Greenwood District Lay Leader**)

Rev. R. Brent Crimm – Provisional Member

Rev. Melissa Williams – Local Pastor

Rev. Mason Cantey – Full Member

Rev. Robby Lybrand – Local Pastor

Eugenia Vicars – Lay Member (**St. Paul UMC, Greenville**)

Sandy Davis – Lay Member (**Lee Road UMC, Greenville**)

## RESOLUTION 2026-03

Received by the deadline (10:33 pm, Saturday, February 28, 2026) in the proper format and signed by lay or clergy members of the conference. ACTION: Under Standing Rule 70a, this resolution has been referred to the Conference Committee on Resolutions and Appeals. The Conference Committee on Resolutions and Appeals will report on RESOLUTION 2026-03 at the 2026 Annual Conference.

### Resolution to Increase Support and Resourcing of Local Pastors in the South Carolina Annual Conference

WHEREAS the proportion of local pastors in the United Methodist Church has been on a sharp rise since 1990, going from two local pastors for every ten elders to 6.3 local pastors for every ten elders,<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS there are currently more local pastors serving in the South Carolina Annual Conference than non-retired elders,

WHEREAS more than one third of pastors in the South Carolina Annual Conference are local pastors,

WHEREAS at least three-fourths of local pastors are appointed less than full time, which significantly limits their ability to fully benefit from connectional support systems like mentors, covenant groups, Bishop's School, clergy gatherings, and even Annual Conference,

WHEREAS local pastor mentor groups vary greatly both in terms of content and format,

WHEREAS loneliness and lack of support are among the leading causes of pastoral burnout,<sup>2</sup>

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference recognizes the significant contribution of local pastors to the ministry of the conference, as well as the urgent need to increase support and resourcing of local pastors, especially for those who are appointed less than full time,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference encourages the bishop and cabinet to continue to consider ways to reduce the number of part-time appointments within the annual conference,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference encourages District Superintendents and District Committees on Ministry to consider ways to coordinate, collaborate, and elevate support for local pastors,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference encourages all elders to consider ways to better support and resource local pastors for the wellbeing of local pastors and the ministries they serve,

AND THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference aims to be a leader in the United Methodist Church for the development and support of local pastors.

<sup>1</sup> Number of Young Elders in The United Methodist Church Reaches a Record Low Number in 2023, Lovett H. Williams, Jr., Lewis Center for Church Leadership

<sup>2</sup> The Silent Struggle: How Pastors Navigate Loneliness by Brent Dyer, Renewing Hope Counseling

#### Signers:

Rev. Matthew Alexander – Full Member

Rev. Mallory Forte – Full Member

Rev. Athena Dickey-Cathcart – Local Pastor

David Salter – Lay Member (**Langley-Warrenton-Capers Chapel UMC, Greenwood/Conference Lay Servant Co-Director**)

Rev. Dr. J. Christopher Greene – Full Member

Rev. Shirley Peterson Gordon – Full Member

Rev. Morgan Byars – Full Member

Sandra Shaffer – Lay Member (**Tranquil UMC, Greenwood/Greenwood District Lay Leader**)

Rev. R. Brent Crimm – Provisional Member

Rev. Kenneth L. Nelson – Full Member

Rev. Melissa Williams – Local Pastor

Rev. Mason Cantey – Full Member

Rev. Robby Lybrand – Local Pastor

Eugenia Vicars – (**St. Paul UMC, Greenville**)

Sandy Davis – Lay Member (**Lee Road UMC, Greenville**)

Rev. Faye Jones – Provisional Member

## **RESOLUTION 2026-04**

Received by the deadline (10:33 pm, Saturday, February 28, 2026) in the proper format and signed by lay or clergy members of the conference. ACTION: Under Standing Rule 70a, this resolution has been referred to the Conference Connectional Ministries. The Conference Connectional Ministries will report on RESOLUTION 2026-04 at the 2026 Annual Conference.

### **Resolution to Develop and Expand Ministries with Young Adults in the South Carolina Annual Conference**

WHEREAS young adults currently have little directed ministry within the South Carolina Annual Conference,

WHEREAS Millennials and Gen Z Christians are attending church more frequently than before and much more often than are older generations,<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS the proportion of young clergy (under 35) has been on a sharp decline since 2017, including the number of elders, deacons, and local pastors,<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS the South Carolina has a growing and thriving youth ministry,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference recognizes the urgency of ministry with young adults in South Carolina both for the present witness and the future mission of the church,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference recognizes the urgency of creating pathways for retaining youth through adulthood,

THEREFORE the Committee on Connectional Ministries (or its successor) will create a 10-year plan to develop a South Carolina Annual Conference Ministry with Young Adults to be presented to the 2027 Annual Conference, including a proposed funding plan, a strategy for collaborating with local churches, and annual retreat/events for Young Adults,

AND THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference aims to be a leader in the United Methodist Church for Ministry with Young Adults.

<sup>1</sup> New Barna Data: Young Adults Lead a Resurgence in Church Attendance, September 2, 2025, barna.com

<sup>2</sup> Number of Young Elders in The United Methodist Church Reaches a Record Low Number in 2023, Lovett H. Williams, Jr., Lewis Center for Church Leadership

Signers:

Rev. Matthew Alexander – Full Member

Rev. Mallory Forte – Full Member

Rev. Rachel Headden – Provisional Member

David Salter – Lay Member **(Langley-Warrenton-Capers Chapel UMC, Greenwood/Conference Lay Servant Co-Director)**

Rev. Dr. J. Christopher Greene – Full Member

Rev. Shirley Peterson Gordon – Full Member

Rev. Morgan Byars – Full Member

Sandra Shaffer – Lay Member **(Tranquil UMC, Greenwood/Greenwood District Lay Leader)**

Rev. R. Brent Crimm – Provisional Member

Rev. Kenneth L. Nelson – Full Member

Rev. Melissa Williams – Local Pastor

Rev. Mason Cantey – Full Member

Eugenia Vicars **(St. Paul UMC, Greenville)**

Sandy Davis – Lay Member **(Lee Road UMC, Greenville)**

## RESOLUTION 2026-05

Received by the deadline (10:33 pm, Saturday, February 28, 2026) in the proper format and signed by lay or clergy members of the conference. ACTION: Under Standing Rule 70a, this resolution has been referred to the Conference Committee on Nominations. The Conference Committee on Nominations will report on RESOLUTION 2026-05 at the 2026 Annual Conference with a recommendation of adopting it (as is) in their report to include in their work in 2026-2027, a recommendation of approval by the Annual Conference or a recommendation of non-approval by the Annual Conference.

### Resolution for the Development and Support of Young Clergy for the South Carolina Annual Conference

WHEREAS the proportion of young clergy (under 35) in the United Methodist Church has been on a sharp decline since 2017, including the number of elders, deacons, and local pastors,<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS the greatest decline of young clergy (under 35) in the United Methodist Church has been among the percentage of elders,<sup>1</sup>

WHEREAS Millennials (age 30-45) make up less than 18% and Gen Z (under 29) less than 1% of full elders in the South Carolina Annual Conference,

WHEREAS Millennials and Gen Z currently make up 54% of the American workforce, with Gen Z now outnumbering Baby Boomers,<sup>2</sup>

WHEREAS more than 53% of UMCSC clergy are from the Baby Boomer generation and less than 14% of UMCSC clergy are Millennials or Gen Z,

WHEREAS retired clergy makeup nearly one-fifth of current appointments,

WHEREAS the last clergy of the Baby Boomer generation will reach mandatory retirement age by 2036 and will reach age 62 by the end of 2026,

WHEREAS loneliness and lack of support are among the leading causes of pastoral burnout,<sup>3</sup>

WHEREAS the Young Clergy Covenant Group (Cohort) has created systems of support for nearly three dozen young clergy over the last five years,

WHEREAS the development of young clergy is vital to the future mission and ministry of the United Methodist Church, especially for the South Carolina Annual Conference,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church recognizes with tremendous urgency the need to invest in the longevity and support of young clergy,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference recognizes the Young Clergy Covenant Group (Cohort) as vital for the future of the annual conference,

THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference aims to expand recruitment, support, and voice for young clergy,

THEREFORE the Committee on Nominations of the South Carolina Annual Conference will endeavor to nominate at least one clergy person under 40 to every board, committee, commission, council, and leadership team in the annual conference,

AND THEREFORE the South Carolina Annual Conference aims to be a leader in the United Methodist Church for the development of young clergy.

<sup>1</sup> Number of Young Elders in The United Methodist Church Reaches a Record Low Number in 2023, Lovett H. Williams, Jr., Lewis Center for Church Leadership

<sup>2</sup> Trendlines, Employment and Training Administration, Issue No. 11, August 2024

<sup>3</sup> The Silent Struggle: How Pastors Navigate Loneliness by Brent Dyer, Renewing Hope Counseling

#### Signers:

Rev. Matthew Alexander – Full Member

Rev. Mallory Forte – Full Member

Rev. Rachel Headden – Provisional Member

David Salter – Lay Member (**Langley-Warrenville-Capers Chapel UMC, Greenwood/Conference Lay Servant Co-Director**)

Christel Cathcart – Lay Member

Rev. Dr. J. Christopher Greene – Full Member

Rev. Shirley Peterson Gordon – Full Member  
Rev. Morgan Byars – Full Member  
Sandra Shaffer – Lay Member **(Tranquil UMC, Greenwood/Greenwood District Lay Leader)**  
Rev. R. Brent Crimm – Provisional Member  
Rev. Kenneth L. Nelson – Full Member  
Rev. Mason Cantey – Full Member  
Eugenia Vicars – **(St. Paul UMC, Greenville)**  
Sandy Davis – Lay Member **(Lee Road UMC, Greenville)**  
Rev. Faye Jones – Provisional Member