

## **THE COMMITTEE ON CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2023-2024**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Committee on Congregational Development shall be to work with the Bishop and Cabinet (Appointive and Extended) to provide long and short term planning and provide the framework for all the efforts of the Annual Conference related to new church development, church redevelopment and congregational revitalization. We exist to continue finding ways to create new opportunities, new places, and new spaces for new people. We work with existing congregations to develop processes to revitalize and develop transformative and impactful ministries and building projects in order to develop more maturing world-transforming disciples of Jesus Christ. We work with the District Boards of Congregational Development, the Cabinet, and Connectional Ministries to identify, resource, assist, support, fund, discover where to deploy planters and develop new church plants, missions, and ministry initiatives to reach the people of existing, new communities, and changing areas across the state of South Carolina. We strive to be a vital resource for local pastors and laity of local congregations as we seek more excellent ways to share the loving gospel of Jesus Christ and Christ Church in extending the Kingdom of God to all of creation.

### **Key moments from the previous year:**

We, as a committee, continue to offer opportunities for MissionInsite orientation and training for the Annual Conference so local churches, pastors and laity may better see, invite, connect, engage, know, disciple, and serve the people of their communities better.

We were able to have our Annual Conference demographically analyzed by ACS Technology this past conference year. The demographic information helped us to better understand and share the love of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people where we see current areas of population and economic growth, areas of decline, and areas where deep pockets of poverty exist in our state.

We were able to support four of the five existing congregations who applied for grants through Existing Church Grant funds totaling \$147,050 with grant support that span the spectrum of vital ministry and missional situations to improve and provide needed substance for people in our various communities across this conference.

The generosity and investment of the local congregations into the ministries and the people called United Methodist in South Carolina, through the Ministry of Congregational Development, has allowed us to support local congregations in a variety of ways. Thank You!!!

We are also grateful for your generosity and investment of \$303,149 through our new church and acquisition funds. This allows and gives us opportunities to start new ministry in new places for new people in various communities in support of New Churches, New Faith Expressions, Renewal Vitality Situations, and Missional Situations in 2023-2024 around the state.

Again, these accomplishments are possible because of you and your church's generosity and commitment to our God given mission of making principled and life transforming disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

While we celebrate all you have given, and allowed us to partner with our sisters and brothers across the connection here in South Carolina through your generosity and investments, we also grieve some of our siblings in our United Methodist Family

in South Carolina and across the Connection who decided to disaffiliate or separate from our family. “Lord, In Your Mercy! Hear Our Prayers!”

Yet, while we grieve the disaffiliations and separations of this past conference year, we celebrate God’s gathering of United Methodist and others in the Greenville District affected by separations, who by God’s Grace developed a New Faith Community known as “**Open Hearts UMC**”. **Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow!!! Hallelujah and Amen!!!**

As a Committee, we continue working to learn best practices from each other and our hope is to continue to expand the pool of resources, local church support, and grant funding opportunities in each of our Districts and the Annual Conference.

We continue to devote a large portion of our meeting times to learning what is and is not working in our respective districts, in our local churches, and across our Annual Conference so we can be the best stewards of what we have received, and continue to receive, from our local congregations of the Annual Conference.

### **Objectives for the coming year:**

Our goal is to continue and improve upon our ideals of being a resource for local churches interested in new ministry opportunities, and to be a catalyst for the change and transformation needed to expand and extend the Kingdom of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ in South Carolina. We will continue supporting our churches through every means of grace God provides for us to support the local congregations.

One of the ways we intend to do this is through our ongoing processes of **getting more MissionInSite training** for our Conference leaders, District Boards, and local church leaders, both lay and clergy. It is also our hope to get all of our existing congregations, new faith communities and expressions to plot their active membership and participants so they, and we, may **see, invite, connect, engage, know, disciple, and serve** the people of our communities by loving them better on behalf of Christ Jesus.

We will continue supporting the current plants and partnerships across the connection while prayerfully discerning our next faithful steps or projects as we prayerfully follow God’s leading through Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit empowers us, sometimes pulling and pushing us into the known and unknown world.

One of our major goals this year is intentional reflection on “**OUR WHY**” and how we plan to fulfill God’s Mission and Ministries through our Conference **four priorities, our values, our vision, and our purpose**.

We strive to see how they (**our four priorities, our values, our vision, our purpose**) align with God’s promises given to us through the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, God’s Holy Word and Will throughout the Old and New Testaments.

We hope to continue our learning best practices from within this Conference, and conversations with other Conferences, so we can continue making what is good better, and what is better the best it can be for the sake of Christ Jesus and Christ Church in the Wesleyan Traditions.

As in previous years, and as we have opportunity to set aside some funds, we seek to fund opportunities for future leadership development, community engagement, developing pathways for connecting and growing principled disciples of Christ, measuring and evaluating current realities and missional possibilities.

We look forward with hope to partnering and sponsoring multiple smaller conference-like workshops on things like **staff/team development, how to lead a visioning process, multi-site challenges, and multi-ethnic/culture transitions**

into **Acts 2** faith communities. We are excited about missional possibilities and opportunities before us even in such a time as this.

**Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:**

There are no specific actions or votes needed for our report, only submitting it to the record and for your prayers for our assignment going forward.

Know this, if there was one take away for you as a delegate it would be this, you can let us know what help you may need and ask how can we help you? We want to be a resource for you, your pastor, your staff, your leadership and Christ local church in your communities. That support could look like a variety of things: funding, training, coaching, or something we have not thought of yet. Whatever it is you are wrestling with, if you think we might be able to help, then call us! We are here for you!

**Narrative:**

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Dr. James P. Smith, Chairperson  
Rev. James L. Friday, Director