

SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST ADVOCATE

Purpose:

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

Key moments from the previous year:

- Produced 12 strong editions of the Advocate, each designed to inform, inspire, encourage, or connect United Methodists across the state;
- Produced seven more titles from the Advocate Press (total 23), including two children's books, available via the Advocate website and on Amazon:
 1. My Banned Black History Sermons, Amiri Hooker
 2. Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry 2003-2023: The First Twenty Years
 3. Herbert the Hippo In the Moment, Meg Cook
 4. Darkness to Light: Finding Jesus in the Valley of Mental Illness
 5. Herbert the Hippo, Meg Cook
 6. A Healing Journey: Poems of Faith, Healing, Recovery, and Coping with Grief, Stephon C. Void
 7. People of My Journey, Arthur Holt
- Assessed the Advocate's future, ultimately affirming its core relationship with The United Methodist Church, adopting a new vision and mission statement, taking steps to grow its digital journalism efforts, and bringing on a marketing coordinator to ensure a successful and viable financial future for the newspaper; and
- Earned three more first-place awards from the South Carolina Press Association: first place for overall newspaper in our division, first place for Jessica Brodie for faith reporting for an article titled "A Move from God," and first place in in-depth reporting for Brodie's series of articles on the discernment and disaffiliation process.

Objectives for the coming year:

- Hire a marketing coordinator in an effort to significantly increase income and enhance the publication's outreach by developing increased marketing and awareness about the Advocate and Advocate Press, including events planning, fundraising and advertising and circulation growth;
- Continue with 12 more strong, encouraging and informative editions of the Advocate, with continued focus on connectionalism and shining the light of Christ in a difficult world;
- Continue commitment to fair, balanced news and journalistic excellence;
- Improve digital product; and
- Release at least five more books this year and increase book sales over last year.

Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:

If you take away nothing from this report, know this:

The award-winning Advocate is a rarity in Methodism—an independent print and digital news publication that has been in existence since 1836 and is still going strong. The Advocate is free to all South Carolina clergy and available by subscription to anyone. Individual rates are \$20/year (\$10 online only). Group plans are \$10/person per year. Online-only church plans also available.

The Advocate helps United Methodist churches in South Carolina stay connected

and helps church members become stronger disciples. All news is welcome. Call 803-786-9486, email advocate@umcsc.org or visit www.advocatesc.org.

Narrative:

The Advocate affirms its affiliation, allegiance and bias to United Methodism while welcoming all views of interest to South Carolina United Methodists and to the advancement of knowledge, faith and discipleship.

The Advocate is the voice of the people of The United Methodist Church in South Carolina, transparently sharing news of relevance to people of faith around advancing knowledge, spiritual growth and discipleship. Our future will focus on heavier emphasis on digital growth, expanding and growing the Advocate Press, and establishing new and improved communication with the conference as we work to tell the stories of the church at work in the world. Our mission is to inform and connect South Carolina United Methodists by independently reporting relevant news, engaging readers, providing a forum for dialogue and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Respectfully submitted:

Jessica Brodie, Editor
jbrodie@umcsc.org, 803.807.0018

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