

SECTION IV

The Fifty-Second Session of the SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE The United Methodist Church Organized 1972

Continuing the South Carolina Conference (1785) and the South Carolina Conference (1866)

Sunday, June 4 – Wednesday, June 7, 2023
Florence Center, Florence, South Carolina

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, Presiding
“Seeking A More Excellent Way: Breathe and Believe, Hewing Hope.”

2023 In-Person ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Sunday, June 4, 2023 – The First Day

At 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, June 4, 2023, the Clergy Session of the United Methodist Church was called to order by the Reverend Melton Arant. Reverend Arant introduced the Reverend Morris Waymer who thanked the members of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Rev. Melton Arant and Mr. Sharome Henry, and Bishop and Mrs. Holston for their unwavering support. The Reverend Morris Waymer introduced the Reverend Letha Brown who presented the candidates for Commissioning and Ordination. These persons were voted upon by the body. The proceedings of the Clergy Session are outlined in the Business Questions. The clergy session concluded with a prayer offered by Bishop Holston.

At 7:00 p.m., Bishop Holston presided over the Commissioning, Ordination and Retirement Recognition Service. Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball, the Resident Bishop of the West Virginia Annual Conference, served as the Ordination Preacher. She preached a Message entitled, “*Original Blessing: Hewing Hope*” based on Genesis 1:26–31, Matthew 3:1–12. The offering received was for the SC Conference Seminary Students Scholarship Fund, administered by the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation.

The following persons were commissioned as *Provisional Elders*:

Arthur Lindburg Gamble, Darlene Moore Richardson, Leo Wesley Roy, Billy Keith Stewart, Steven Matthew Turner

The following persons were commissioned as *Provisional Deacons*:

Kim Moultrie Bryant, Laura McCoy Geloni

The following person who was previously ordained in another tradition had his *orders recognized* and was received as a Full Member of the South Carolina Annual Conference:

John Clarence Elmore, Jr.

The following persons were *Ordained as Elders*:

Louis Ashley, Peter Kent Berntson, James Thornton Brown II, Carsten Aubrey Bryant, Mason Heyward Cantey, Scott Stephen Gilmer, Shirley Peterson Gordon, Alisha Hansen, Joseph David Kovas, Cameron Thomas Levi, Woongchul Daniel Ra, Amanda Geddings Richardson, Cynthia Anne Rumsey

The following person was *Ordained as a Deacon*:

Margaret Rosa Cantey

The following *Retirees* were recognized:

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

Monday, June 5, 2023 – The Second Day

At 9:30 a.m. the second day of the Fifty-Second Session of the South Carolina Annual Conference was called to order by Bishop Holston. Following a greeting, Bishop Holston offered a sermon entitled “Strong at the Broken Places,” based on 2 Corinthians 4:5 -12 – *21 Revised Standard Version*. Bishop Holston reminded us that none of us are perfect, and that we are also stronger at our broken places. Bishop Holston challenged us find the grace of God in each person we meet. The worship service included music provided by Mrs. Jenny Middleton, Mrs. Carla Fleming, Mr. Charles Miller, and Mr. George Hiatt. Bishop Holston officiated at the Table and Holy Communion was shared with the Conference attendees. The offering received today was for the newly established Bishop Joseph B. Bethea Endowed Scholarship through the Office of Black Church Studies at Duke Divinity School. Bishop Holston called the conference to recess until 11:30 a.m.

At 11:35 a.m. Bishop L. Jonathan Holston called the Annual Conference to order with the singing of “Marching to Zion.” The Reverend Kenneth Nelson, Conference Secretary, offered the following **2023 Organizational Motions & Closing Motions**

- 1) That the tellers nominated by the District Superintendents for the 2023 Annual Conference Session be elected as nominated without reading and that their names be published in the 2023 Conference Journal; (motion passed) (Find in Section III of the 2023 Journal Vol. I.)
- 2) That the official roll and record of attendance for the 2023 Annual Conference session be designated as those who officially registered along with any updated registrations that have occurred with the verification of the conference secretary (motion passed)
- 3) That the conference program printed and distributed in the conference materials-along with such scheduling adjustments which the President and Secretary have since made-be adopted as the Agenda for the 2023 Annual Conference Session; provided that the President may adjust the schedule as necessary to expedite the business of the Session; (motion passed) and
- 4) that voting shall be done in keeping with the provisions of Standing Rule 24 and that the seating area of the floor of the Florence Center arena (burgundy seats), and the tiered seating (teal) immediately opposite the platform, and facing directly toward the platform, up to the level of the concourse seating in sections 316-325 and 213-217-218 together with any wheelchairs present on the floor or in the handicap area immediately behind sections 315 & 318, the platform, and area surrounding the platform be designated as the “**bar of the conference**” for all business sessions of the 2023 Annual Conference session (motion passed).
- 5) That the body may vote on committee, board, and commission reports in their entirety instead of individual sections during the 2023 Annual Conference (motion passed).

Further Comments:

I ask you to find several items in your conference materials.

Located in the Voting and Parliamentary process of your conference material registration material, please find the Lime Green recognition sheet. We ask that if you desire to be recognized by the Chair that you hold up the Recognition sheet. Remain at your seat until called upon by the Bishop. We encourage anyone who thinks he or she may want to be recognized to sit on the floor of the arena. While the bar of the conference extends into the stadium seating of the arena, we have found that it is easier to see someone asking to be recognized on the floor level rather than in tiered seating.

As it relates to voting, you will find VOTING & BADGE COLOR GUIDE. Please read this carefully. Persons with RED, WHITE, or BLUE BADGES may vote on all matters in the business before the body.

Persons with purple badges have the privilege of voice but not vote. Person with green badges, we are honored by your presence. You may be extended the right of voice only when granted by the Bishop and body.

VOTING Wi-Fi Network Information-Can be found in the information section on the same page as Florence Center parking map. There you will find the Wi-Fi network name and the password.

Network Name: UMCSC-Conference
Network Password: JohnWesley

Right behind the Voting and Badge Color guide, you will find copies of submission sheet for any motions that you make from the floor. **In keeping with Standing Rule 8, please complete this sheet as soon as you return to your seat and give it to teller so it may be provided to the Secretary's Desk.**

The annual conference committee values your opinion as it relates to our life together at Annual Conference. After the close of the conference, we will provide you with an opportunity to evaluate annual conference using a survey tool. We would be honored if you would take the time to do so.

Greetings from Host DS Rev. Terry Fleming, Florence District

Rev. Fleming greets the body on behalf of the Florence District. So good to see everyone in person. We missed seeing everyone together the past years. He asked everyone to stand and see the other children of God around us. When we are through every one of us will be blessed children of God.

Greetings from Host Pastor Rev. Susan Maddox, Pastor, Highland Park UMC

Rev. Maddox greets body on behalf of Highland Park. Encourages everyone remember the good between each other. Bishop Steiner-Ball said, "God blesses us first."

Consent Calendar (SR 22) Rev. Ken Nelson, Conference Secretary
The Consent Calendar

The Consent Calendar can be found on pages 163 of your conference material.

SR 22- The Consent Calendar provides for the adoption by "consent" of reports and other items which do not necessarily require deliberation by the Annual Conference in open session and which can be adopted or "moved to the record without reading" by a simple majority vote. We will act on the consent calendar on Wednesday morning. Prior to the consideration of the Consent Calendar scheduled for Wednesday morning, any fifteen members of the Annual Conference may request the removal of a specific item from the Consent Calendar, and it shall be removed and considered at an appropriate time as determined by the President and the Secretary. The Consent Calendar shall be adopted by a majority vote.

To remove an item from the Consent Calendar, complete and secure the required fifteen signatures on the form found on page **165** and deliver the completed form to the Secretary of the Annual Conference prior to consideration of the Consent Calendar. A separate petition is required for each item to be removed.

Adoption of the Consent Calendar- The consent calendar may be found on page 163. Being that any items removed for the consent calendar have been acted upon by the body, Bishop I move the adoption of the consent calendar.

Committee on Standing Rules (SR 18) Rev. Michael Hood

Rev. Hood delivered report -p. 125. Motion to receive as printed passed.

Question – Ed Roper (Charleston District) – Motion to give a list of separating churches at this time. Bishop Holston rules out of order as that will be the report of the Conference Board of Trustees to be taken up at 2pm Tuesday.

Committee on Nominations (SR19) Rev. Joseph James

Rev. James delivers report -pg. 1. Please use form on pg. 21 to request editorial changes. All quadrennial boards will be vacant next year. If you would like to serve, go to umcsc.org/nomination to fill out application.

Reports presented as printed #1-4.

Motion to receive report passed. Editorial changes and corrections pending.

Rev. Dr. Stephen Love: Ms. Sandy Shaffer should be added as Lay Member of the Greenwood District Committee on Ministry. She was added ad interim to the Committee, but her name was not submitted as a new member for your Conference Report on Nominations. Editorial correction.

Question: Charlie Thomas – Replace Rev. Jim Sweitzer with Rev. Geneva Stafford for Belin Board of Trust. Editorial correction.

Morris Waymer: For Board of Ordained Ministry, replace Rev. Charles Johnson with Rev. Jerry Gadsden. Editorial correction.

Beth Addis: For Committee on Standing Rules – p. 17, line 50 – Change Mary E Blue, vice chairperson is deceased, as far as I know, no one has been elected to replace her as vice chair. I'm a member of that committee. Editorial correction.

John Sterling Poole: For report #2, p. 6, line 43 – Inclusion of Charleston Wesley Foundation Board (on back). Editorial correction.

Rev. Christopher Lollis: For Board of Pension and Health Benefits –
Report – Joint Committee on Medical – Remove Rev. Charles Johnson and add Rev. Jerry Gadsden.
Report – Committee on Appeals – Remove vacancy, add Jerry Dicks.
Report – Wespeth Liaisons – remove Paula Whiteside, add Lynn Hammell
Lay Members – remove Donnie Christopher – resigned.
Report – Committee on Proportional Payment: remove whole line
Secretary: remove Thelma Hudson

Rev. Vivia Fowler: Report – Columbia College Board of Trustees, p.4, line 41-63, This is not the current board. I have forwarded to Ken Nelson the email from Joye Hipp. Editorial Correction.

Report: Committee on Petitions to General Conference, p. 15, line 57, Change Carolyn Briscoe address to 108 E. Brookwood Dr., Clemson, SC 29631

The conference will reassemble at 2pm.
12:05pm - Bishop Holston prays a blessing and calls for lunch recess.

Day 2 – Monday: The Afternoon Session

After a lunch break, Bishop L. Jonathan Holston reconvened the body at 2:07 p.m. with the singing of the hymn, “Blessed Assurance.” Bishop Holston invited Mr. Holbrooks Platts to provide a report of the **Committee on Episcopacy**, found on page 142 of the conference materials. Following the presentation of the report, Bishop Holston presented the report to the body for approval. The report was unanimously approved. Bishop Holston then invited the body to thank Mr. Platts for his more than eighty years of service to the United Methodist Church.

Bishop Holston invited the Reverend Mitch Houston to present the **Committee Council on Finance and Administration** report found on pages 23-53 of the conference materials. Reverend Houston thanked Mrs. Beth Westbury for her leadership of the Conference Finance. He advised that the decision was made to reduce the apportionments due from each church in light of the churches who have decided to leave the conference. This has resulted in a 15% cut from the previous year’s budget. Reverend Houston presented the report as information. Bishop Holston advised that the report would be presented to the body for approval at a later time.

Rev. Steve Simoneaux presented the **Committee on Resolutions and Appeals** report, page 153. The resolution to unequivocally oppose the death penalty was presented to the body, by Bishop Holston for approval. Bishop asked Reverend Seminole for the rationale, he advised that the resolution follows The UMC Resolutions.

SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST RESOLUTION TO UNEQUIVOCALLY OPPOSE THE DEATH PENALTY

We worship a God who received the death penalty (Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:25; John 19:16). Jesus was tried, sentenced, and murdered by the state. He died on a cross on a hill between two criminals (Luke 23:32). That cross was the symbol of the oppressive power of the Roman state. It was the tool the Romans used to keep the population in line. The cross on a hill said, “behave, or you will end up here.” The death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore, and transform all human beings. (United Methodist Social Principles, ¶164.G) Contemporary capital punishment is flawed in theory and practice. Racism, classism, and other systemic oppressions profoundly shape who receives capital punishment. Additionally,

wrongful execution is an inherent risk in capital punishment. In the United States, over 190 people (about the seating capacity of Madison Square Garden) who were wrongly convicted have been exonerated from death row since 1973.

Whereas as Christians, we believe in a God who rejected the Cross and rejects capital punishment. And as Wesleyans, we believe that God's grace is ever reaching out to restore our relationship with God and with each other. The death penalty denies the possibility of new life and reconciliation, and preaches the false gospel that people are 1) beyond redemption, 2) defined by the worst acts they have ever done and 3) further defined by the worst experiences they have ever felt or witnessed.

Whereas The United Methodist Church also recognizes the unjust and flawed implementation of the death penalty, and the case of George Stinney, Jr. (a 14-year-old African American teenager, and the youngest person to be executed in the last century, for the alleged murder of two white children that he did not commit), and the fact that three men have been exonerated from South Carolina's Death Row since it's reinstatement in 1976 (where executions reveal racism, bias against persons with intellectual disabilities, severe mental illness, low income, inadequate legal representation, and the likely execution of at least one innocent person. (Book of Resolutions, 5037)

Whereas the death penalty is a descendent of racial terror lynching's, as demonstrated by the fact that of the 282 people who have been executed since 1912 (when South Carolina started keeping official records of executions), 208 (74%) were Black; 81% of all modern South Carolina death sentences involved the killing of a white person; cases like that of Alex Murdaugh are not tried as a capital crime because of the defendant's race, class background, and access to legal power.

Therefore "We oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes." (Social Principles ¶164.G) We encourage the following:

We encourage United Methodist Congregations to hold a vigil in their church buildings, at the execution facility or state capitol when an execution occurs. Witness to the fact that a person is being killed on behalf of society — on behalf of you — and you resist this action. In your witness, share information on social media using #deathpenalty and connect with local anti-death penalty groups.

We encourage local churches to connect with anti-death penalty efforts and organizations in the state of South Carolina to learn more about those who are on death row and ways to support them, their families,

We encourage congregations to Advocate with your elected officials to make their voice heard, by letter, in-person visit, phone call, email, Twitter, or other social media. Write to people who are facing the death penalty. Send Christmas cards, seasonal greetings, or letters to those on death row.

We encourage the Bishop of the South Carolina United Methodist Annual Conference to write a letter to the Governor of South Carolina asking for the death penalty to be abolished and encourage other denominations with which we are in Full Communion to do the same.

Submitted By: Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church
and Rev Amiri B Hooker

Rev. Seminole presented the **Resolution on Gun Violence** found on page 154.

Mr. Mark Cochran of the Greenville District presented a motion for amendment by deletion. Mr. Paul Brewer from the Hartsville District presented a speech in opposition of the motion.

After a call for additional speeches, Bishop Holston called for a vote to delete item number five of the Gun Violence Resolution. He asked those in support of deletion to stand. Following the count, Bishop Holston then asked those in opposition of the removal to stand. The motion to delete item 5 was approved by a vote of 525 in favor and 479 against.

Bishop Holston presented the motion for a vote. Mr. Bob Abbott of the Hartsville District stood with a request to delete item 6, page 155 bullet 6 (line 1 and 2). Bishop Holston called for a second. The Reverend Franklin Buie stood with a speech against the removal. The Reverend Larry McCutcheon stood to ask for a point of clarification, Mr. Abbott made a speech and a motion at the same time, this is against the parliamentary

rules. Mr. Luke Biggs stood to ask for clarification, and he suggested a clarification to the wording “large capacity” and “trigger pulls.”

Bishop Holston invited the Reverend Amiri Hooker to offer a speech in opposition to removal of the language. Bishop Holston called for a vote: all in favor of deletion were asked to stand. He then asked those who were against the deletion of the language to stand. 593 against deletion to 320 for deletion.

Bishop Holston called for a vote. Mr. Mike Lench stood to express a concern that this language is in opposition of our constitutional rights. This was a speech against the resolution. Bishop Holston called Ms. Jody Connor to make a speech. She provided an edit to line 16 on page 154 to remove “The United Methodist” so that it reads: *Whereas ~~The United Methodist~~ God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world’s warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly. And so shall we.*

The Reverend Paul Wood stood to offer a speech in favor of the Resolution. Mr. Mark Conchran stood with a recommendation against the resolution. Bishop advised that this was not in order as he had already spoken.

Ms. Dawn Craft suggested a change of the wording, this was a speech against the resolution. The Reverend Mitch Houston made a motion to call the question. This motion was approved. Bishop Holston invited all in favor of the Resolution to stand. He then asked those who did not support the resolution to stand. The resolution passed: 732 in favor, 199 against.

SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST RESOLUTION ON GUN VIOLENCE

Gun violence isn’t slowing down in America. Before the 2023 Lent Season, The Gun Violence Archive recorded 5,217 deaths related to gun violence. In 2022, the Gun Archive recorded 647 mass shootings and 44,287 total deaths from gun violence. In 2014 the South Carolina Annual Conference passed a resolution on gun violence without direct action suggestions and now is a time to move even further to deal with the issues of gun violence in our state and nation. The United Methodist Church in its Social Principles and Book of Resolutions has long called on churchgoers to work to end gun violence. The time now is to change the moral conversation around the crisis of gun violence.

Whereas Jesus’ call to his followers to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) which is tied to an intimate relationship with God, and echoes God’s dreams for peace for all of creation as expressed in Old testament book of Micah fourth chapter. (Micah 4:1-14)

Whereas God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world’s warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly. And so shall we. (2016 *Book of Discipline*, “A Companion Litany to Our Social Creed”)

Whereas The stunning imagery of Micah’s dream is the transformation of weapons into instruments of harvesting food...occurs after the judgments are handed down to the nations. The transformation is not complete until the nations participate in their own transformation. The text states that the nations themselves, “shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.”

Whereas In an average year, gun violence in America kills 40,000 people, wounds twice as many, and has an economic consequence to our nation of \$557 billion. Without a doubt, the human cost of gun violence—the people who are taken from us and the survivors whose lives are forever altered—is the most devastating.

Whereas all children, seniors, and the poor in America should be guaranteed the right to live, learn and live in safely—free from violence and fear. We envision a nation where all people feel safe in their communities and classrooms and leaders at all levels protect children and the people not guns.

Therefore: As followers of Jesus, called to live into the reality of God’s dream of shalom as described by Micah, we must address the epidemic of gun violence so “that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in God’s paths.”

Therefore, we call upon United Methodists in South Carolina to prayerfully address gun violence in their local context. Some of the ways in which to prevent gun violence include the following:

1. For congregations to make preventing gun violence a regular part of our conversations and prayer times. Gun violence must be worshipfully and theologically reflected on, and we encourage United Methodist churches to

- frame conversations theologically by utilizing resources produced by the General Board of Church and Society.
2. For congregations to assist those affected by gun violence through prayer, pastoral care, creating space, and encouraging survivors to share their stories, financial assistance, and through identifying other resources in their communities as victims of gun violence and their families walk through the process of grieving and healing.
 3. For individual United Methodists who own guns as hunters or collectors to safely and securely store their guns and to teach the importance of practicing gun safety.
 4. For United Methodist congregations to lead or join in ecumenical or inter-faith gatherings for public prayer at sites where gun violence has occurred and partner with law enforcement to help prevent gun violence.
 5. For United Methodist congregations to partner with local law-enforcement agencies and community groups to address mass shooting and ways to address the militarization of police and recommended limits the type of military equipment granted to law enforcement agencies.
 6. For United Methodist congregations to advocate at the local and national level for laws that prevent or reduce gun violence. To include:
 - Universal background checks on all gun purchases
 - Ensuring all guns are sold through licensed gun retailers
 - Prohibiting all individuals under restraining order due to threat of violence from purchasing a gun
 - Prohibiting persons with serious mental illness, who pose a danger to themselves and their communities, from purchasing a gun.
 - Banning large-capacity ammunition magazines and weapons designed to fire multiple rounds each time the trigger is pulled.
 - Promoting new technologies to aid law-enforcement agencies to trace crime guns and promote public safety.

Submitted By the Advocacy Committee Chair Rev. Bernie Mazyck and
SC Board of Church & Society Chair Rev Amiri B Hooker

The Reverend Kathryn Hunter stood to ask why the other resolutions could not be brought before the conference. Bishop Holston advised that the two other resolutions were not in line with the standing rules. Rev. Simoneaux advised that names were not attached to those resolutions.

Mr. Ed Roper, Charleston District made a motion to set aside conference standing rule number 7 so that the other resolutions could be considered. Bishop Holston advised that this request was out of order. Rev. Simoneaux submitted the report to the record.

The Reverend Paul Wood asked when is it possible to suspend a standing rule. Bishop Holston advised, that when something is properly before us, we can suspend a rule. Reverend Wood asked whether the resolution could be reconsidered at a later time during the conference. Bishop advised that there is a standing rule that all resolutions must be properly before us. Ms. Bonnie Williams asked if we had voted to include the other resolutions.

Ms. Ellen Davis asked why we would say that the resolutions are not properly before us. Bishop Holston advised that all resolutions are included; however, the Resolutions Committee must determine whether it is properly before us. The remaining resolutions were not.

The Reverend Mike Vandiver asked if these resolutions could be brought before the body this year. Bishop Holston advised that they could not.

The Reverend Kathryn Hunter stood with a word of thanks to the delegates for reading what was put forth to the delegates. She advised that other Conferences have passed these resolutions.

Ms. Anne Walker of the Hartville District asked why the people who presented resolutions were not told that one person must present them, and not a group. She advised that it is unconscionable. Bishop Holston advised that he couldn't answer the question. There will be an opportunity to present these at another Annual Conference.

The Reverend Paul Wood make a motion to appeal the decision of the Bishop, that resolutions are out of order. Bishop advised that the motions were not eligible to be before

us. The Reverend Wood then asked to appeal the decision of the Committee on Resolutions.

Ms. Janet Gibson, Spartanburg District, they were advised that the resolutions were sent in on time and that the Resolutions committee may need to meet before the deadlines. Ms. Sydney Gatch, Spartanburg District advised that a mistake was made on how the resolutions were made, and the team is ready to move forward.

Bishop dismissed the body for a break until 4 p.m.

Bishop Holston reconvened the body at 3:57 p.m. with the singing of “On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand.” Bishop Holston asked the Reverend Ken Nelson to make special presentations. Rev. Nelson called the Reverend Dr. Larry McCutcheon – the Chaplain of Claflin to present the Ninth president of Claflin University, Dr. Dwaun J. Warmack. Bishop Holston welcomed President Warmack after a standing ovation from the body. The Reverend Smoke Kanipe introduced the Chief Executive Officer of Epworth, Mrs. Beth Williams.

Bishop Holston called on the Reverend Dr. Stephen Love to present the **Report of the Cabinet** on page 132. The Rev. Love thanked the team that helps the Cabinet from behind the scenes – including lay persons and clergy. “We are on the same team, and we have the same leader: Episcopal and Jesus! Dr. Love presented the report for approval. Bishop Holston called for approval. The report was unanimously approved.

Bishop Holston invited Ms. Barbara Ware to provide the **Report of the Conference Lay Leader** on pages 62-64 of the conference materials. Ms. Ware introduced members of her team, and expressed appreciation, including the United Women in Faith, United Methodist Men, and the Youth Leaders. She advised that three new District Lay Leaders would be welcomed this year. She submitted the report to the Bishop for approval. Bishop called for approval. The report was unanimously approved.

Bishop Holston invited the Rev. Morris Waymer to provide the **Report of the Board of Ordained Ministry**. Rev. Waymer directed the body to pages 78–79 of the conference materials. Rev. Waymer presented the provisional elders and deacons and the ordained deacons and elders (see the list provided for the Commissioning and Ordination Service). In response to business question 13 – the answer is yes, except for matters previously handled in the Clergy Session. Rev. Waymer presented the report to the Bishop for approval. Bishop called for a vote, and the report was unanimously approved.

Reverend Morris Waymer asked Bishop if the licensing service could commence. Bishop Holston agreed. The body sang an opening hymn, “A Charge to Keep I Have.” Ms. Barbara Ware came forth to share with Rev. Waymer in the presentation of licensing. The following persons were presented for licensing:

Christopher Jason Allen, George Judson Barnes, Robert Leonard Brock, William Joel Campbell, Jeffrey Paul Cila, Athena Nesmith, Dickey-Cathcart, James Pearlie Creel, Jr., Henry James Dixon, Jr., Mark Edward English, Gary Wade Finch, Rachel Elizabeth Headoon, Janice Hayes Holliday, Karen Hail Jones, Steven Robert Laphan, Gary Wayne Light, Gary Newton Love, Thomas Marvin McCoy, Sean Michael O’Neil, Frankie Dean Owens, Jeremy Nathaniel Phipps, Ruth Anne Pitt, John Sterling Poole, Richard Arnold Powell, James Weldon Pressley, Terri Overlees, Schell James, Keith Sellers, James Edward Taylor, Patrick John Taylor, Marvin Taylor, Jr., Brenda Lee Toms, Nelson Keith Yates

Bishop Holston invited Dr. James Salley to come forward to present an update on **Africa University**, found on pages 139–140 of the conference materials. Dr. Salley presented a slide presentation which answered the question: “Can anything good come out of Africa?” The answer is - YES! Dr. Salley offered the following statistics:

- 30 years of impactful ministries.
- Bishop Holston is newest member of the Board of Directors.
- Local churches invested 83.73% and S.C Annual Conference has given 100% of the asking.
- \$800,000+ gift for the Fairfield Fund by Epworth Children’s Home.
- 2,791 students – 2022-2023.
- 94.7 % Graduation Rate
- 92% Graduates serving on the continent

- 45+ Buildings and Debt Free

Bishop Holston thanked Dr. Salley for his leadership, and recognized Africa University for graduating more than 1300 persons this weekend! Bishop Holston asked the Reverend Ken Nelson for announcements. Rev. Nelson invited everyone to stay for the Praise and Prayer Service and encouraged everyone to be involved in sharing time with one another after the conference sessions. Bishop Holston gave the body a stand-up break at 4:54 p.m. to prepare for the Evening Worship Service.

At 5:00 p.m. the Evening Praise and Prayer Session convened with the Reverend Kim Moultrie Bryant - 2023 Provisional Deacon in the Charleston District preaching.

Day 3 – Tuesday: The Morning Session

At 7:30 a.m. Holy Communion was administered in room 106.
 Liturgist: the Reverend Norma Bartelle, Local Pastor - Jeremiah & Kennedyville UMCs, Florence District
 Preacher: the Reverend Claire Van Den Berg, 2022 Provisional Elder
 Liberty Chapel-Friendship Charge, Florence District
 Celebrant: Louis Ashley, 2023 Ordained Elder,
 Bethel UMC, Kingstree, Florence District

At 9:00 a.m. Morning Praise and Prayer was held in the conference arena led by the Reverend Cameron Thomas Levi, 2023 Ordained Elder - St. Paul UMC Pastor, Saluda, Greenwood District.

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston began the business session at 9:34 a.m. with the singing of "To God be the Glory!" He then asked the Reverend Kenneth Nelson to guide the body through the testing of VPOLL. After the test, the Reverend Kenneth Nelson advised that VPOLL would not be used, instead hand votes would be used. Bishop Holston offered a brief anecdote about things that don't work, like his father's car that would never work when he was growing up. He let us know that all we have to do is go on and realize that something will eventually work.

The Reverend Cathy Jamieson ask that the conference send greetings to the Reverend Susan Henry-Crowe who will be retiring after 49 years as the Chair of the General Board of Ministry.

Bishop Holston invited Mr. Cassie Watson, co-chair to provide the **Report of the Commission of Equitable Compensation**. He recognized his committee, and then advised that the CEC is recommending a cost-of-living increase of 6% to the minimum salary in 2024. He thanked the churches for support and asked them to help to ensure that Pastors are taking their allotted vacation. Bishop Holston received the report and asked for a vote from the body. The recommendation was unanimously approved.

Bishop Holston called the **Conference Board of Pensions**, Dr. Valerie Brooks-Madden – Chairperson, the Rev. Chris Lollis – Benefits Officer, and the Reverend Rett Haselden, to offer their report. Dr. Brooks Madden directed the body to the report on page 80–109 in the conference materials. She advised that paperless statements would be used in 2024 – going to the Pastor and the church treasurer each month. Rev. Lollis offered highlights of changes that will occur in 2024. Page 80 – line 6 a 6% increase. 2024 retiree moving will be increased to \$2,000. Slight changes in 2024 to the medical benefits. The health benefit fee that the churches pay will increase in 2024 – see page 86 line 17. He thanked Dr. Valerie Brooks-Madden for her leadership, his staff for their support, and Mrs. Beth Westbury for her expertise. Bishop Holston asked for a vote to receive the report. The Report was unanimously approved.

The Conference Secretary, Rev. Ken Nelson advised the body to watch videos regarding UMCOR and Discipleship Ministries. Bishop Holston offered thanks to the SC ERT teams – tornado came through Griffin, Georgia, and assisted families, included the Bishop and Lady Holston's family.

Reverend Nelson thanked the conference for offerings \$6,680 – Sunday, and \$8,465 on Monday.

Bishop Holston invited the Reverend Millie Nelson Smith – Director of Connectional Ministries and the Reverend Ross Chellis – Convener, to come forward to present the **Conference Connectional Ministries Report** beginning on page 54. She thanked those who are involved with Connectional Ministries in any way. She highlighted the work of UMCOR and their disaster recovery efforts. Rev. Nelson Smith congratulated award recipients. She then invited the Congregational Specialists and her support team to stand and to be recognized. She recognized Gail Corn who will be retiring after 30 years of service. Bishop Holston presented the report to the body for approval. The report was unanimously approved.

The Reverend Kenneth Nelson guided the body to watch videos concerning Global Ministries and the General Board of Higher Education.

At 10:38 a.m. Bishop Holston adjourned the conference for a break.

Bishop Holston reconvened the conference at 11:11 a.m. with the singing of “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms.” After a “Praise Break” Bishop Holston reminded us that every now and then we must take a break to thank God for WHO HE IS and for what He continues to do in our midst! He then invited Judge Jackie Jenkins to offer **the Report of the General and Jurisdictional Delegation**. Judge Jenkins offered thanks to Bishop Holston, Lady Holston and to the delegation. The delegation was invited to the stage. Judge Jenkins offered her report. She advised that all thirty-six members of the delegation and alternates were present. She advised that three delegates were elected bishops including our very own, the Reverend Dr. Robin Dease who has been assigned the Episcopal leadership of the North Georgia Conference. The other elected Bishops included: the Reverend Tom Berlin and Reverend Connie Shelton. Bishop Holston has been reappointed to the SC Annual Conference. From April 23–May 3, 2024, the General Conference will be held at the Charlotte Convention Center – 8 clergy and 8 lay persons will represent our conference. She recognized the delegates individually. She invited the Reverend Kenneth Nelson to come forward to offer remarks. Rev. Nelson offered words of gratitude to the body, with special thanks to Bishop and Lady Holston, to the delegation, and to others. He offered special thanks to his brother Lewis who was there for him, and to James Watson who said, never let a moment like this define you. He advised that there is work to be done in the church. We don’t have time to play small or to be bitter when we can be better. Judge Jenkins asked for the prayers of the body. Bishop Holston asked the body for their approval of the report. The report was unanimously approved.

Bishop Holston called upon the Reverend Joseph James to present the **Report of the Committee on Nominations**. Rev. James offered the report to the Bishop to present to the body for approval. The report was unanimously approved.

Bishop invited the Reverend Joseph Kovas to present the **Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry Report**. Rev. Kovas invited the body to visit the special needs homes around the Conference to get an understanding of the importance of this ministry. Bishop Holston thanked Rev. Kovas and his team for their work.

Bishop Holston invited the body to watch a video concerning Africa University. He bid safe travel to Dr. James Salley who will be soon leaving to return to Africa.

The Reverend Roger Grambling stood to ask to present a motion to move that prior to the 2024 AC that an amendment to standing rules 70 be made to review all resolutions made to the Annual Conference to determine that such resolutions are properly before the body for approval, and if not that the resolution would be returned for revision before an assigned deadline. Bishop Holston asked for a speech against. None was presented. Bishop called for a vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

Bishop Holton turned to the Reverend Kenneth Nelson for announcements. Rev. Nelson advised that materials would be distributed to voting members: those in the bar with Red, White, or Blue name badges. Following the distribution of the Resolution of the Board of Trustees Bishop Holston invited the Rev. Terry Fleming to offer a prayer before the lunch break. The body was adjourned for lunch break at 11:55 a.m.

Bishop reconvened the conference at 2:03 p.m. with the singing of "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing!" He asked the Reverend Kenneth Nelson for any announcements. Rev. Nelson asked Mrs. Holston to come to the stage and he presented her with a bouquet of flowers from the conference, with words of thanks! Bishop Holston invited the Chancellor, Ms. Kay Crowe to present the **Report of the Chancellor**. She advised that the report is in the printed materials and asked that it be moved to record. Bishop Holston asked the body if they would approve it, and it was unanimously approved.

Bishop Holston invited Ms. Crowe to explain the discernment process for disaffiliation. She explained that the Conference Trustees developed a process wherein the church council of the local church could request a church conference with the District Superintendent. Following a 30-day discernment period, a vote of 2/3 of the church council could vote for disaffiliation. An amount equal to 10% of the appraised value and any unpaid apportionments and current apportionments, and an additional 12 months of apportionments, and all unpaid salaries, and a withdrawal liability for any unpaid pensions would be required, as well as provision for any cemeteries to be transferred to cemetery association. The churches listed on the Resolution of the Board of Trustees have met said criteria. Ms. Crowe called upon the Rev. Dr. Stephen Love to speak on behalf of the Board of Trustees and to affirm that the decisions made by the local churches listed affirm the missional needs of the churches. The Rev. Mike Wood, chair of the Conference Trustees affirmed that the churches have completed all requirements for separation as per the *Book of Discipline*. Bishop Holston advised that the vote would require a simple majority vote. Prior to the vote additional hand outs were provided to voting members who had not previously received them.

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
THE SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE OF
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO RATIFY AND APPROVE
THE CLOSURE OF THE BELOW LISTED CHURCHES.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Church (District/Town) GCFA#

St Andrew (Anderson/Easley) 270508
Chiquola (Anderson/Honea Path) 270598
Bells (Anderson/Abbeville) 270634
Salem (Anderson/Salem) 271148
Aldersgate (Charleston/North Charleston) 271365
Charleston Korean (Charleston/N Charleston) 271651
Friendship (Charleston/Cross) 271731
Pinopolis (Charleston/Pinopolis) 271924
Point Hope (Charleston/Mt Pleasant) 279758
Columbia Korean (Columbia/Columbia) 272280
Rehoboth/Leesville (Columbia/Batesburg Leesville) 272531
Chapin (Columbia/Chapin) 272677
Lebanon (Columbia/Eastover) 272768
Mt Horeb (Columbia/Lexington) 272930
Pond Branch (Columbia/Gilbert) 273023
Cades (Florence/Cades) 275660
Cameron (Florence/Lake City) 275795
First/Hemingway (Florence/Hemingway) 275820
St Paul/Coward (Florence/Coward) 275831
Ebenezer (Florence/Hemingway) 275842
Old Johnsonville (Florence/Johnsonville) 275933
Mt Vernon (Florence/Greeleyville) 275955
Prospect (Florence/Pamplico) 275990
Lane (Florence/Lane) 276004
Liberty Chapel (Florence/Florence) 276026
New Zion (Florence/New Zion) 276061
Pine Grove/Timmonsville (Florence/Timmonsville) 276106
Pisgah (Florence/Florence) 276128
Cedar Swamp (Florence/Kingstree) 276130
Millwood (Florence/Kingstree) 276163
Tabernacle (Florence/Pamplico) 276196
Shiloh/Turbeville (Florence/Lynchburg) 276210
Trinity/New Zion (Florence/Alcolu) 276232
Trio (Florence/Salters) 276243
Pine Grove/Turbeville (Florence/Turbeville) 276265
Salem/Timmonsville (Florence/Timmonsville) 276287
Earle (Florence/Andrews) 276334
Suttons (Florence/Andrews) 276345

Church (District/Town) GCFA#

Good Hope (Florence/Hemingway) 276414
St Luke/Kingstree (Florence/Salters) 956923
Dials (Greenville/Gray Court) 273411
Shiloh (Greenville/Gray Court) 273433
Buncombe Street (Greenville/Greenville) 273626
Covenant (Greenville/Greer) 273945
Sharon/Greer (Greenville/Greer) 274107
Zoar/Greer (Greenville/Greer) 274164
Mauldin (Greenville/Mauldin) 274200
Mountain View (Greenville/Taylor) 274222
Hodges (Greenwood/Hodges) 270645
Shiloh (Greenwood/Saluda) 272894
Butler (Greenwood/Saluda) 273125
McCormick (Greenwood/McCormick) 275124
Concord (Hartsville/Bishopville) 280198
Dalzell (Hartsville/Dalzell) 280314
Lewis Chapel (Hartsville/Sumter) 280393
Bethel/Oswego (Hartsville/Sumter) 280462
McLeod Chapel (Hartsville/Rembert) 280520
St John/Rembert (Hartsville/Rembert) 280564
St John/Sumter (Hartsville/Sumter) 280600
St Mark's/Sumter (Broad Street) (Hartsville/Sumter) 280622
St Matthew/Bishopville (Hartsville/Bishopville) 280746
Beulah (Hartsville/Camden) 280781
Trinity/Andrews (Marion/Andrews) 275625
Wayne (Marion/Georgetown) 275784
Bethel/Georgetown (Marion/Andrews) 276447
Aynor (Marion/Aynor) 276505
Rehoboth/Aynor (Marion/Galivants Ferry) 276516
First/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) 276540
Zoan (Marion/Loris) 276551
Antioch/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) 276562
Christ/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) 276584
Pisgah (Marion/Aynor) 276618
Boykin (Marion/Bennettsville) 276653
Trinity/Clio (Marion/Clio) 276664
Pine Grove (Marion/McColl) 276675
Smyrna/Bennettsville (Marion/Bennettsville) 276711
Berea (Marion/McColl) 276733
Main Street/Dillon (Marion/Dillon) 276744
First/Loris (Marion/Loris) 276868
Main Street/McColl (Marion/McColl) 276904
Brown Swamp (Marion/Conway) 276948
Oak Grove/Wallace (Marion/Wallace) 276994
Pleasant Hill/Wallace (Marion/Wallace) 277145
Center (Marion/Mullins) 277191
Tranquil (Marion/Mullins) 277214
Limestone (Orangeburg/Orangeburg) 277817
Ebenezer/Orange Cir (Orangeburg/North) 278025
Cattle Creek (Orangeburg/Rowesville) 278060
Grace Community (Rock Hill/Fort Mill) 270862
Capers Chapel (Rock Hill/Chester) 278151
Catawba (Rock Hill/Catawba) 278162
New Hope/Chester (Rock Hill/Chester) 278173
Armenia (Rock Hill/Chester) 278242
Mt Vernon (Rock Hill/Hickory Grove) 278388
Bethel/Lancaster (Rock Hill/Lancaster) 278754
Wesley Chapel (Spartanburg/Union) 278457
Liberty/Campobello (Spartanburg/Landrum) 279097
Buffalo (Spartanburg/Buffalo) 279100
Campobello (Spartanburg/Campobello) 279111
Carlisle (Spartanburg/Carlisle) 279122

Church (District/Town) GCFA#

Bethlehem/Jonesville (Spartanburg/Union) 279350
Sardis/Union (Spartanburg/Union) 279417
Fosters Chapel (Spartanburg/Jonesville) 279428
Lyman (Spartanburg/Lyman) 279485
Roebuck (Spartanburg/Roebuck) 279656
Reidville Road (Spartanburg/Moore) 279691
Walnut Grove (Spartanburg/Roebuck) 279907
Tillman (Walterboro/Tillman) 271695
Cottageville (Walterboro/Cottageville) 271720
Cypress (Walterboro/Ridgeville) 271775
Mt Tabor (Walterboro/Ridgeville) 271797
Trinity/Ridgeville (Walterboro/Ridgeville) 271833
St Paul/Ridgeland (Walterboro/Ridgeland) 271968

Adopted and approved this 6th day of June, 2023.

I have reviewed this resolution and I consent.

Kenneth L. Nelson, Conference Secretary
South Carolina Conference of
The United Methodist Church

Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop
South Carolina Conference of
The United Methodist Church.

The Reverend Kenneth Nelson asked for a prayer for Rev. Steven McNeal and Ms. Mary Ann, both of whom who are not feeling well. Bishop Holston offered the prayer for their healing.

The Reverend John Culp stood to make a speech. He commended the African American Churches for remaining loyal to The United Methodist Church. The Reverend Carol Cannon stood to make a speech. She asked that each name listed be read aloud. The Reverend Mike Wood read the names aloud. Bishop Holston called upon the Reverend Jim Toole to make a speech. He asked how the clergy would be reassigned. Is there a plan? What is the process for affirming those who leave? Bishop Holston advised that clergy will have until June 30th to make the decision whether they will stay or leave, after that time the Cabinet will make appropriate decisions. The Reverend Michael Rouse made a speech concerning the Uniting Ceremony in 1969, and how the spirit in which the churches were united should be the same at this time. The Reverend Fran Connell stood to make a speech. She said that this is a time of grief and sorrow. She asked that for a word of prayer for God to lead us through this time of change. Bishop Holston advised that prayer. The Reverend Tommy Wilkes made a speech. He asked if churches can come back later. Bishop advised that those requests would be considered individually. The Reverend Kim Strong stood to make a speech. Rev. Strong advised that God is still in control. The Reverend Joseph James stood to make a speech. He asked if there is a way to say goodbye in a worshipful manner. The Reverend Mike Evans stood to make a speech. He asked if he could call for the question. The question was seconded. Bishop asked for a vote on calling the question. It was unanimously approved. Bishop Holston prayed before the vote. He then asked the body if they would vote for the closure of the churches listed if they would stand. He then asked those who would not allow the closure to stand. The report was approved by a simple majority. Bishop Holston prayed after the vote. The Reverend Dr. Larry McCutcheon stood to asked that we show appreciation for those who guided us through the process. The Reverend Tim White stood to offer expressions of gratitude to those who guided his church and others through the process of disaffiliation. The Rev. Mike Wood stood to offer thanks to the Board of Trustees. Rev. Wood asked that the resolution of the Trustees be moved into record. Bishop Holston called for a vote. The resolution was approved. The report of the Board of Trustees was moved into record with unanimous approval of the body.

Bishop Holston asked the Reverend Kenneth Nelson for any announcements. The Reverend Wayne Smith asked if the discernment process remains open. Bishop Holston answered, yes as per the *Book of Discipline*.

Ms. Barbara Gaither stood to invite the United Women in Faith to meet after the adjournment. Bishop Holston adjourned the conference at 3:05 p.m. until the Memorial Service at 5 p.m.

At 5:00 p.m. the body gathered for **A Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving** led by the Reverend Timothy Julian Rogers, Marion District Superintendent. The title of the message was *"They Were Sent – And It Was Beautiful"*. As the Bishop read the following names of the honored dead, a bell was rang in remembrance.

Retired Bishop: Marshall L. (Jack) Meadors, Jr.

Active Ministers: Jerold Dekover McKnight, William McClary Wrighten

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

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

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

Day 4 – Wednesday: The Closing Session

At 7:30 a.m. Holy Communion was shared in room 106. The Liturgist: Rev. Gerald Clinkscales, Local Pastor - Crossroads-Martha's Chapel-Mays Charge, Saluda/Ninety-Six, Greenwood District; the Preacher: the Reverend Margaret Wilkes, Deacon - Clemson United Methodist Church, Anderson District; and the Celebrant: Rev Amanda Richardson, 2023 Ordained Elder - Johnston-Harmony Charge, Johnston, Greenwood District

At 9:00 a.m. the conference gathered for Morning Praise and Prayer led by the Reverend Tae Suk Park, 2022 Ordained Elder - Associate Pastor, Surfside UMC, Marion District.

At 9:26 a.m. Bishop Holston called the body to order with the singing of "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations," followed by videos concerning the United Methodist Men and the United Women of Faith. Bishop Holston expressed thanks to the Florence District for their hospitality.

The Reverend Kenneth Nelson directed the body to the Consent Calendar. Bishop Holston called for a vote on the Consent Calendar, and it was unanimously passed. Bishop Holston called upon the Reverend Fran Elrod to present the Resolutions to Church Closing and Charge Line Change. She offered the resolution declaring the closure of three churches – see pages 159–160: Lockhart United Methodist Church, Union, SC, Spartanburg District; Bowers Chapel, Florence, Florence District, Union, Spartanburg District.

Mr. Pinckney Samuel Weber, III "Sammy" Weber stood to speak concerning Lockhart UMC. He provided a history of Lockhart UMC. His grandfather was one of the founders and he will be one of the last members.

The Reverend Mary Nichols spoke concerning the people of Unity UMC. She offered a word of love for the congregation that she has been proud to serve.

Bishop Holston offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the churches. He then presented the resolution to the body for approval. The resolution was unanimously approved.

**A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE AD INTERIM CLOSURE OF
LOCKHART UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
105 North 1st Street, Union, South Carolina 29364
SPARTANBURG DISTRICT
GCFA # 278548**

Whereas Lockhart United Methodist Church located in the Spartanburg District no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized; the local church is no longer financially sustainable by its members, is no longer in a position to foresee such long-term sustainability as well as the ability to be active in the life of the community, declining membership, and inability to sustain a vibrant faith community. The District Superintendent certifies that the procedures as set forth in Section 2549 of *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church (2016) have been complied with.

Whereas there are exigent circumstances present to support the ad interim closure of this church pursuant to section 2549 (3) (b) of The Book of Discipline. These include the need to preserve and protect the building and to preserve the limited and existing funds of the church. The church does not have the means to continue to maintain or insure this property and services will no longer be held at this location after June 18, 2023.

Whereas the Charge conference of Lockhart United Methodist Church voted on March 26, 2023 to request closure on an ad interim basis effective June 18, 2023. All property of Lockhart United Methodist Church shall be transferred to Trustees of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and the District Superintendent of the Spartanburg District and/or any two members of the Conference Board of Trustees are authorized to execute any documents to include any deeds or other legal documents to effectuate this transfer.

Resolved, pursuant to the authority granted to authorize (ad interim) closure of a church under section 2549 (3) (b) of *The Book of Discipline*, the majority of the District Superintendents agree and consent to the closure of this property.

Adopted and approved this 22nd day of March 2023

Rev. Fran Elrod Secretary of the Cabinet of the
South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church

I have reviewed this resolution and I consent.
Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop
South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church

**A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE (AD INTERIM) CLOSURE OF
BOWERS CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
5960 E Old Marion Hwy, Florence, SC 29506
FLORENCE DISTRICT
GCFA # 957940**

Whereas Bowers Chapel United Methodist Church located in the Florence District no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized. The pastor and lay leader report that attendance has decreased to an average of 5-7 persons in worship each week, that giving has decreased to an amount frequently insufficient to cover expenses, including the pastor's salary, and that individuals are unwilling to serve in positions necessary for continuing operations. The District Superintendent certifies that the procedures as set forth in Section 2549 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (2016) have been complied with.

Whereas there are exigent circumstances present to support the (ad interim) closure of this church pursuant to section 2549 (3) (b) of *The Book of Discipline*. These include the need to preserve and protect the building and to preserve the limited and existing funds of the church. The church does not have the means to maintain or insure this property. All property of Bowers Chapel United Methodist Church shall be transferred to Trustees of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and the District Superintendent of the Florence District and/or any two members of the Conference Board of Trustees are

authorized to execute any documents to include any deeds or other legal documents to effectuate this transfer.

Resolved, pursuant to the authority granted to authorize (ad interim) closure of a church under section 2549 (3) (b) of *The Book of Discipline*, the majority of the District Superintendents agree and consent to the closure of this property.

Adopted and approved this 15th day of September, 2022.

Rev. Fran Elrod Secretary of the Cabinet of the
South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church

I have reviewed this resolution and I consent.
Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop
South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

**A RESOLUTION DECLARING CLOSURE OF
UNITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
206 Hart Street, Union SC 29379
SPARTANBURG DISTRICT
GCFA # 279430**

Whereas Union United Methodist Church located in the Spartanburg District no longer serves the purpose for which it was organized; the local church is no longer financially sustainable by its members, is no longer in a position to foresee such long-term sustainability as well as the ability to be active in the life of the community, declining membership, and inability to sustain a vibrant faith community. The District Superintendent certifies that the procedures as set forth in Section 2549 of *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (2016) have been compiled with.

Whereas there are exigent circumstances present to support the closure of this church pursuant to section 2549 (3) (b) of *The Book of Discipline*. These include the need to preserve and protect the building and to preserve the limited and existing funds of the church. The church does not have the means to continue to maintain or insure this property and services will no longer be held at this location after June 30, 2023.

Whereas the Charge conference of Unity United Methodist Church voted on May 9, 2023 to request closure effective June 30, 2023.

All property of Unity United Methodist Church shall be transferred to Trustees of the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and the District Superintendent of the Spartanburg District and/or any two members of the Conference Board of Trustees are authorized to execute any documents to include any deeds or other legal documents to effectuate this transfer.

Resolved, pursuant to the authority granted to authorize closure of a church under section 2549 (3) (b) of *The Book of Discipline*, the majority of District Superintendents agree and consent to the closure of this property.

Adopted and approved this 17th day of May 2023.

Rev. Fran Elrod Secretary of the Cabinet of the
South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church

I have reviewed this resolution and I consent.
Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop
South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The Reverend Fran Elrod the presented the charge line changes found on pages 161 and 162. Rev. Elrod offered thanks to all who worked to prepare the information for us. The report was approved and presented to record.

CHARGELINE CHANGES 2023

ANDERSON DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Chiquola-Donalds Charge
 - a. Make Chiquola (270598) a station church
 - b. Attach Donalds (270612) to Trinity, Honea Path (270667) to form the Trinity-Donalds Charge

FLORENCE DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Elijah-St. Luke Charge
 - a. Make Elijah (957142) a station church
 - b. Make St. Luke, Salters (956923) a station church
2. Dissolve the Liberty-Friendship Charge
 - a. Make Friendship (276174) a station church
 - b. Make Liberty Chapel (276026) a station church
3. Dissolve the Pamplico-Prospect Charge
 - a. Make Pamplico (276083) a station church
 - b. Make Prospect (275990) a station church

GREENVILLE DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Bramlett Charge
 - a. Make Bramlett (273400) a station church
 - b. Make Gray Court (273524) a station church

HARTSVILLE DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Kellybell-Sandy Bluff Charge
 - a. Make Kellybell (953383) a station church
 - b. Make Sandy Bluff (959208) a station church
2. Dissolve the Mount Beulah-New Hope Charge
 - a. Make Mount Beulah (953430) a station church
 - b. Make New Hope (956103) a station church
3. Dissolve the Oswego Circuit
 - a. Make Clark (953565) a station church
 - b. Mount Moriah(953576) and Saint Mark (959094) to continue as the Oswego Circuit
4. Dissolve the New Market-Tabernacle Charge
 - a. Remove Tabernacle (280724) from the Darlington (Hartsville District) Cooperative Parish
 - b. Make New Market (280132) a station church
 - c. Make Tabernacle (280724) a station church

MARION DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Bethel-Ebenezer Charge
 - a. Make Bethel (276972) a station church
 - b. Make Ebenezer (276835) a station church
2. Dissolve the Shiloh –Smyrna Charge
 - a. Make Shiloh (276755) a station church
 - b. Make Smyrna (276711) a station church
3. Dissolve the Marlboro Circuit
 - a. Make New Hope (276755) a station church
 - b. Make Oak Grove (276711) a station church

ORANGEBURG DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Orange Circuit
 - a. Make Ebenezer (278025) a station church
 - b. Attach North (278071) to Trinity (278047) to form the North Circuit
2. Dissolve the Trinity-Limestone Charge
 - a. Make Limestone (277817) a station church
 - b. Attach Trinity (278047) to North (278071) to form the North Circuit
3. Dissolve the Rowesville Charge
 - a. Make Cattle Creek (278060) a station church
 - b. Make Bethel (278058) a station church

ROCK HILL DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Bethel-Armenia Charge
 - a. Make Bethel (287184) a station church
 - b. Make Armenia (278242) a station church
2. Dissolve the Chester Circuit

- a. Make Capers Chapel (278151) a station church
- b. Make New Hope (278173) a station church
- c. Make Wesley Memorial (278220) a station church
- 3. Dissolve the Hickory Grove Charge
 - a. Make Canaan (278390) a station church
 - b. Make Mount Vernon (278388) a station church
- 4. Dissolve the Tabernacle-Bethel Charge
 - a. Make Tabernacle (278413) a station church
 - b. Make Bethel (278754) a station church
- 5. Dissolve the Catawba-El Bethel Charge
 - a. Make Catawba (278162) a station church
 - b. Make El Bethel (278231) a station church

SPARTANBURG DISTRICT

- 1. Dissolve the Ben Avon-Roebuck Charge
 - a. Make Ben Avon (279587) a station church
 - b. Make Roebuck (279656) a station church
- 2. Dissolve the Whitmire-Carlisle Charge
 - a. Make Whitmire (278801) a station church
 - b. Make Carlisle (279122) a station church

WALTERBORO DISTRICT

- 1. Dissolve the Cottageville Charge
 - a. Make Rehoboth (271412) a station church
 - b. Make Cottageville (271720) a station church
- 2. Dissolve the St. Paul-Tillman Charge
 - a. Make St. Paul (271968) a station church
 - b. Make Tillman (271695) a station church
- 3. Dissolve the Ridgeville Charge
 - a. Make Mt. Tabor (271797) a station church
 - b. Make Trinity (271833) a station church
 - c. Make Cypress (271775) a station church

ADDITIONAL CHARGELINE CHANGES 2023

(see pages 161-162 Other Charge Line Changes)

FLORENCE DISTRICT

- 1. Dissolve the Cades-Cameron Charge
 - a. Make Cades (275660) a station church
 - b. Make Cameron (275795) a station church
- 2. Dissolve the Ebenezer-First Charge
 - a. Make Ebenezer (275842) a station church
 - b. Make First, Hemingway (275820) a station church
- 3. Dissolve the Kingstree Circuit
 - a. Make Cedar Swamp (276130) a station church
 - b. Make Millwood (276163) a station church
- 4. Dissolve the New Zion Charge
 - a. Make New Zion (276061) a station church
 - b. Make Trinity (276232) a station church
- 5. Dissolve the Pine Grove-Salem Charge
 - a. Make Pine Grove (276106) a station church
 - b. Make Salem Charge (276287) a station church
- 6. Dissolve the Trio Charge
 - a. Make Trio (276243) a station church
 - b. Make Earle (276334) a station church
 - c. Make Sutton (276345) a station church
- 7. Dissolve the Turbeville Charge
 - a. Make Pine Grove (276265) a station church
 - b. Make Shiloh (276210) a station church
- 8. Close Bowers Chapel (957940) (ad-interim closure 9/15/22)

GREENVILLE DISTRICT

- 1. Dissolve the St. John-McBee Chapel Charge
 - a. Make McBee Chapel (273741) a station church

- b. Make St. John (273832) a station church

SPARTANBURG DISTRICT

1. Dissolve the Lockhart-Wesley Chapel
 - a. Close Lockhart (278548) (effective 6/18/2023)
 - b. Make Wesley Chapel (278457) a station church
2. Close Unity (279430)

Bishop Holston called the Reverend Mitch Houston to present the Council on Finance and Administration Report. He presented the budget for 2024. He thanked the Bishop for his wisdom and support. He recognized the CF&A Team for their work, as well as pastors and lay members. He advised that 89.22% of apportionments were paid. The largest percentage increase. The largest apportionments paid went to the Orangeburg District. The recommended budget was reduced by \$2.4M. He advised that we lost \$2.3M from the separating churches; however, these churches paid assessments prior to separation – this will offset the amount lost. He referred the body to the budget on page 30. He advised that churches may not see an increase or a decrease in apportionments in the coming years due to the disaffiliation of churches. The Reverend Houston provided the following statistics:

- 89.22% Apportionments Paid.
- Largest percentage point increase – 3.8% Hartsville District
- Orangeburg District – Highest rate of apportionments paid – 98.8%.
- Reduced by \$2,212,000. Lost \$2.3 million from separating churches. Report in detail can be found on pp. 23ff.
- Budget \$13,286,000 (cut 15%)

Ms. Anne Walker – Trinity, Sumter, and representative of the Alston Wilkes Society, invited everyone to look at page 57 – advance specials. She thanked everyone for their support of the advance specials. The Reverend Joseph Huggins presented a motion to direct funds to the Epworth Children’s Home in light of the disaffiliation. The motion was seconded. He advised that the local church has been the backbone of Epworth, and that portions of the disaffiliation fees should be set aside for Epworth. Bishop Holston asked Rev. Houston to speak to how the funds will be used. Rev. Houston advised that this is the responsibility of the Trustees, and not CF&A. The Reverend Tim Rogers stood to speak concerning the direction of the Trustees by the Annual Conference. Per paragraph 2549, Bishop Holston advised that this is correct, that a motion cannot be made for the Annual Conference to direct the Trustees.

Mr. Andy Morris, Greenwood district asked if districts and administrative staffs will be reduced. He made a motion to reduce the districts by two. The motion was made and seconded. Rev. Houston advised that discussions were had pertaining to reducing districts; however, it’s not clear to CF&A about reducing districts at this time. He advised that they don’t have the authority to determine the number of districts. Bishop Holston advised that two-thirds vote of the Annual Conference would be required to make this change; however, he would suggest that we give the Cabinet and others within the Conference time to make the decisions. Rev. Houston made a speech against the action. Mr. John Gibbon, Salem UMC, Irmo called the question. Bishop Holston advised that he need to call for additional speeches before the question can be called. Ms. Rosa Kennelly Dance. She advised that nothing can be done this spontaneously. She spoke against the action until the process can be established. Bishop Holston asked for a vote on the question. It was approved. Bishop Holston called for a vote to approve the motion. The motion was not approved.

Mr. John Pool made an appeal to support the Charleston Wesley Foundation. Ms. Debbie Conner, Chair of Coastal Wesley stood to make a speech concerning supporting Wesley Foundations so that young people are supported and directed back to the local church. Bishop Holston asked for approval of the budget. The budget was unanimously approved. Bishop Holston advised the body to check ourselves individually to determine if we are being faithful to our vow to support our church with our tithes.

The Rev. Michael Bingham, Greenwood District, asked for a point of personal privilege. He thanked everyone for supporting the Wesley Foundation. He testified that his daughter received life-giving support! She just graduated from Valdosta State last month and just accepted a new job.

The Reverend Kenneth Nelson presented two videos: COSROW and the Black College Fund. The Reverend Kenneth Nelson presented a motion to set the date and location for the Annual Conference: June 9–12, 2024; TD Convention Center in Greenville, SC. Bishop Holston called for a vote on the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The Reverend Kenneth Nelson called Mr. Jonathan Brashier, VP of Sales – Visit Greenville, SC to greet the body.

Rev. Nelson directed the body to all of the persons listed on page 39 of the worship booklet and celebrated their contributions. The Reverend Kenneth Nelson offered the following Omnibus Motion: That any reports, nominations, or recommendations printed and distributed in the conference materials or distributed on the floor during the Annual Conference Session not previously acted upon be accepted and moved to record and that following the completion of The Fixing of the Appointments, that this 2023 Session of the South Carolina Annual Conference be adjourned sine die.

At 10:44 a.m., Bishop Holston adjourned the conference for a 10-minute break to prepare for the closing worship service and fixing of appointments.

At 11:30 a.m. the body reconvened for the Sending Forth and Fixing of the Appointments. Bishop Holston concluded the conference with a sermon based on the feeding of the 5,000 in Matthew's Gospel. He invited the body to not send the hungry away, but for each of us to be determined to feed them in whatever way that we can. Bishop Holton recognized Mr. Sharome and Mrs. Stephanie Henry who are in Charleston so that Stephanie can receive the gift of a new kidney! Bishop Holston recognized birthdays. Bishop Holston ensured that all participants received a copy of the appointments.

Bishop Holston called upon Barbara Ware, the Conference Lay Leader to stand with him as the appointments are fixed. The appointments are outlined on the Ministerial Appointments Booklet which was distributed by the Tellers to all of the conference delegates. Each District Superintendent offered the following:

Anderson District, the Reverend Steve Patterson, Jeff Fogle – Lay Leader, the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Charleston District, the Reverend Sandra Stephens-Poirel, Mr. Geillis McCallister – Lay Leader, correction: Knightsville, Summerville – delete $\frac{3}{4}$ of time signature. The listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Columbia District, the Reverend Fran Elrod, Mr. Michael Jennings – Lay Leader: page 8 – one additional, add Rev. Fadetra Herrington Boyd as chaplain at Columbia College. the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Florence District – The Reverend Terry Fleming, Mr. Tracy Johnson – Lay Leader. the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Greenville District – The Reverend James Dennis, the Honorable Chandra Dillard – Lay Leader. Correction: page 14, the Rev. Christopher Brian Gilmer – 1 year instead of 11. The listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Greenwood District – The Reverend Stephen Love, Mr. Tony Watson – Lay Leader. the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Hartsville, District – The Reverend Telley L. Gadson, Conference Lay Leader stood in for her Lay Leader. the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Marion District – Rev. Tim Rogers – Outgoing District Superintendent, Rev. Steven Lee Brown – Incoming District Superintendent, Myrtle Beach – add the Reverend Jim Creele $\frac{1}{4}$ appointment. the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Orangeburg District – Rev. Kenneth Nelson, Ms. Sheila Shankner – Lay Leader; the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Rock Hill District – Rev. Dr. Anthony Hodge, Mr. Bob James – Lay Leader, the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Spartanburg District – Rev. Kathy Mitchell, Mr. Rick Hammet – Lay Leader, the listed appointments, page 29 – delete William Rochester, insert Stephen Lapham, remove Cecil Enlow, and replace with TBS, Pg. 30 delete Martha Timmons under extension ministries, remove TBS with Michael Chad Ponder, include a student pastor Grayson Fallow; with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Walterboro District – Rev. Joseph McDonnel, Mr. Wally Coal – Lay Leader; the listed appointments, with the exception of the churches that chose to leave the conference, are fixed.

Bishop Holston fixed the appointments, and offered the following charge as printed in the worship guide: “God calls us to a shared ministry of Christ’s Holy Church, as we leave this place, we go to be disciples and to make disciples for the transformation of the world. He asked the clergy: will we go where we are sent? The Clergy responded affirmatively as printed in the worship guide. He asked if the laity would affirm the appointments. The Laity responded affirmatively as printed in the worship guide.
