

SECTION VII
**REPORTS OF COUNCILS, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES,
AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

THE COUNCIL ON FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Recommendations to the 2023 Annual Conference

Each and every disciple of Christ is called to be stewards of the blessings from God. On behalf of the Council on Finance and Administration, I want to thank all United Methodists in South Carolina for their generosity in 2022. We achieved a 89.22% collection rate on apportionments. We praise God for our churches and the way they continue to positively respond to the various challenges we face. We celebrate the Orangeburg District for collecting the highest percentage at 98.23%. The largest percentage point increase was in the Hartsville District at 3.83.

The following pages outline the complete ministry funding plan for our South Carolina Annual Conference for calendar year 2024. The Council has sought to prepare this document with deep prayer and faithful reflection. The Council is aware that the target is to have a budget at or around 15% of total Conference average net funds. We are happy to report that this percentage has been below the 15% target rate since 2020.

The recommended budget for 2024 is reduced by \$2,412,015 and is estimated to be 13.9% of average net funds. This significant reduction is to reflect the apportionments estimated to be lost because of our Conference's separating churches. The Council is recommending in its budget that the General Church apportionments be reduced by 15%. The rationale for the reduction is (1) to reflect the approximate reduction that would have occurred if the general church's budget request for the 2020 General Conference had been approved and (2) to reflect that the South Carolina Conference has been slower to disaffiliate/separate churches than other conferences which has resulted in the South Carolina Conference bearing a larger share of the general church's budget.

We appreciate the service of Mrs. Elizabeth (Beth) Westbury and her dedicated staff. I am also constantly grateful for the devoted work of every lay and clergy member of the Council on Finance and Administration. They attend, interact, debate and support the work of the Council in a most faithful and dependable manner. We add our thanks to Bishop Jonathan Holston for his continued support and leadership.

May God continue to bless and guide all the ministries of our beloved SC Annual Conference!

*The Reverend Mitch Houston, President,
Council on Finance and Administration*

Report No. 1

- A. The compensation for the District Superintendents for the year 2024 will be set at \$107,681, a 0% increase. (DS compensation for 2023 is 107,681 and for 2022 was \$104,545.) In accordance with paragraphs 613.13 and 614.1a of the *2016 Book of Discipline*, housing for each superintendent shall be provided in the form of a parsonage, funded by the respective district as provided in paragraph E below.
- B. The Council on Finance and Administration of the South Carolina Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church, hereby designates 15% (\$16,152) of the district superintendent's salary for the year 2024 as allocated for parsonage utilities and maintenance ("utility exclusion"), not including expenses paid by the district. Any subsequent changes to the utilities exclusion that may be requested by an individual may be approved by the Treasurer on behalf of the Council on Finance and Administration.
- C. The District Administration Fund will be handled as follows:
 - 1) The item "Office Expense" in the District Administration Fund will be for the operation of the District Office to pay such items as secretary, postage, and supplies and will be set at \$21,000 per district.
 - 2) Exceptions: Inasmuch as the Columbia District Office must be in The United Methodist Center, one-half of that office rent will be paid from the Conference Expense Fund. Inasmuch as the Columbia District superintendent is designated

as the Cabinet secretary, one-half of the salary and benefits of the secretary in that office will be paid from the Conference Expense Fund.

- 3) Travel (in and out-of-district) is set at \$170,000 for the total of all districts, which includes \$8,000 for the common lodging and meal expenses of retreats. This will be set at \$13,500 per district or an allocated amount set by the Cabinet not to exceed a total of \$162,000. District superintendents will be reimbursed for actual meal and hotel expenses (not per diem) when reasonable in amount and supported by a detailed receipt. In addition, insurance & pensions is expected to be approximately \$331,500 (\$27,625 per district), and continuing education will be set at the amount recommended by the Commission on Equitable Compensation (currently at \$750 per superintendent).
- 4) Vouchers for continuing education must be approved prior to payment. The unused portion of the Continuing Education allowance may be carried forward from year to year during a district superintendent's tenure, not to exceed a total amounting to three year's Continuing Education allocation. The accumulation is cancelled in full when a district superintendent leaves the superintendency. It does not carry forward to the new district superintendent. However, by application to the CF&A in advance of leaving the superintendency, the district superintendent may within a reasonable length of time use the unused portion of the Continuing Education allowance to take training that would assist in his/her return to the parish ministry or other appointment. For the year in which there is a move, one-half of the Continuing Education allowance will be available for each superintendent.
- 5) The funds for program in each district are based on the membership of the district, beginning with a base of \$2,800 for the smallest membership district and adding \$100 for each one thousand (1,000) members, or major fraction thereof, above 18,000. These funds are not guaranteed and are contingent upon the apportionment receipts and other requirements of the district administration fund. The schedule for 2024 will be as follows:

District	2022 Membership	Amount
Anderson	11,852	\$ 2,800
Charleston	21,090	\$ 3,100
Columbia	33,058	\$ 4,300
Florence	15,044	\$ 2,800
Greenville	20,292	\$ 3,000
Greenwood	13,369	\$ 2,800
Hartsville	15,521	\$ 2,800
Marion	18,124	\$ 2,800
Orangeburg	15,057	\$ 2,800
Rock Hill	14,921	\$ 2,800
Spartanburg	12,518	\$ 2,800
Walterboro	12,467	\$ 2,800
Totals	203,313	\$35,600

- D. Each District Board of Trustees shall administer all funds for the District Parsonage Fund, which provides funds for parsonage payments, repairs, insurance and furnishings (not to include parsonage utility payments). The moving expenses of an in-coming district superintendent may also be paid from the District Parsonage Fund, not to include more than \$350 packing expenses. To comply with the change in tax law effective January 1, 2018 whereby reimbursements of moving expenses become taxable compensation to the recipient, the amount of reimbursement will be included in the district superintendent's taxable income as reported on Form W-2. Reimbursements of moving expenses for district superintendents shall be paid without the benefit of a gross up for taxes. Each district office shall provide its trustees with regular reports of all receipts and expenditures of the District Parsonage Fund.
- E. Below are the percentages of average net funds that each church is asked to pay to its respective District Parsonage/Office Fund:

District	Parsonage	Office	Ministry Initiatives	Total	Avg. Net Funds
Anderson	40,000	45,000		85,000	.012364
Charleston	25,000	40,000		65,000	.006382
Columbia	25,000	35,000		60,000	.004213
Florence	30,000	40,000		70,000	.010329
Greenville	30,000	35,000		65,000	.008053

Greenwood	40,000	40,000		80,000	.011307
Hartsville	40,000	40,000		80,000	.011118
Marion	10,000	40,000		50,000	.005329
Orangeburg	25,000	30,000		55,000	.007925
Rock Hill	15,000	35,000		50,000	.006957
Spartanburg	35,000	25,000		60,000	.009115
Walterboro	10,000	30,000	25,000	65,000	.011944
Total	325,000	435,000	25,000	785,000	

Report No. 2

- A. We recommend that the following special observances be a part of the program of each local church and that appropriate free-will offerings be received.
- Human Relations Day – January 14, 2024
 - Golden Cross Sunday – February 4, 2024
 - UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing) – March 10, 2024
 - Native American Awareness Sunday – April 14, 2024
 - Peace with Justice Sunday – May 26, 2024
 - Epworth Children’s Home
 - Mothers’ Day – May 12, 2024
 - Work Day – September 8, 2024
 - Church school offering first Sunday each month
 - Aldersgate Special Needs Sunday – August 11, 2024
 - Youth Service Fund Sunday – September 15, 2024 (youth offering)
 - World Communion Sunday – October 6, 2024
 - Conference Advance Specials Sunday – November 3, 2024
 - United Methodist Student Day – November 24, 2024
- B. We offer the following:
- 1) That all boards, commissions and committees receiving funds from the conference treasurer shall submit with each voucher adequate supporting data (receipts, bills, contemporaneous travel log, etc.). Payments in excess of \$1,000 should be approved by the Conference Treasurer in advance.
 - 2) That boards, agencies and conference institutions which are allowed to withdraw lump sums from the conference treasurer shall submit an annual audit (with management letter) by a certified public accountant to the Council on Finance and Administration, along with evidence of fidelity insurance coverage and compliance with payroll tax laws.
 - 3) That all boards, commissions and agencies of the conference reimburse persons at a rate of 24 cents per mile when traveling on conference business. In order to encourage carpooling, we recommend that if a car contains two persons traveling on church business, the mileage rate be increased to 32 cents; if a car contains three or more persons all traveling on church business, the rate be increased to 40 cents per mile. Pastors who are members of such agencies should submit reimbursement requests to their appointed church or charge for the difference between their conference reimbursement and the approved IRS mileage rate, since participation in the ministries of the district and conference is an expected responsibility of all appointed pastors. Conference employees will be reimbursed at the approved IRS mileage rate when traveling on church business. We recommend that other expenses for travel on church business be paid. We also recommend that the guideline amount paid to a person for meals shall be \$7.00 for breakfast, \$13.00 for lunch and \$20.00 for the evening meal.
 - 4) That the balance held for each board, commission, committee or agency on the books of the conference treasurer shall be carried forward from one year to the next and that this shall be taken into consideration in the subsequent budget request.
 - 5) That conference boards and agencies may not spend in excess of funds received on budget for the given conference year, except that funds carried forward may be spent in addition to funds received in the current year if such carryover funds were included in the budget presented to CFA. Any expenses beyond the combination of anticipated receipts (based on previous-year percentage of payment) plus budgeted carryover funds will not be paid by the treasurer.

- 6) That “average net funds” as used in the calculation of 2024 apportionments shall mean for each church the two-year average of net funds in the years 2022 and 2021. Newly organized churches will be phased in over four years, but for the years prior to the organization of the new church, the net funds figure will be zero. Satellite churches will be phased in beginning in the first year they do not receive support from Congregational Development. “Net funds” for churches that provide a housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage will exclude the lesser of the actual housing allowance or 25% of the minister’s compensation prior to calculating the church’s average net funds.
- 7) That “net funds” be defined as the total of figures reported on lines 41 through 47 (inclusive) of Table 2 for 2021 and 2022.
- 8) That once the apportionments are calculated from Table 2 statistics for any given year, those apportionments cannot be altered. Needed corrections can be made on Table 2 reports for use in future year calculations by providing written explanation of the correction to the Treasurer.
- 9) Total apportionment funding for Methodist Homes Residents’ Assistance (item 11, Report No. 9) reflects changes in funding as a result of Methodist Oaks being sold to a for-profit entity. Methodist Oaks requested the Conference continue assistance for four individuals in residence there. Based on the monthly assistance requested and the life-expectancy of the individuals, an expected need has been projected. For 2024, the allocation of funds among the participating homes remains the same as in 2023. The recommended allocations are:

	2023	2024
Methodist Oaks	27%	27%
Wesley Commons	50%	50%
Methodist Manor	23%	23%

- 10) That the funds received on the apportionment for Senior College Scholarship Fund (item 9, Report No. 9) be divided in three equal parts, one-third each going to Wofford College, Columbia College and Claflin University; that the funds received on the apportionment for Camps and Retreat Ministries (item 12, Report No. 9) be distributed to the various Camps and Retreat Ministries as determined by the Board of Trustees of the South Carolina United Methodist Camps and Retreat Ministries.
- 11) That the Annual Conference Council on Finance and Administration be authorized to grant amounts from the Conference Contingency Fund or Permanent Reserve to meet any individual emergency or unanticipated need.
- 12) That the salaries and fixed essential expenses of Conference Connectional Ministries (section A-4 of the Conference Benevolences budget) be funded up to 100% of budget by using funds from the Contingency Fund; the remainder of that budget will be funded at the percentage paid on the line item.
- 13) That the salaries and benefits portion of the Campus Ministry budget be funded up to 100% of budget by using funds from the Contingency Fund; the remainder of that budget will be funded at the percentage paid on the line item.
- 14) That the budgets of the District Superintendent Salaries, Director of Administrative Services, the Conference Archivist Contract and the Coordinator of Clergy Services be funded up to 100% of a year end deficit, but not more than the amount budgeted, by using funds from the Contingency Fund.
- 15) The Council on Finance and Administration of the South Carolina Annual Conference, The United Methodist Church, hereby designates 15% of the salary for each conference clergy staff for the year 2024, exclusive of a designated housing allowance, as allocated for utilities and maintenance (“utilities exclusion”), not including maid service. Any subsequent changes to the utilities exclusion that may be requested by an individual may be approved by the Treasurer on behalf of the Council on Finance and Administration.
- 16) That local churches of the conference incorporate. An informational pamphlet prepared by the Conference Chancellor and the Cabinet is available at www.umcsc.org. After incorporation, churches should take care to maintain with the Secretary of State, an accurate, up-to-date record of the name and address of their registered agent.

Report No. 3

As noted in our report to the 2009 Annual Conference, economic uncertainties led to the reduction in apportioned budgets for the Senior Scholarship Fund, Spartanburg Methodist College, and Methodist Homes Residents' Assistance Fund. The trend of reducing the budgets for these significant ministries continues. In an effort to increase the funds available for these ministries without adding to the apportionment budget, the voluntary asking Extra Mile for Colleges and Homes was increased from \$600,284 for 2017 to \$625,000 for 2018. Council recommends the 2024 Extra Mile for Colleges and Homes voluntary asking remain at \$625,000 and allocated as shown below. We ask churches with sufficient resources to continue to support the Extra Mile for Colleges and Homes. However, the Extra Mile funding request will no longer be calculated for churches based on the apportionment formula and included on the bottom of the apportionment statement as a voluntary asking. Removing the Extra Mile pledge is to better communicate that it is a voluntary asking and not linked to apportionment payments.

	2023 Actual	2024 recommendation	Notes for 2024
Senior Scholarship Fund	67%	67%	One-third to each: Clafin University, Columbia College, Wofford College
Methodist Homes	15%	15%	Wesley Commons 70% Methodist Manor 30%
Spartanburg Methodist College	18%	18%	All to Spartanburg Methodist College

Report No. 4

[Reserved for future use.]

Report No. 5

In accordance with the Disciplinary requirement to publish the conference investment policy at least once a quadrennium, CF&A's investment policy is to invest Conference Funds in accordance with the *2016 Discipline paragraph 613.5* and under the additional guidelines:

- A) Forms of investment authorized:
 - 1) short-term United States treasury bills or bonds and bonds of U.S. government agencies,
 - 2) savings or money market accounts that are Federally Insured,
 - 3) certificates of deposit in any Federally Insured savings and loan association, commercial bank, credit union,
 - 4) term notes or demand deposits of The United Methodist Development Fund dba Wesleyan Investive,
 - 5) funds managed by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath),
 - 6) endowments with The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, Inc., or Foundation Investment Management (formerly The United Methodist Church Foundation).
- B) Limitations:
 - 1) no stocks (common or preferred stocks) or real estate may be purchased unless the funds are under the management of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath), The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, Inc., or Foundation Investment Management (formerly The United Methodist Church Foundation).
 - 2) no corporate or municipal bonds may be purchased unless the funds are under the management of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath), The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, Inc. or Foundation Investment Management (formerly The United Methodist Church Foundation).
 - 3) no loans may be made except where authorized by action of the Annual Conference, or as part of an investment of the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath)

- 4) no investments may be made with maturities longer than 36 months, with the exception of term notes with The United Methodist Development Fund dba Wesleyan Investive.
 - 5) no investment may exceed the then-current limit on FDIC or FSLIC insurance without approval of CF&A, with the exceptions of: the primary checking account(s); collateralized certificates; or funds on deposit with The United Methodist Development Fund dba Wesleyan Investive, The General Board of Pension and Health Benefits (Wespath), The South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, Inc., or Foundation Investment Management (formerly The United Methodist Church Foundation).
- C) Income on invested funds will be credited to the Permanent Reserve Fund of the Conference unless the funds are for the Annual Conference Trustees, Equitable Compensation, pension or health benefits, or are invested under a trust or as an endowment.

Report No. 6

Following is a listing of the 2022 Average Net Funds for each district for the total Conference. These are the figures used in the calculation of the 2024 apportionments.

District	2022	District	2022
Anderson	6,874,788	Hartsville	7,195,465
Charleston	10,184,975	Marion	9,382,649
Columbia	14,241,674	Orangeburg	6,939,910
Florence	6,777,188	Rock Hill	7,187,453
Greenville	8,071,938	Spartanburg	6,582,617
Greenwood	7,075,156	Walterboro	5,442,205
TOTAL			95,956,018

Respectfully Submitted,

Mitch Houston, President
 Smith Patterson, Vice-President
 James Bennett, Secretary
 Elizabeth G. Westbury, Treasurer

Report No. 7

The Conference Administration Fund (Item 6, Report No. 9) shall be divided as follows:

Fund	Approved for 2023	Requested for 2024	Recommended for 2024	% Change
1 Contingency Fund	\$ 220,000	\$ 220,000	\$ 100,000	-54.5%
2 Journal Publication	12,063	12,063	7,063	-41.4%
3 Reserved for future use	0	0	0	
4 Director of Administrative Services Office	791,470	791,470	711,470	-10.1%
5 Reserved for future use	0	0	0	
6 Conference Expense Fund	249,223	249,223	249,223	0.0%
7 Administrative Committees	4,900	4,900	4,900	0.0%
8 Conference Secretary	39,287	39,287	39,287	0.0%
9 Methodist Center Trustees	40,206	40,206	35,206	-12.4%
10 Coordinator of Clergy Services	273,790	273,790	273,790	0.0%
11 General Conference Delegates	4,875	4,875	4,875	0.0%
12 Judicial/Administrative Proceedings	11,700	11,700	10,000	-14.5%
TOTALS	\$ 1,647,514	\$ 1,647,514	\$ 1,435,814	-12.8%

Report No. 8

The Conference Benevolences Fund (Item 1, Report No. 9) will be divided as follows:

Fund	Approved for 2023	Requested for 2024	Recommended for 2024	%
				Change
A. Connectional Ministries				
1. Conference Advance Specials				
Ministry Programs	\$ 155,000	\$ 155,000	\$ 155,000	0.0%
Special Salary Supplements	20,500	20,500	20,500	0.0%
Sub-totals (1)	\$ 175,500	\$ 175,500	\$ 175,500	0.0%
2. Board/Agency Programs				
District Councils	\$ 63,000	\$ 23,000	\$ -	-100.0%
Advocacy	45,260	45,260	40,760	-9.9%
Discipleship	62,480	62,480	56,280	-9.9%
Lay Leadership	7,270	7,270	6,543	-10.0%
Outreach	20,000	20,000	18,000	-10.0%
Total Board and Agency Programs (2)	\$ 198,010	\$ 158,010	\$ 121,583	-38.6%
3. Board/Agency Administration	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
4. Operations (100% guaranteed)	\$ 1,559,380	\$ 1,509,380	\$ 1,439,380	-7.7%
5. Communications				
Electronics	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	0.0%
Resource Center	17,000	17,000	17,000	0.0%
Public & Media Relations	35,000	35,000	35,000	0.0%
Sub-totals (5)	\$ 102,000	\$ 102,000	\$ 102,000	0.0%
6. Advocate	\$ 113,000	\$ 110,000	\$ 88,000	-22.1%
Sub-totals (A)	\$ 2,147,890	\$ 2,054,890	\$ 1,926,463	-10.3%
B. Other Conference Agencies				
1. Cabinet Emergency Fund	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,000	0.0%
2. Bishop's Contingency Fund	12,500	12,500	12,500	0.0%
3. Episcopal Office	16,741	28,761	28,761	71.8%
4. Committee on Episcopacy	3,000	3,000	3,000	0.0%
5. Episcopal Residence	23,000	23,000	20,000	-13.0%
6. Archives & History:				
Conference Archivist Contract	29,833	30,727	30,727	3.0%
7. Ordained Ministry				
a) Operations	65,000	20,000	20,000	-69.2% *
b) Career Planning Programs	10,000	10,000	10,000	0.0%
Sub-totals (B)	\$ 192,074	\$ 159,988	\$ 156,988	-18.3%
Total Conference Benevolences	\$ 2,339,964	\$ 2,214,878	\$ 2,083,451	-11.0%

Report No. 9

We recommend that the following funds be apportioned to churches on the basis of percentages of average net funds.

FUND	Approved for 2023	Requested for 2024	Recommended for 2024	% Change
Conference Apportionments:				
1 Conference Benevolences-see Report 8	2,339,964	2,214,878	2,083,451	-11.0%
2 Retiree Health/Transition/Contingency	800,000	200,000	200,000	-75.0%
3 District Superintendents Salary	1,292,176	1,292,176	1,292,176	0.0%
4 Equitable Compensation	565,000	565,000	365,000	-35.4%
5 District Administration	821,822	821,822	746,822	-9.1%
6 Conference Administration-see Report 7	1,647,514	1,647,514	1,435,814	-12.8%
7 Congregational Development	955,708	955,708	855,000	-10.5%
8 Campus Ministry	672,729	682,929	600,000	-10.8%
9 Senior College Scholarships	950,000	950,000	850,000	-10.5%
10 Spartanburg Methodist College	588,018	588,018	488,000	-17.0%
11 Methodist Homes Residents' Assistance	400,000	400,000	375,000	-6.3%
12 Camps & Retreats Ministries	319,800	319,800	284,000	-11.2%
Sub-total	11,352,731	10,637,845	9,575,263	-15.7%
General Church and Jurisdiction Apportionments:				
13 World Service **	2,176,172	2,208,570	1,849,746	-15.0%
14 Episcopal Fund **	644,453	654,047	547,785	-15.0%
15 General Conference Administration **	258,403	262,250	219,643	-15.0%
16 Ministerial Education **	735,010	745,952	624,759	-15.0%
17 Interdenominational Cooperation **	57,483	58,339	48,861	-15.0%
18 Black College **	293,189	297,554	249,211	-15.0%
19 Africa University **	65,614	66,591	55,772	-15.0%
20 Jurisdiction Mission/Ministry #	29,328	29,328	29,328	0.0%
Sub-total	\$ 4,259,652	\$ 4,322,631	\$ 3,625,105	-14.9%
TOTALS	\$ 15,612,383	\$ 14,960,476	\$ 13,200,368	-15.4%
Average Net Funds for Apportionments	\$110,769,534	\$95,956,018	\$95,956,018	
Budget as percentage of Average Net Funds	14.1%	15.6%	13.8%	
Asking: Extra Mile (reference Report No. 3)	625,000	625,000	625,000	

** Line items marked with ** are General Conference apportioned funds.

Line item marked with # is a Southeastern Jurisdictional apportionment.

CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

“Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, people possessed by demons or having epilepsy or afflicted with paralysis, and he cured them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.”

— Matthew 4:23-25

The fourth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew recounts the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, a time when he is going to places where there is a need for hope. As Jesus went and as people came to him, his fame spread. There was something magnetic about Jesus that drew people to him. The further he went, the more people would come to him – and a number of those people left with him.

We all have times – in our personal life, our vocational life, our professional life – when we feel pulled in different directions. It is during these moments that we have to remind ourselves that part of that tug is Jesus drawing us to him. Sometimes, as Jesus pulls, we get dragged along the bottom. We get caught up in some of the nastiness, some of the grime of the world that won’t let go – but ultimately we come free. Then there are times when we are dragged through significant experiences and the world takes hold of us and no matter how hard Jesus may tug on us and say, “No, I’m not letting you go; you’re coming to me,” we can’t seem to get free of the world’s grasp.

Amid all of the seemingly non-stop turmoil and uncertainty about the future, we are reminded of that sensation of being tugged and pulled in all sorts of directions. There is a lot going on in the world in which we do ministry – a lot of distractions that can cause us to take our eye off of our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

But we serve a living God, a God who never gives up on us, a God who is constantly drawing us to him. So, when we feel that strain of the world pulling us away from our mission, let it be a reminder that Jesus is tugging on us, as well, and he will never give up on us.

With faith in the unfailing love of Christ, and confidence in a future filled with hope, Conference Connectional Ministries has stayed the course over the past year in our disciple-making mission. So much was accomplished by our Connectional Ministries staff and volunteers, and so much remains to be done.

Just as we know that God will never give up on us, we will not give up on doing God’s work in a world desperately in need of the saving and comforting love of Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

E. Rossiter Chellis, Convener
Conference Connectional Ministries
erchellis@umcsc.org

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

The work of Connectional Ministries is to serve as the steward of the vision of the Annual Conference – to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We take this work to heart – amid all of the uncertainty, amid all of the distractions, amid all of the sorrow and loss. Making disciples – we continue to center our ministry and mission on that. This is my work, your work, our work together.

Connectional Ministries is here for the local church – equipping and connecting congregations, enabling them to do the important work of making disciples in their communities. We do that through the generous giving of South Carolina United Methodists. We do that through the commitment and dedication of our Connectional Ministries staff. We do that through the countless hours of a multitude of volunteers across the conference, including the members of our Conference Connectional Ministries Team.

Here in the South Carolina Conference, we celebrate our connection through “Our 4 Priorities”: Developing Leaders, Engaging Our Communities, Connecting With and Growing Disciples, and Measuring Realities and Evaluating Missional Possibilities. Hear again these four words: leaders, communities, disciples, possibilities.

What do “Our 4 Priorities” look like in the work of Connectional Ministries? We train and develop lay leaders and church leadership teams. We allocate funding and resources for local churches. We support campus ministries and advocate for justice for the poor and marginalized. We walk alongside local churches as they discern their faithful next steps. We promote congregational health and healthy conflict management. We help keep children and vulnerable adults safe by educating local churches on our Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures.

We affirm clergy health by coordinating Clergy Care resources, retreats and small group experiences. We provide discipleship and worship experiences for youth and young people. We step into the breach alongside local church volunteers when disaster strikes. We provide expertise and support for local churches and other ministries who need assistance with church communications and information technology. We make Christian education resources available to congregations.

We advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion through ministries dedicated to supporting United Methodists from African American, Native American, Asian American and Hispanic/Latino heritages, and other ethnic local church concerns – as well as the status and role of women in the church.

Clearly, there’s a lot that goes into being connectional – and again, none of it would be possible without the prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness of South Carolina United Methodists. Here’s a sampling of the past year’s ministry under the Connectional Ministries umbrella:

- As part of The United Methodist Church’s commitment to keeping our children, youth and vulnerable adults safe – as spelled out in the Scouting bankruptcy settlement – we have updated our Conference Safe Sanctuaries policy. We have recruited and trained more than 50 volunteers across all 12 districts to assist local churches as they review and update their own policies.
- Forward Focus has emerged as an invaluable tool during this time when local churches are having heartfelt discussions about their future in ministry. We have stepped up recruitment and have trained two dozen new Forward Leaders, and we will continue those efforts in the coming year.
- Annual events – such as the Carolinas Black Clergy Leadership Retreat and the Summit on the Black Church – are growing. They are attracting members of other Annual Conferences, within the Southeastern Jurisdiction and two other jurisdictions – from as far away as Texas, Illinois and Ohio.
- Grants, scholarships and other financial support totaling more than \$350,000 have been distributed to worthy local and conference-affiliated ministries thanks to your connectional giving, our Hunger and Health and Welfare Accessibility ministries, Church Extension Ministries and Global Ministries, the Belin Trust, and the Golden Cross Health Care Scholarship program. Also, two new ministries were funded through Discipleship Ministries.
- Conference Native American Ministries trained more than 70 new local church Native American Representatives and provided 347 much-needed Elder Baskets filled with non-perishable items to tribal seniors.
- South Carolina’s Committee on the Status and Role of Women stepped up their efforts to make United Methodists and others more aware of the devastating toll domestic violence takes in our communities.
- UMCSC Early Response Teams logged more than 2,300 hours of work, responding with prayer, compassion, and hard work to eight communities across the state affected by dangerous storms. South Carolina ERTs also traveled to Kentucky, Florida and Mississippi to assist with recovery efforts in the wake of devastating flooding, a category 4 hurricane, and deadly tornadoes.
- United Methodist Volunteers in Mission of South Carolina dispatched seven teams to six nations – Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala and Panama – providing eye exams at local schools and orphanages, working on construction projects, and leading Vacation Bible School.
- Our Discipleship Ministry Area developed an Intentional Discipleship Plan to help local churches better understand disciple making, how they can engage their communities, and how to create an Intentional Discipleship System that is specific to their ministry context.

So, what will the work of Connectional Ministries look like in the coming year?

- We will continue helping local churches discern their current reality and the missional opportunities that will address the needs identified in their community.

- Native American Ministries is planning a three-day event that will include a tour of South Carolina tribal grounds, opportunities for cultural expression and shared worship.
- Our Ethnic Local Church Concerns Committee will launch a Lay Academy designed to build the skills of lay members of local churches throughout the conference.
- COSROW will host workshops and outreach efforts to further educate local churches and the public about the issue of domestic violence as a challenge to families and communities across our state.
- The Advocacy Ministry Area will continue to explore the effect ever-shrinking access to affordable housing has on the poor and marginalized citizens – especially how gentrification is affecting minority and indigenous communities and low-income communities.
- South Carolina Ministries With Youth People is working to make it easier and more affordable for our youth to attend “Youth 2023” – the national quadrennial event for United Methodist youth from across the United States.
- And most importantly, we will be keeping our focus on making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Five awards are given each year to outstanding clergy and laity in the South Carolina Conference:

- Bishop’s Five-Star Award, presented to churches that embrace new ministries geared toward growth and outreach. The 2023 recipients are Belin Memorial UMC in Murrells Inlet (Rev. Will Malambri, pastor); Bethlehem-St. James UMC in Johns Island (Rev. Pattie Gordon, pastor); Centenary UMC in Moncks Corner (Rev. Darlene Moore Richardson, pastor); Grace UMC in Columbia (Rev. Rett Haselden, pastor); Herbert Memorial UMC in Georgetown (Rev. Charles Wilbanks, pastor); Kellybell UMC in Hartsville (Rev. Mary Burnell, pastor); New Life UMC in Walterboro (Rev. Angela Ford Nelson, pastor); New Webster UMC in Wadmalaw Island (Rev. Pattie Gordon, pastor); O’Neal Street UMC in Newberry (Rev. Darlene Kelley, pastor); St. James UMC in Spartanburg (Rev. Andrew Wolfe, pastor); and the Trinity-Harris Charge in Greenwood (Rev. Thessa Smith, pastor).
- Joseph Benjamin Bethea Distinguished Service Award – Presented to persons (clergy, laity, youth) who have performed outstanding service in working for racial justice. The 2023 recipient is Shelby Henderson, a member of New Harmony UMC in Seneca.
- Michael C. Watson Volunteer in Mission Award – Presented to persons (clergy, laity) who exemplify extraordinary volunteer service beyond the local church. The 2023 recipient is Ward Smith, a member of Mt. Hebron UMC in West Columbia.
- Barbara Boultinghouse Bridge Builder Award – Presented to person or organization for promoting equity and inclusiveness without regard to race, gender, age, handicap or economic condition. The 2023 recipient is the Rev. Elizabeth Murray, associate pastor for youth and young adults at American Church in Paris.
- Harry Denman Evangelism Award – Honors pastors and laypersons for responsible evangelism in the local church. The 2023 recipients are the Rev. Corinthia Mack (clergy), pastor of New Market UMC in Hartsville, and Judi Landin (laity), a member of Bluffton UMC.

God’s Peace,

Millie Nelson Smith, Director
 Conference Connectional Ministries
 mnelsonsmith@umcsc.org

**REPORT 2 – PART I
SPECIAL DAYS FOR 2024**

A. MANDATED BY GENERAL CONFERENCE

Human Relations Day (GBGM, GBCS, CORR)	January 14
Ecumenical Sunday (CUIC)	January 21
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (CUIC)	January 18-25
Black History Month	February 2024
Boy Scouts Sunday / Scouting Ministries Sunday (UMM)	February 4
Women’s History Month	March 2024
World Day of Prayer	March 1
Girl Scouts Sunday / Alt. Scouting Min. Sunday (UMM)	March 10
UMCOR Sunday	March 10
Holy Week	March 24-30
Native American Awareness Sunday (GBGM)	April 14
Asian Pacific American Heritage Month	May 2024
Christian Home Month (GBOD)	May 2024
Older Adult Recognition Day	(any day in May)
National Day of Prayer	May 2
Aldersgate Day/Heritage Sunday (Archives and History)	May 26
Peace with Justice Sunday (GBCS)	May 26
Hispanic Heritage Month (GBGM)	Sept. 15-Oct. 15
World Communion Sunday (GBGM, GBGH, CORR)	October 6
Children’s Sabbath: A National Observance	October 13
Laity Sunday (GBOD)	October 13
Reformation Day	October 31
Native American Heritage Month	November 2024
All Saints Sunday	November 3
Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday (GBGM)	November 10
National Bible Week	November 17-24
United Methodist Student Day (GBHEM)	November 24
World AIDS Day	December 1

B. S.C. ANNUAL CONFERENCE DESIGNATED SPECIAL DAYS 2024

Human Relations Day	January 14, 2024
Golden Cross Sunday	February 4, 2024
United Methodist Camps and Retreats Sunday	March 3, 2024
UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing)	March 10, 2024
Native American Awareness Sunday	April 14, 2024
Advocate Awareness Sunday	May 19, 2024
Epworth Children’s Home Mother’s Day	May 12, 2024
United Methodist Men’s Day	June 2, 2024
Peace with Justice Sunday	May 26, 2024
Aldersgate Special Needs Sunday	August 11, 2024
Call to Ministry Sunday	August 11, 2024
Epworth Children’s Home Work Day	September 8, 2024
Youth Service Fund Sunday	September 15, 2024
World Communion Sunday	October 6, 2024
Conference Advance Special Ministries Sunday	November 3, 2024
United Methodist Student Day	November 24, 2024

ADVANCED SPECIAL MINISTRIES FOR 2024

ALSTON WILKES SOCIETY – UMC Conference ASM Organization Description

The mission of the Alston Wilkes Society is rebuilding lives for a safer community. Founded in 1962, by Methodist Minister Rev. Elli Alston Wilkes as an offender reentry program, the Alston Wilkes Society has expanded its service population and geographic footprint over the past 61 years to include the following programs:

- 1) The Community Services Program: This program carries on the original mission of Rev. Wilkes, providing reentry services such as basic needs assistance, employment supports, and housing supports for returning citizens in eight locations throughout the state of SC. This program serves more than 1,000 individuals annually;

- 2) Federal Residential Reentry Centers: These programs are designed to help federal offenders make a successful transition back into their communities through housing and reentry services. They are located in Charleston, Florence, Columbia & Fayetteville, with a fifth opening in Greenville in the fall of 2023;
- 3) Supportive Services for Veteran Families: Supported by a grant from the Veterans Administration, this program prevents homelessness by helping qualifying veterans and their families gain access to the resources they need to successfully transition to, or maintain, permanent housing. This program covers 36 of the 46 counties in the state of SC;
- 4) Alston Wilkes Veterans Homes: AWS provides transitional housing and supportive services (e.g., clinical, employment, substance abuse, etc.) for homeless veterans in Columbia and Greenville; and
- 5) Alston Wilkes Youth Home: This residential program serves male adolescents referred by Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Social Services, who are suffering from behavioral and/or mental health issues that require a supervised, therapeutic living situation.

All of these programs have one thing in common – they provide not just services needed to overcome barriers to success, but also offer hope for a better future for those served and the entire community.

BENNETTSTVILLE-CHERAW AREA COOPERATIVE MINISTRY (BCACM)

The Bennettsville-Cheraw Area Cooperative Ministry (BCACM) was established in the late 1960s. Ten United Methodist Churches came together to form the BCACM. The BCACM has 10 member churches today, but they are not the original 10. The BCACM member churches are located either in the Hartsville District or the Marion District. The primary goals of the BCACM are to strengthen the member churches and their communities in the areas of lay leadership, advocacy, discipleship and outreach. These goals are being addressed through Bible study, prayer, workshops, partnerships with local schools and agencies, mentoring boys and girls, supporting vacation Bible Schools at the churches, community engagement, and encouraging and supporting participation in leadership opportunities across the united Methodist connection. We also reach out to those who are less fortunate to address physical and spiritual needs.

The chairperson of the BCACM Council is Robert Short, Rev. Judith A. Knox serves as director, and Araba Sweet is the church and community worker assigned to this ministry.

COLUMBIA BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY CENTER

Mission:

The Columbia Bethlehem Community Center (CBCC) mission is to educate and enrich families to help them achieve their own success.

Vision:

CBCC vision is to meet educational, cultural, recreational and spiritual needs of children and families in the Midlands while encouraging them to use their individual gifts to make a positive difference in their lives and in their communities.

Kara P Simmons, Executive Director, 308 McRae Street Columbia SC 29203, cbccexecutive@umcsc.org

BETHLEHEM CENTER SPARTANBURG

The Bethlehem Center is a non-profit organization proudly serving the Spartanburg community since 1930. The Bethlehem Center was established as a partner of the National Office of United Methodist Women, The South Carolina Conference, and a program of the Advanced Special Ministries. The Bethlehem Center role in the community then and now was to address the needs of the underserved, low to moderate income individuals and families as well as to advocate for women, children and vulnerable citizens. The Bethlehem Center envisions a world in which all of people are recipients of the basic necessities for a fruitful and enriched life. Toward this goal, the Bethlehem Center provides services and programming to help the neediest in the community, low income families and children and seniors. The Bethlehem Center desires to engage and encourage those in the community by building relationships, fostering opportunities for partnerships with other groups or businesses and advocating for the needs of the community. The Center's efforts are focused on providing opportunities for individuals to realize their potential and improve the quality of their lives. The Center's mission is to support, strengthen and inspire individuals and families and support the redevelopment of the Highland community. To be aware. To Contribute. To Foster. To Provide. To Empower.

served. As a sponsor organization for participants in the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program, we assist childcare providers in receiving reimbursements for nutritious meals served to promote children's healthy development and keep their small family child care home businesses financially stable. ICS is currently piloting a Provider Partnership Program to increase collaboration between home childcare providers and local UMCs to advance our work in building strong families, communities and healthy, thriving children. Local UMCs are paired with a family childcare provider to support these children and their families by providing enrichment resources and extending invitations to the children and families to participate in church activities. Together we are creating and sustaining safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children and families which have been shown to prevent adverse childhood experiences and help children reach their full health and life potential.

KILLINGSWORTH

The mission of Killingsworth, a National Mission Institution of United Women in Faith, is to support, to empower and advocate for women recovering from varying life crises within a safe nurturing Christian environment. In 1947 Corrie Killingsworth's vision of a safe, supportive Christian home for young women leaving home for the first time became a reality. In 1972 the mission changed to serve women who had experienced significant life crises and were preparing to transition back into the community as more stable, responsible citizens.

Residents are referred from across the nation leaving addiction treatment facilities, homeless shelters, prison, domestic violence facilities, and other toxic environments. Residents are expected to work or go to school and be able to pay a nominal fee for residency. Killingsworth provides not only a safe supportive community for residents, but also life skills, Bible study and spiritual development, career development, individual and group counseling and financial literacy as they prepare to return to their homes or create new ones.

JUBILEE ACADEMY

Jubilee Academy is a faith-based organization, working to turn the hearts and lives of inner-city children, youth and families towards Christ and academic excellence.

Vision: At Jubilee Academy, we envision educated, productive citizens who have exchanged the bondage of welfare and poverty for freedom in Christ, in the hopes that these individuals will be the firm foundation for future generations, according to God's word. There is nothing more critical to a community's long-term sustainability than a well-educated and well-adjusted child, for they are our future! Ensuring that all of the children of the Midlands receive the support they need to become well-adjusted, educated, productive members of the community will guarantee a bright future for both these children and the community at large. Jubilee is committed to changing lives forever and breaking the cycle of generational poverty, which keeps these children from reaching their full potentials.

PATH

PATH is celebrating our 41st year of serving the needy in Western York County, encompassing the residents of York School District #1—York, Sharon, Hickory Grove, Smyrna, McConnells and tiny parts of Clover and Rock Hill.

PATH exists for the purpose of helping those in need by providing temporary aid in times of crisis and helping to prevent hunger in our service area. Our clients are the working poor and the unemployed, single and double parent families, the homeless, those fighting addictions, ex-convicts, the elderly, the mentally and physically disabled, victims of crime, accidents and injuries, and others in crisis.

We provide emergency rent and utility assistance; clothing vouchers 4 times a year; job clinics; finance and other basic needs classes; and our monthly food supply to the underserved neighbors in our community.

THE COASTAL SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER

The Coastal Samaritan Counseling Center's mission is to assist people on their journey toward healing and wholeness. The Center ministers to individuals, couples, and families in crisis through affordable holistic counseling, education, and consultation. The Center also is providing a school enrichment program to assist public and private schools with their students and staff mental health needs. The Center also promotes and maintains close associations with various churches, inter-faith communities, and clergy in the Grand Strand area. Assisting area business, non-profits, and ministry leaders, the Center offers relevant educational and consultative services to help create strength and sustain a culture of excellence that is needed in today's COVID -19 world.

Programs:

Youth Services:

SOAR AFTER SCHOOL and SOAR Summer Camp
Highland Early Learning Center 4K (projected Fall 2021)
Mentoring & Youth Sports Partnerships

Community Wellness Program:

Senior Days Out - Active Living, Sewing to Sow, Soul Food
Community Fitness Program
Community Events

Community Supportive Services:

Food Pantry
Information and Referral Services
Volunteer Management
Full Service Computer lab - WIFI, Printing, Soft Skills & Computer Skills Training
Case Management

CHRISTIAN ASSISTANCE BRIDGE

Christian Assistance Bridge partners with our community to end hunger and empower our most vulnerable families with hope and resources through the love of Christ. Volunteers provide food, financial assistance for qualifying clients, and resource counseling. Christian Assistance Bridge gives out over 125,000 pounds of food each year. We also have the blessing of meeting with every client to create a household budget and help them locate resources to increase their income and cut back on expenses. Our goal is to help families thrive, not just survive. During this visit, the volunteer resource counselors may help qualifying clients with emergency financial Assistance for utilities, rent, temporary shelter, prescription medication, etc.

Thank You for allowing us to help families like Ms. Flossie, a senior adult living in her bronco. Because of the support of the Methodist Churches, we have been able to help her move into an apartment, fill her pantry, and allow her to apply for other government resources so that she can thrive. She has now been living in her apartment for over a year. You helped bring her from homelessness to self-sufficiently. Every time we check on her, she thanks God for all the assistance.

Many Blessings, Kate Williams, C: 601-988-7653

THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY - COLUMBIA

OUR MISSION: To increase the economic self-sufficiency of people experiencing poverty in the Midlands through crisis assistance and sustainability programs.

OUR HISTORY: In 1982, The Cooperative Ministry was founded by five churches (First Presbyterian Church, Main Street Methodist, Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Washington Street United Methodist Church, and First Baptist Church) in downtown Columbia. The goal was to establish a collaborative method of administering assistance to those in need while preventing duplication of services. The Cooperative Ministry is now supported by 53 partnering churches, family foundations, corporations and small businesses, government agencies, and thousands of individuals. The Cooperative Ministry is a debt-free organization, and 90 percent of all expenses go to direct ten unique program services. A local board of directors governs The Cooperative Ministry's operations.

WE HELP BECAUSE ... As God's created people, we are called to be like our Creator – to walk in God's way – the way of love, compassion, and mercy. Compassion is at the heart of faith in God, and we are called to care deeply and act concretely to alleviate suffering. Compassion is a call to action and not an easy one, but one which we engage in joyfully and thoughtfully. We are called to release people from bondage to a cycle of poverty. We desire to honor God by reflecting Divine compassion for our clients.

INTERFAITH COMMUNITY SERVICES OF SC (ICS)

Interfaith Community Services of SC (ICS) works with faith and community partners to improve lives of low-income children and families in SC. SC ranks 39th in child-wellbeing with 21% of children living in poverty. ICS values a 40+ year relationship with the SCUMC in this work, addressing factors to interrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty. We support quality early childhood experiences providing technical assistance, training, monitoring and resources for home child care providers in 23 counties. Approximately 90% of our providers serve children in high poverty school attendance zones. 99% are female and 58% are minority, as are 60% of the children

While the Center's main office is in the heart of Myrtle Beach at First United Methodist Church, the Center offers has an additional 5 day per week office in North Myrtle Beach serving the North Grand Strand. Because of COVID-19 and the necessary lockdowns CSCC have added Video Therapy to replace our normal satellite locations. With Video Therapy, we can service the entire State of South Carolina.

The Center is affiliated with a national network of faith-based counseling centers called The Solithen Institute. The Solithen Institute accredits counseling centers, which have a theological purpose, offer basic counseling services, utilize a holistic perspective, and require staff to have professional credentials. The Institute's mission is to help affiliated centers provide team-oriented, cost-efficient counseling, education, and consultation, which emphasize the interrelatedness of mind, body, spirit, and community.

THE TRACY JACKSON PROGRAM OF GIFT (General Instruction for Tomorrow)

The Tracy Jackson Program of GIFT has a mission to feed the bodies, minds and spirits of children. We do this by providing a free summer day camp type experience, including free breakfast and free lunch and activities, when school is not in session.

In the summer of 2019 we served an average of 160 breakfasts a day and 190 lunches a day to the children in Abbeville County and in the City of Anderson. In Abbeville 62% of the public school children get free or reduced priced meals at school; in Anderson it's over 94%.

For some of the children, their first knowledge of God is the grace said at meals in our program and the care of our site workers.

Our motto is "We do it for the children." Our prayer is to serve Christ by serving God's children.

UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION- SOUTH CAROLINA UMVIM-SC

Volunteers in Mission began as a vision that ordinary people could make an extraordinary difference in the world. South Carolina is proudly the home of these visionaries and the beginning of this amazing ministry that is now worldwide and supported by many Conferences across the United States. It has also served as the model for other denominations as they have followed the lead to create hands on ministries through the years.

Today Volunteers in Mission are men and women who are adventurous in their faith. They yearn to not only serve Christ, but to serve Him in new and exciting ways. They want to broaden their horizons of faith as well as the height and breadth of their lives. They want to go where the need is greatest and meet that need with faith, hope and love.

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission is a fellowship of believers, lay and clergy, men and women, adults and youth, who have stepped out in faith to serve the needs of communities around the world.

South Carolina UMVIM consists of people just like you. They have felt and followed the call of Christ in their lives to go out into the world. They share the vision and spread the Gospel of Christ through actively working to ease the burdens of others through construction, medical clinics, evangelism, VBS, and many other means.

Acting as the hands and feet of Christ, UMVIM missionaries help others at home and throughout the world through construction, medical and various other activities. Whether it is building a chapel in the Philippines or building and staffing an eye clinic in Haiti, the men and women of UMVIM, SC strive to put shoe leather on their faith. There are multiple opportunities for short term or long-term service, and opportunities year round in many places.

UMVIM-SC meets the first Tuesday of each month at Grace UMC on Harbison Blvd., Columbia at 7:30 pm except in June and July. We invite all to attend even if you have not participated in UMVIM before.

UNITED MINISTRIES

United Ministries' mission is to serve and empower those on the transformative journey 200 200 to self-sufficiency. Our vision is a community working together to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive in Greenville.

WALLACE FAMILY LIFE CENTER

The Wallace Family Life Center is a family-oriented facility. The mission of the center is to provide educational, cultural, recreational and religious programs to enrich the lives of the people in the Wallace community. Currently, the center offers the following: children after school program, summer camp, summer youth garden club, adult education, adult Bible class and medical assistance, CDL and mental health referrals.

Although, Wallace is located in an economically challenged area in South Carolina, the pandemic has selfishly had a devastating impact on some households and often meals are insufficient. Therefore, the WFLC also periodically distributes food to assist families in need within the Wallace community on a first-come, first-served basis. It is the support of United Women in Faith, South Carolina UMC, Churches, individuals and others throughout the year which allows the WFLC to provide valuable services to children and adults in the Wallace and surrounding area who utilize the center.

LAY LEADERSHIP AREA

Purpose

Lay Leadership is one of the four areas within the South Carolina United Methodist Conference Connectional Ministries program. Lay Leadership serves to unite laity across the Conference and to encourage laity to be engaged in their local church and active in their districts. Laity of the South Carolina United Methodist Annual Conference play a pivotal role in the making of disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. From the smallest churches to the larger membership churches, we have a common purpose-to continue to share the Good News with others and to be a part of building the kingdom. The Conference Lay Leader serves as the Convener of this area.

Key moments

These last few years have been very different from what we came to be accustomed to in the past. Many gatherings and meetings were done virtually and surprisingly, we managed to continue our work without meeting many times in person. Ministry and mission continued throughout our conference, and we are happy to be meeting in person for Annual Conference 2023. We stayed connected during these last few years, but it will be nice to gather in person. Lay Leadership Area of Connectional Ministries continued to meet many times virtually. Our area is comprised of several lay lead groups that are such a blessing to our conference.

The United Women in Faith had a name change last year and we celebrate all the good and worthy projects they continue to share with others. They donated \$10,000 to the Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign and celebrated their 50th Annual Meeting at First United Methodist Church in Myrtle Beach in October 2022 with over 200 in attendance. Their 2023 mission trip will be "The Asheville to Nashville Adventure" March 27-30, 2023.

Likewise, the United Methodist Men (Men in Ministry) continued to focus on gatherings that bring men together to worship and grow their faith. An event in February 2023 was held at Mt. Horeb UMC in Lexington and was very successful.

Lay Servant Ministries (LSM) Conference Co-Directors, Becky Green and David Salter have attended workshops to learn more about several new lay servant courses including training for Certified Lay Ministers and more. Lay Servants have been very active in Safe Sanctuary Trainer Training in hopes these lay servants will be available to go to local churches to present the Safe Sanctuary training.

Our youth held a one day Revolution event that saw many young people give their life to Christ. Immerse was held at Asbury Hills and again, a great event for the youth of our conference. Chris Lynch does a wonderful job along with his many volunteers to give opportunities for our future, our young people, to live out dedication to a Christian life.

We are blessed to have all of these wonderful lay led programs and groups here in South Carolina that enable the laity to serve God and others. Lay Leadership is as strong as we are because of United Women in Faith, United Methodist Men, Lay Servant Ministries, our amazing youth program and all the laity who serve in the local churches.

Objectives for the coming year include:

- 1) Continue our work to engage and equip laity across the Annual Conference with the resources and information needed to assist the local churches with their outreach and service.
- 2) Continue to encourage churches to have discussions within their local communities that focus on mission, ministry, and the response to racism and homelessness.
- 3) Continue to build lay and clergy partnerships.
- 4) Have District Lay Leaders work with local church lay leaders to advance the Four Priorities as a starting point for their local church's mission and ministry.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

If you take away nothing else from this report know this...

That laity is very important in the life of each local church, each district, and the SC Annual Conference. Laity working in partnership with clergy can impact our local communities, our state, and our entire world. Laity are called to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others. Let us all remember we all have a part in our church, our Annual Conference, and our denomination.

Narrative

These are extraordinary times in our church and world. As we navigate the future, let us be guided by a vision filled with action. We are all called to be God's servants wherever we may find ourselves. Let us love one another as God loves us. May we continue to be a witness to the world of God's grace and mercy. Jesus gave us the Great Commandment, to "love one another as I have loved you." May the world see us as ones who love and respect each other even though we may not all agree on certain matters. We are all called to be disciples and to live our lives in a manner that reflects the love of Jesus Christ.

Other ministry leaders

We are grateful for the District Lay Leaders (DLL) who give their time and talents to serve each district. We appreciate the support they offer to their respective District Superintendents and the laity in their district. If you do not know your DLL, take the time to get to know them and invite them to your church. Serving presently are Jeff Fogle, Anderson; Gillis McAllister, Charleston; Michael Jennings, Columbia; Tracy Johnson, Florence; Tony Watson, Greenwood; Chandra Dillard, Greenville; Sarah Johnson, Hartsville; Michael Toms, Marion; Shelia Shanklin, Orangeburg; Bob James, Rock Hill; Rick Hammett, Spartanburg; and Wally Cole, Walterboro.

A special thanks to the Lay Leadership Advisory Board: Lisa Fusco, Chairperson; Bob James, DLL representative; Michael Toms, DLL representative; Marlene Spencer, United Women in Faith Representative; Herman Lightsey, Men in Ministry representative; Sylvia Greene, Lay Servant Ministry representative; and Tyler Cattenhead, young adult.

A word of thanks and appreciation to Rev. Millie Smith, Connectional Ministries Conference Director and the Connectional Ministries staff liaison to Lay Leadership, Tammy Fulmer, for their continued support and assistance to Lay Leadership.

Barbara Ware, Conference Lay Leader;
Jeff Fogle, Associate Conference Lay Leader;
Cassie Watson, Lay Leadership Secretary.
Rev. Joey McDonald serves as the Lay Leadership Area representative from the Cabinet.

LAY LEADERSHIP: LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES

Purpose:

Lay Servant Ministries is a program of Discipleship Ministries which is designed to provide United Methodist laity training opportunities and experiences to equip disciples of Jesus Christ to realize and respond to their personal call to ministry of the laity.

Key moments from the previous year include:

Conference Lay Servant Ministries held the first "in person" Academy (Train the Trainer) event since the pandemic began. The event held at Trenholm Road UMC was well attended. At this event several new Lay Servant Courses were introduced and persons trained to teach them in the districts.

The Conference Co-Directors, Becky Green and David Salter, attended the Certified Lay Minister Network and the Association of Annual Conference Directors of Lay Servant Directors in Nashville, TN. The Co-Directors received information about new lay servant courses, training for Certified Lay Ministers, and more.

Many districts have returned to "in person" training, and some are using hybrid training to reach more people.

Lay Servants have been requested, and many have responded, to go through Safe Sanctuary Trainer Training so that the lay servants may go to local churches to present the Safe Sanctuary training.

Several new Lay Servant Courses have been now taught in many districts, including Ministry with the Forgotten: Dementia through a Spiritual Lens, Soul Reset: Breakdown, Breakthrough and the Journey to Wholeness, and Engaging Your Community: A Guide to Seeing All the People. Three of our South Carolina Certified Lay Ministers have become CLM Specialists in Congregational Care.

Objectives for the coming year:

Continue the great work Lay Servant Ministries is already doing.

Continue incorporating the Four Priorities into the work of Lay Servant Ministries.

Have more of our districts return to in person schools and hybrid formats to reach more people.

Offer more of the newer courses being developed by Discipleship Ministries along with continuing to offer the old favorites and required courses for Lay Speaking.

Partner with other groups to discuss the feasibility of offering "Respite For All" in some of the local churches in the conference.

Support the training of more Certified Lay Ministers.

Encourage presently Certified Lay Ministers to research and perhaps complete a specialization in one of the areas offered through Discipleship Ministries and Be a Disciple.

Support the needs of the South Carolina Annual Conference.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference:

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

Although speaking from the pulpit has always been one important role of the lay servants, many never speak from the pulpit. However, lay servants support by:

Caregiving love and service

Crisis ministries, hospital and nursing home visitations.

Specialized ministry within their communities.

Lay Servant Ministries is a great support agent for the mission of the local church while helping Christians to claim their spiritual gifts, talents, and skills. Lay Servants are engaged and partnering with Clergy with the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Narrative:

Lay Servant Ministries has been the starting point of many of our clergy who have heard the call to ministry. As many come through DCOM they relate stories of how attending Lay Servant Schools helped to shape their theology, their compassion for others, and the desire to serve in a ministerial capacity. Others who have not heard the call to ministry as clergy, have found their calling to serve in other ways through lay servant ministry.

Respectfully submitted:

David Salter, Co-Director,
Conference Lay Servant Ministries
davidsalter68@gmail.com, 803-646-1704

Becky Green, Conference Co-Director; David Salter, Conference Co-Director;
Pamela Goodwine-Glover, Secretary; Gwendolyn Brown, Anderson District Director;
Constance L. Wilborn, Charleston District Director; Sylvia Harris-Green, Co-Director,
Columbia District; Chuck Sovick, Co-Director, Columbia District; Mark McGee, Director,
Florence District; Cathy Trevino, Director, Greenwood District; Kenneth Moore, Director,
Greenville District; Sha'Rome Henry, Director, Hartsville District; David Lovell,
Co-Director Marion District; Gerrie Watson, Co-Director, Marion District; Rosa
Kennerly-Dance, Director, Orangeburg District; Lynne Tyner, Director; Rock Hill
District; Annie Crocker, Director; Spartanburg District; Thelma Hudson; Director,
Walterboro District; Rev. Cathy Joens, Rev. Kenneth Nelson, Rev. Jeffrey Salley,
Betty Void, and Tom Whitacre, Extended Team Members.

ALDERSGATE SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY

Purpose:

The mission of Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry (ASNM) is to provide the highest quality of life and greatest level of independence in Christian homes for adults with special needs. We have homes in Orangeburg, Columbia, and Florence that support adults with special needs and hope to open two more homes in 2023.

Key moments from the previous year:

One of our biggest successes this year was getting approval from the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs to open more homes in an effort to serve more people with special needs in our state that are in desperate need of a place to call home.

We had a tremendously successful Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry Sunday raising more funds to help us open two more homes in 2023. God truly blessed the ministry this year thanks to so many wonderful churches in the Conference. Additionally, we were fortunate to have an anonymous donor give the ministry funds that will almost cover the entire cost to build another home in Florence. This will enable the ministry to serve four more people with special needs in the Florence area. We hope to open a home in Columbia as well this upcoming year and we have plans to work with Grace UMC on potentially building a home on their land which would serve four more people with special needs in the Columbia area.

Our ministry was able to help families receive a much-needed break this year through our AIM - Aldersgate in the Morning - respite program which was such a blessing. While the program didn't last the entire year, we are grateful for the opportunity that we had to work with families in the Midlands area in giving them a break even if it was just for 3 hours one or two days a week. The gentleman that attended the program were a joy!

Objectives for the coming year:

Our main objective this year is to open two more community training homes in our state that will provide residential services to eight more people with special needs.

We strive to continue to grow our grassroots network with local church representatives. Our objective is to find two or three more district representatives so we can have folks in the various districts sharing the mission of Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry and also gaining more prayers for our ministry.

This year we celebrate our 20th anniversary and hope to publish the history of our ministry with the help of the Advocate.

Another critical objective for our ministry is to continue to keep our residents and staff safe and healthy. While the pandemic has slowed down, we still remain diligent in monitoring and implementing needed precautions to keep everyone well.

Lastly, we hope that in 2023 our Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry Sunday will be even more successful than it was this year. When we say successful, we mean reaching more people and sharing what we do here at Aldersgate and getting more folks praying for our ministry and if they feel so led, to donate as well.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None**If you take away nothing from this report, know this:**

We are grateful to be able to provide homes to adults with special needs. Our residents enjoy living in a Christian environment and are encouraged to be as independent as possible.

As we continue to make progress on our organizational priorities, we look forward to having a greater impact on the lives of adults with special needs and their families.

"My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest." - Isaiah 32:18

Narrative:**Boyd's Story**

Boyd was living in another residential facility when his dad learned about the Aldersgate home in Florence known as Rick's House. "I heard great things about Rick's House and knew that's where my son should be," he said. "I'm grateful to the staff. The home is always clean, and Boyd has plenty to do."

Boyd has been at Rick's House since 2020. He enjoys hanging out with his housemates and participating in activities like baseball. His other hobbies include watching Scooby-Doo and playing video games.

"Boyd is treated very, very well," his dad said. "The staff take the time to make sure he has what he needs. They are flexible and supportive. I believe they truly love Boyd. They have his back 100%. They are wonderful people. It gives me peace of mind knowing my child with special needs is receiving the love and support he needs 24-7."

When asked what he likes best about living at Rick's House Boyd said, "I love that I have some additional people who care about me and treat me like family."

Respectfully submitted:

Kim Thomas, Executive Director
asnm-sc@att.net, 803-924-2946
Term: July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023/July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024
Chair- W.C Hammett, Vice Chair- Mike Simpson
Secretary - Michelle Neal Hunt, Treasurer - Daly Ward
Immediate Past Chair - Susan Kovas

EPWORTH CHILDREN'S HOME

Purpose:

The purpose of Epworth's Children Home is to break the destructive cycle of abuse, neglect, and shame and replace it with an opportunity for each person to live a life of self-respect, responsibility, and productivity.

Key moments from the previous year:

- I. In 2022, there was increased mobilization and support from the United Methodists of South Carolina, with 50 churches engaged in 90 different acts of church support for birth and foster families. Examples of support included welcome baskets, parents' night out, appreciation events, and warm meals for families in need. This support assists foster parents so they may continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Also, UMC giving continues to be strong.
- II. Rev. John Holler and Bishop Jonathan Holston traveled to Zimbabwe, Africa in October to celebrate the close of the "Every Child is a Miracle" campaign with Fairfield Children's Home and the people served by Old Mutare Mission. During the onset of the campaign, it was agreed that there would be a campaign tithe to foreign missions to children. The proceeds from this missional tithe will transform lives of children.
- III. Epworth experienced another year of growth through its many programs.
 - i. Epworth established a new regional hub for foster care and prevention services. This new hub, located in Beaufort County, serves the lower coastal region of the state. In 2022, Epworth licensed 52 additional foster homes across South Carolina and served 264 children and youth in individual foster homes. The increase in children, youth and foster parents served demonstrates that church outreach strategies have effectively engaged more families statewide.
 - ii. Epworth facilitated 16 Circle of Parents mutual self-help groups. Circle of Parents is a nationally recognized model for parent support groups.

(Continued below in narrative section.)

Objectives for the coming year:

- I. Epworth will continue the expansion of the Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing by opening a new Upstate Center for Counseling in Anderson. This program will serve children, youth and families through outpatient counseling services.
- II. Epworth received \$600,000 grant from the office of the Department of Justice to create a practice model for older, disengaged youth ages 18-25, who have had involvement with our Juvenile Justice system.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

Epworth Children's Home along with our United Methodist Churches continue to demonstrate God's love for His people. In John 21:16, Jesus instructs Simon Peter to "Take care of my sheep." Epworth's staff and foster parents are dedicated, compassionate individuals who are taking care of Jesus' sheep daily. We have a long tradition of assessing the needs of underserved children and their families and of offering new services and programs to meet the changing needs of South Carolina's families. Whether Epworth is serving children and families through the traditional group home, foster family programs, kinship care initiatives, counseling programs, family preservation programs or services for older, disengaged youth, the mission of healing hurts and nurturing hope through Christian communities continues. Epworth is a community where unconditional love and grace are modeled to all persons regardless of gender, race, national origin, or religious preference.

Narrative: (Continued from key moments above.)

- iii. Epworth launched a new prevention service for children and families in need. The Intensive In-home Services program is designed to prevent children and youth from entering state supported care. Although similar to Epworth's Homebuilders prevention programs, the criteria for admission are less restrictive and the duration of service is longer. Clinicians may work with children and families up to 6 months if needed. Also, in 2022 Epworth expanded the Homebuilders family stabilization program to Florence County.
- iv. Epworth's residential programs continue to evolve as state changes necessitate transformation of the residential campuses. Epworth served a total of 25 youth ages 18-23 years of age in our Independent Living program during 2022. This center prepares youth who are aging out of care with the necessary tools to be successful in life. The Family Care Center served 15 mothers and 25 children in 2022. This program provides a safe environment for moms who struggle with substance use issues while they learn to care for their children. The focus of this program is to create a healthy family life for these moms and children. Our traditional residential campus served 123 youth during 2022.
- v. Epworth's Early Intervention Center serves children with special needs through a pre-school on campus and home-based services. This center served 116 children in 2022.
- vi. Epworth's Center for Counseling provided much needed psychotherapy services to the community. The center treated 670 clients through outpatient services. This center provides in-person and telehealth services to children, youth, and families.

Respectfully submitted:

Beth Williams, President, CEO
bwilliams@epworthsc.org, 803-256-7394
Rev. Smoke Kanipe, Pastor/Board Chairperson
Email: skanipe@shandon-umc.org; Phone: 803-256-8383

THE MANOR (THE UNITED METHODIST MANOR OF THE PEE DEE)

Purpose:

The Manor seeks to be the best senior living facility in Eastern South Carolina with patio homes, independent living, assisted living memory care, and skilled nursing facilities.

Key moments from the previous year:

The Manor came out of the Covid crisis in relatively good shape, thanks to our outstanding leadership team, dedicated team members, understanding and co-operative residents and family members, and COVID relief funds from the federal government.

Reverend Tom Pietila accepted the position of Chaplain of the Mary Alice Ingram Chapel upon the retirement of Reverend Dane Morehead.

We are challenged by staff shortages in all areas, but our dedicated team has kept service and care levels very high.

We have provided a site for the Aldersgate Ministries to build a second Special Needs home on our campus.

Objectives for the coming year:

Both hold and increase our market share in a very competitive industry, both non profit and for profit.

Continue to meet our debt requirements to our lenders in a very challenging environment.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

The Manor will continue to provide the best senior living environment and care in the region, never forgetting our beginnings from Central UMC, Reverend Bob Faulkner, and Mary Alice Ingram.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

John Orr, Chair, Board of Trustees
jorr@c.rr.com, 843.229.7415

WESLEY COMMONS

Purpose:

Wesley Commons exists to enrich lives by providing innovative living opportunities in accord with Christian principles. Wesley Commons is a master-planned, full-service Life Plan Community.

Key moments from the previous year:

While our nation, state and community continue to recover from the global pandemic, we face a new foe of economic lineage. While we advance forward through various biological and financial storms, Wesley Commons remains grateful for our staff, our residents, our supporters and our operational protocols. The impacts of COVID 19 were devastating on so many fronts and touched the lives of every member of our Wesley Commons family in some fashion. Likewise, the impacts of an uncoupled economy continue to claw at the wellbeing of all. That being said, our mission of care is resilient and our drive is never diminished. Not only have we remained at high alert protocols for several years, we have also navigated through the correlating financial impacts related to those safety efforts and other legislative missteps. While taxing, we are grateful to have traversed through this awful storm and now see the hint of clear skies ahead. As of this writing, we are completing the first of several phases of community enhancements that are intended to carry us forward as the community of choice for those seeking exceptional hospitality and healthcare of value.

Objectives for the coming year:

Wesley Commons looks forward to engaging in our plans that have reimaged our campus amenities for our diverse and evolving consumer. Our completely remodeled Wellness Complex with enhanced experiences for aerobics, yoga, water aerobics, weight training, etc., and our remodeled areas of our Commons and Treehouse buildings are something to see. We are also pleased to see our pickleball courts, community gardens, wilderness trails and other amenities are in full use. Each of these are or will soon receive further enhancements or refreshing. We are also excited to install our visually dynamic Heritage Connector leading to our newly renovated Asbury Hall Theater/Auditorium, that reflects and honors all that have and continue to support our wonderful community.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

We are a grateful and blessed community that continues to fulfill our mission and growth through both, the good and the bad, times. We are only able to do this through God's Grace and our acknowledgment of such. Our employees, residents and greater community have all coalesced around our common bond of service to one another. Over this past year, Wesley Commons has poignantly lived out its mission to enrich lives by providing innovative living opportunities in accord with Christian principles.

Narrative:

We are located on more than 180 beautiful wooded acres in Greenwood, South Carolina, a charming Southern city offering the warm appeal of small-town living with ready access to major metropolitan areas. Benefiting from a rich legacy of continuous reinvention, our residents enjoy an active lifestyle in neighborhoods of wonderful homes enhanced by exceptional services, sumptuous culinary creations and spectacular amenities – all coordinated by a trained, attentive staff that truly cares. In addition to its several active adult neighborhoods of single family homes and apartments, Wesley Commons provides the finest in wellness, assisted living, skilled nursing care, specialized care for Alzheimer's and dementia-related illnesses, as well as critical therapy and post-acute programs. Recognized as a destination community, Wesley Commons' reputation and market reach attracts consumers from across the US.

Respectfully submitted:

David Buckshorn, CEO
dbuckshorn@wesleycommons.org, 864-227-7258

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY

Purpose

Clafin University is continuing its quest to be acknowledged as a twenty-first century premier comprehensive institution of higher learning that promotes a diverse and inclusive community of globally engaged visionary leaders. Clafin is committed to giving students access to excellent educational opportunities in its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs.

Key moments from previous year:

Clafin University's philanthropic initiatives have garnered six-figure investment gifts from perpetual partnerships with Bank of America, Gilead Sciences, Inc., and the Johnson Group, Inc.

On November 30, 2021, a community-wide effort got underway to raise \$50,000 for Need-Based Scholarships. During this Giving Tuesday initiative, Clafin far exceeded its goal by reportingly raising \$97,841.79.

During February 2022, Getty Images, Inc. announced an award of \$500,000 to digitally preserve Clafin University's historic photographs. This award provided internship opportunities for several students. It also gave students an in-depth exploration into the history of South Carolina and their Alma Mater's role in the Civil Rights era. Clafin University also received a generous gift of a \$1.2M gift from BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina to provide tuition support, internship opportunities, and post-graduate career placements for students.

In March 2022, the University celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony for a \$30M new student activity center. The Center is designed to enhance the co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities for students, residents, and communities in Orangeburg County. It will include a bookstore, esports gaming lounge, movie theater, and conference rooms.

In addition to the growth in programming and services that has been made possible by increasing support for the University, new recognitions of Clafin's commitment to excellence include the U.S. News & World Report ranking Clafin University as #3 in graduation rate for HBCUs nationwide, behind Spelman College and Howard University, institutions whose endowments dwarf Clafin's.

Objectives for the coming year:

Clafin University remains committed to providing students with access to exemplary educational opportunities emphasizing critical and analytic thinking, independent research, and oral and written communication skills that position them to explore and confront the substantive challenges facing global society. Clafin will also ensure the implementation of its new strategic plan and its alignment with the mission, vision, and Guiding Principles – Commitment to Excellence, Commitment to Valuing People, Commitment to Being Student Centered, Commitment to Exemplary Educational programs, Commitment to Fiscal Accountability, and Commitment to Social Justice.

The 2022-2026 strategic plan, "Clafin Soars," was approved by the Board of Trustees during its Fall 2021 meeting. Broadly, the plan includes five strategic initiatives (abbreviated as S.O.A.R.S.) include:

- I. Commitment to Student Engagement and Success
- II. Creative Online Global Strategies through programs and initiatives leveraging Leading-Edge Technology
- III. Cutting Edge Academic Enterprise to promote student competitiveness and success
- IV. Consistent Resource Enhancement through Friend-raising and Fundraising
- V. Collaborative Strategic Initiatives for Economic and Workforce Development

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

Clafin University has been ranked No. 9 among the 2022-2023 Best Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs) by U.S. News & World Report. Clafin has earned a spot in the U.S. News Top 10 Best HBCUs for 12 consecutive years. The University is ranked No. 1 in Annual Alumni Giving Percentage among HBCUs and No. 20 in the Top Performers on Social Mobility category among national liberal arts colleges/universities. Now in its 38th year, the rankings evaluate more than 1,450 colleges and universities on up to 17 measures of academic quality.

The support and partnership of the United Methodist Church is important for Claflin University to continue its proud legacy of cultivating and educating future leaders for the United Methodist Church's ministry.

Narrative:

This year, as has previous years, continues to present itself with both challenges and blessings despite the lingering COVID-19 variants. We have demonstrated our unwavering commitment to surviving and thriving with notable milestones and accomplishments. With a strong focus on innovation, leadership, and student success, Claflin knows that all of our blessings come from the Lord. Although we still have so much more to accomplish, our "Claflin Confidence" assures us that this is only the beginning of the "Elevation and Transformation" as we continue to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling that is Christ Jesus. We are laser focused on ensuring that Claflin continues to prepare in a way that makes us one of the top regional institutions in the country.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE

Purpose:

Columbia College prepares every student personally and professionally for success through liberal arts and professional programs emphasizing service, social justice, and leadership development

Key moments from the previous year:

Columbia College is in the midst of refreshing its leadership team to capitalize on the energy and momentum on campus. Three key leaders – provost, chief financial officer, and athletic director- retired in either 2022 or 2023. Each of these key positions have been successfully filled after conducting national searches. The College is also currently in the search process for a new president, as Dr. Bogart returns to Ohio for family reasons.

One highlight in 2022 was the successful completion of the ten-year reaffirmation of accreditation with SACSCOC. Our visiting team had no recommendations (a clean visit), marking a substantial improvement over the assessment a few years previously when the College had been on warning status.

A bittersweet focus of activity this year has been the prospective acquisition of College Place United Methodist Church to be renovated as campus worship, education, and community space. We are excited about the additional opportunities provided by the space and will always treasure the legacy of working alongside the congregation for over a century.

The new athletic teams in men's and women's tennis and men's swimming are thriving. The new Esports program is adding another dimension to our extracurricular program. We also celebrated receiving a \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support our alternative teacher certification program.

Objectives for the coming year:

There are two overarching goals for the upcoming year. The first is to successfully transition the presidential leadership. The second is to renovate the College Place United Methodist Church property for occupancy in August 2024.

One ongoing priority is continuing to identify ways to grow mission-centered academic programs. Enrollment has grown by 25 percent since 2019, to around 1500 students, but we are not yet at capacity. A related priority is to continue revitalizing and renewing the campus and College-owned property adjacent to campus, as other renovation projects also proceed.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

Columbia College appreciates and respects its tradition of founding in the United Methodist Church and our continued relationship with the Church. Our mission, vision, values, and strategic plan remain rooted in our commitment to the education of all students. The College is fully inclusive, welcoming all students in varying educational modalities who embrace and grow in their lives and professions with a focus on service, social justice, and leadership development.

Narrative:

"There was always something pulling me to Columbia College. I visited a few other schools, but my heart always went back to CC." Graduating senior Zykeria Moultrie's family ties run deep in Columbia College history. Zykeria's great great great grandmother was Susie Thomas, who worked for Columbia College from 1919 until 1968. Zykeria is the first of her family to attend Columbia College following her grandmother's service. When asked what she thinks Susie would say to her on her graduation day, Zykeria shared that she believes her Grandma Susie would be at a loss for words. "Considering the time that she worked for the College, watching a woman from her own family graduate would have been a dream come true. From the stories I've always been told, Susie had a deep, true love for Columbia College, and I believe her words would have been ones of great pride, surprise, and gratitude."

Respectfully submitted:

William T Bogart, President
president@columbiasc.edu, 803-786-3178

SPARTANBURG METHODIST COLLEGE

Purpose:

Spartanburg Methodist College is a private residential institution offering associate and baccalaureate degrees within the United Methodist Connection. At SMC, lives are transformed in a values-oriented, student-centered atmosphere in the Christian tradition that encourages academic excellence, intellectual exploration, social awareness, and character development within the liberal arts tradition.

Key moments from the previous year:

SMC continues to develop and diversify our education offerings. SMC Online now offers a fully online Associate's and Bachelor's Degree. Our faculty have developed multiple new course offerings for in person learning as well as our growing online program.

SMC graduated our third class of Bachelor's Degree students in May.

SMC debuted the "Pioneer Promise," a program that guarantees that any student with a 4.0 GPA or higher in High School can attend SMC with no cost for tuition or fees.

The faculty have developed and approved a BA in Psychology.

SMC is growing the relationship between academics and athletics through a faculty liaison, Student Athlete Advisory Committee, and a Faculty booster club.

Objectives for the coming year:

We continue to add to our course offerings and schedule with an eye towards accommodating our 3rd and 4th year students.

SMC is committed to ensuring that our students have the best opportunity to persist through to graduation. As a result, SMC has adopted a single advisor program. Under this program, a student will have the same advisor from enrollment through employment.

SMC has a Science building that is in dire need of updating. We are currently investigating renovation of that space.

SMC is investigating what steps are necessary to move into 4 year athletic competition.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

Since 1911, SMC has provided education and opportunity to young people who might not otherwise be able to access it. Every person on this campus, from the staff to our faculty, to President Cochran, is committed to shepherding these young people in the direction of love, peace, and prosperity.

It is our belief that the ongoing work to move into offering a four-year option at SMC will enable us to better reach these students. Time and again, we have heard from graduating students that they wish they could remain at SMC in our familial, supportive atmosphere. Now we can offer them that opportunity to continue to grow in knowledge, citizenship, and faith while continuing to be nurtured by our committed, caring faculty and staff.

Narrative:

The following is a testimonial from one of our seniors on campus.

Spartanburg Methodist College (SMC) has supported me as a student in every aspect, from academics to personal. I could have not seen myself going to another college due to how much the faculty and staff care about my success. SMC has also afforded me countless opportunities for growth that I will forever be grateful for. Any student that comes to this great college will meet that one faculty and staff member that makes all the difference. In my case, there are a hand full of professionals that make sure I succeed in every domain of life. SMC truly does go above and beyond to make sure students have equal access to a quality education.

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Timothy C. Drum, II
Chaplain and Director of Church Relations
drumt@smcsc.edu, 864-327-5794

WOFFORD COLLEGE**Purpose:**

Wofford College provides a superior liberal arts education that prepares students to be leaders who think critically while possessing the knowledge and skills to turn thoughts into action to make positive contributions to the world around them.

Key moments from the previous year:

The \$150 million gift from Jerry Richardson, Wofford Class of 1959, in 2021 inspired our community of learners to spend 2022 thinking critically about the Wofford experience and how to leverage the things we do well to support student success in light of our growing endowment.

Wofford celebrated the grand re-opening of Burwell Dining Hall. The two-floor dining hall was completely renovated at a cost of \$11 million, funded largely by AVI Foodsystems.

Wofford's impact in the community was demonstrated by a student research project that inspired Spartanburg County Council's decision to use \$1 million in federal funds to demolish more than 100 abandoned and condemned properties.

Wofford successfully completed its program of targeted, incremental growth, reaching an enrollment of 1,800 students.

We welcomed the Class of 2026 – our largest ever. The 508 students were selected from a record 4,427 applications received by the college. The class is the college's most selective ever.

Objectives for the coming year:

Wofford will continue to look for innovative ways to utilize the Jerry Richardson gift to create meaningful experiential learning opportunities for our students.

The Wofford College Wesley Fellowship transitioned to new clergy leadership during the fall of 2022. The Rev. Paige Wolfe, Wofford Class of 2007, who has faithfully served this group for seven years, assumed another role. We are grateful for her leadership. The Revs. Brad (Class of 2001) and Megan Gray have taken over clergy leadership of this group. The students meet on campus weekly and also participate in a Sunday school class at Bethel United Methodist Church.

Wofford College is appreciative of our ongoing relationship with Central United Methodist Church. Our Lifelong Learning program is currently housed there and involved 392 learners in 2022.

The college's Emerging Leaders Initiative (ELI), a vocational discernment program for those considering some aspect of lay or clergy ministry, restructured this year. The program is led by the Rev. Dr. Ron Robinson, a 1978 Wofford graduate and the Perkins-Prothro Chaplain and Professor of Religion. The restructure resulted in 23 students signing up for the program. Eight students received scholarship assistance as participants. Students are exploring ministry in such diverse areas as environmental justice, gerontology, chaplaincy, counseling, government and social work.

The college continues to house the S.C. Conference Archives, administered by Wofford and S.C. Conference archivist Dr. Phillip Stone, Wofford Class of 1994.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

During the 2022-23 academic year, Wofford distributed more than \$79 million in merit and need-based scholarships, federal and state aid, as well as outside scholarships and loans. A third of Wofford's budget goes toward scholarships and financial assistance, and more than 97% of Wofford students receive some form of financial assistance. Specifically, the college's 184 United Methodist students (10% of the student body) shared more than \$7.25 million in financial aid this year (100 percent of the South Carolina Annual Conference's contribution goes toward financial assistance for these deserving students).

Narrative:

The Wofford experience prioritizes experiential learning, equity and the liberal arts. The goal is for all students — regardless of circumstances or personal financial constraints — to have access to all that Wofford College offers. We sincerely appreciate the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and the many servant-leaders for their continued support of higher education.

Nayef H. Samhat
President

Respectfully submitted:

Robert Dalton, Writer/editor
daltonrw@wofford.edu, 864-597-4199

CHARLESTON WESLEY FOUNDATION

Purpose:

Our goals are to connect students to Christ, connect them to each other, and help students through college.

Key moments from the previous year:

Challenges:

1. We dealt with a Director transition which was altogether not the smoothest of transitions as Board Chair, Staff, and several Board members changed from resignations or term limits. Rebuilding staff and Board has been one of the larger challenges of this year, but we have managed to formulate a very effective staff and Board.
2. We've had to relaunch almost all of our ministries due to Covid restrictions, campus dynamics, and previous decisions. This has proven difficult.

Successes:

1. We managed to connect with a brand-new campus as well as grow attendance in our non-Citadel campus (which The Citadel used to be our primary focus).
2. We are up in fundraising by almost twice as much as last year.
We've reconnected with many local UMCs as well as other churches in the area.

Objectives for the coming year:

1. We hope to reach further into Trident Tech, CSU, and American College of the Building Arts next year.
2. We hope to become more pan-Methodist in our support network (e.g., AMEs, Wesleyan, SMCs, GMCs).
3. We hope to improve campus relations and smooth out communications between campuses.
4. We hope to maintain our current involvement level at each campus, but we also intend to focus specifically on fellowship and service as a growth area.
5. We hope to continue to rework our fundraising and spending in order to better anticipate and offset whatever budgetary impacts are on the horizon from the Conference.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

God is alive in these young people. We have had over 10 student leaders preach to churches, lead Sunday schools, teach Bible studies, and more. We have two graduating students who are pursuing ministry as a career (one UMC, another PCUSA). Lastly, we have approximately 5 students who have reconnected with their faith through the Charleston Wesley Foundation.

Narrative:

I am passionate about this ministry, because I was a part of this ministry. Wesley Foundations are crucial to health of the South Carolina Conference because it develops future church leaders like me, my wife, my friends, and so many more. It is a worthwhile investment to continue to connect with college students who would otherwise disengage from church altogether during these formative years. I see it firsthand every day in what God is doing across 4 campuses in Charleston. With continued support, we can continue to guide students on their collegiate spiritual journey and continue to minister to an often overlooked demographic. Pray for the college students.

Respectfully submitted:

John Sterling Poole, Director
jspool@umcsc.org, 864-205-6392
Clayton Tovo, Administrative Minister
Rev Rob Rabenstein, Board Chair
Rev Dr Vivia Lawton Fowler, Board Vice Chair

CLEMSON WESLEY FOUNDATION

Purpose:

Clemson Wesley is a campus ministry serving Clemson University. Our purpose is to create a community where students find belonging, grow in their faith, and serve God and neighbor.

Key moments from the previous year:

- CW is in ministry to approximately 100 students per week through worship and small group discipleship opportunities.
- 80 students participated in two spiritual life retreats in the fall and spring semesters.
- Two Clemson Wesley Alumni will graduate from seminary in May. Another student will begin seminary in the fall. This adds to the over two dozen students who have gone to seminary and are in full time ministry over the past several years.
- 25 students participated in a week long service trip.

Objectives for the coming year:

This is a challenging but exciting time to be in campus ministry. The post-pandemic era and new generational shifts have created a new way of life on college campuses. These factors combined with denominational tension and uncertainty bring a challenge to campus ministry. However, this new era also provides for great opportunity.

Our objective for the coming year is to continue to innovate and be in vital ministry to the students at Clemson University and Tri-County Technical College. Campus ministry is different than it was 5 years ago and the needs of students is constantly evolving. We look forward to the years ahead as we find new ways to be in ministry with college students. Our "how" is ever-changing but our "why" remains the same. We will continue to proclaim the good news of Jesus and create a community of belonging, growth and service.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

Clemson Wesley is a vital ministry making a difference in the lives of students. We look forward to meeting the challenges ahead as we create a community of belonging, growth and service.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Steve Simoneaux, Executive Director
steve@clemsonwesley.org, 864-650-3177

COLUMBIA WESLEY FOUNDATION- METHODIST STUDENT NETWORK

The reign of God is breaking in upon us, even now, Jesus proclaimed. The reign of God is breaking into the lives of students at the University of South Carolina and into the campus ministry called the Methodist Student Network (Wesley Foundation) as we worship, serve each other and especially the “least of these”, learn about the mysteries of faith, offer hospitality, work for justice and work for the full realization of God’s rule. It is a community striving to be hospitable to all regardless of background, language, sexual orientation or maturity of faith. We are young, very imperfect but passionate about the spiritual life and are intentional about living it out in practical and faithful ways. These are some of the signs of the reign of God breaking in among us.

We serve. We regularly go to the Washington Street Soup Cellar to serve food and offer words of encouragement. We provide a breakfast for the homeless/food insecure on a Saturday morning once or twice a month. We prepare the food at 6:30 am at the campus ministry center and serve it in a parking lot in downtown Columbia. We also serve dinner, interact and play games with the patrons of the formerly homeless pallet program at the Rapid Shelter. Additionally we serve on other one-off occasions at places such as the Tucker Center.

We are **in mission** a number of times each year. This past year we took three different mission trips to demonstrate and share the gospel in word and deed. We took groups to serve in Ecuador offering a medical-optometry-health clinic serving 2000 people. We travelled to Manning several times to build wheel chair ramps to help disabled people have better access to their homes. We also made a trip to share in the life and prayer of the **Taize** community in France.

We gather in small groups throughout the week support one another and to **learn more about the faith**. We do bible study, share our lives and pray for one another. This year we held two retreats to allow students more time for building the community and intentionally connecting with God. We have an older graduate plus group (**Joyful Hour**) that regularly meets to provide friendship and faith support.

We **worship** Sunday evening in a lively and joyous manner utilizing the various gifts of students and a diversity of traditions from the global church. Afterwards we eat together a meal donated by a local United Methodist church or prepared by staff or a local church.

The Campus Ministry Center is a place of **hospitality** where many students gather to socialize, eat, study and meet to talk. It is also home to other groups and ministries. We have founded several interfaith groups that meet at the center. The “Table of Abraham” (Christian, Jew, Muslim) has expanded to become **Carolina Interfaith A to Z**. The Jewish student group, **Hillel**, is now sharing the building renamed **Carolina Faiths Center** which has one of four interfaith prayer spaces on campus.

Sincere thanks to all the people and churches that support this connectional ministry. This ministry would not be possible without it. Thanks to the Board members, local churches, Sunday school classes, UM Men’s and Women’s groups. We are grateful that they are so helpful. And, of course, thanks to students and staff.

Tom Wall- United Methodist Campus Minister
Columbia Wesley Foundation Director

FRANCIS MARION UNIVERSITY WESLEY FOUNDATION

Purpose:

Francis Marion University Wesley Foundation exists to help students grow stronger in their faith, to share the love of Christ and serve others on campus, in the community and where ever they go.

Key moments from the previous year:

This year we were excited to resume our Winter Wesley Retreat weekend at Asbury Hills. Retreats such as this one, are an opportunity for all attending to slow down, relax, explore nature and listen for God’s voice. Students not only have the opportunity to connect with God but also with other students from multiple university campuses. Asbury Hills is such a beautiful place to worship and be in fellowship with one another. The students from FMU had never been to Asbury Hills. The impact of the weekend was great for us and the students are ready and waiting to go back next year. What a great weekend opportunity it was, to get

away from campus life and to seek spiritual renewal. It made me very happy to be able to share with the students one of my favorite places to seek renewal.

Objectives for the coming year:

We are planning to do our own group retreat in the fall, to the SC coast, and return to the Winter Wesley retreat at Asbury Hills in February 2024 with the other universities. This fall we will seek to be as visible as we can on campus to reach out to students. Opportunities like 1st Friday and Student Organizational Fairs presents the opportunities for us to attend the activities and reach out to students. Also, we are hoping to grow this ministry in numbers just like many of our churches, so please, anyone reading this report who know of college students who attend a university where we have a Wesley Foundation, please let them know about this great ministry. Many of our United Methodist Students are not aware that this ministry exists on their campuses. We will continue with find ways to be in fellowship and worship with each other on campus and be involved in the community, through many different activities. Some old, some new!

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference:

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

We will continue to shower God's love upon our students and encourage them on their faith journey. We thank all of you who have supported us in various way, whether it was through prayer, finances, bringing food, or telling students that we are on campuses. We truly appreciate everything that is done to help this ministry. Thank you!5

Narrative:

In closing I would like to share with you a word from one of our students...

I have really enjoyed the past four years with The Wesley Foundation. This group allowed me to leave all of my stress and frustration on the other side of the door for at least two hours a week. I am beyond grateful for the people that I have meet along the way and all the friendships made. I really appreciate Mrs. Lou and all of her time and all of her energy that she has invested into this group. Since Freshmen year, The Wesley Foundation gave me something positive to look forward to on Monday nights. I really enjoyed all the guest speakers that came out to share their knowledge and love for the Lord. They were all so nice and generous and have made a impact on my life too. This group is amazing because it creates opportunities for fellowship, worship, friendships, life-long networks, community service and an overall sense of community and love.

FMU Wesley has made a lasting impact on my life and will always have a special place in my heart. I really hope that this group continues to grow and flourish and continues to spread love and light into the lives of students at Francis Marion University.

- Tamara B.

Respectfully submitted:

Lou Jordan, Campus Director
mnejordan@umcsc.org, 843-665-9276

FURMAN WESLEY FELLOWSHIP

Purpose:

The ministry of Furman Wesley Fellowship serves the Furman University community in the values of the United Methodist Church. We seek to be "A Place to Be, Belong, Connect, & Engage" for the student of Furman.

Key moments from the previous year:

Furman Wesley experienced a great year. Not only did we welcome the amazing class of 2026, but also were able to celebrate 15 years of ministry together ... as this was my 15th year at Furman Wesley Fellowship. It seems like yesterday that this amazing journey began. In order to honor this milestone, we hosted a 15 for 15 Fundraising Campaign. This gave us the opportunity to highlight all the great ministry together and offer the opportunity for people to give back to Wesley. In addition, this year was filled with retreats to Gatlinburg and the Beach, as well as mission opportunities in which we partnered with Habitat for Humanity, Furman's Heller Service Corp, and Prisma Health. We had the opportunity to co-host the University Ash Wednesday Service on the steps of the library,

which was a great opportunity for our group to give back to the campus. We are blessed with an amazing music team who played for our annual SC State Wesley Retreat, along with a few other praise teams. The ministry at Furman continues to thrive and we are excited for the opportunities it affords to our students. Our students, Board, and I am thankful for the support of the SC Annual Conference.

Objectives for the coming year:

Obviously, our continued priority is finding creative ways to stay connected to our students, campus, and community. Our group has sought new ways of connecting with students, as well as, partnered with a few other campus groups to provide outreach to the community. Another priority is being strategic about how to provide a sustainable ministry at Furman University. We have been blessed in our ministry with gracious supporters who see the value in our ministry. However, we recognize the importance of being proactive in the ever-changing environment of the UMC and the world in which we live. Our Wesley Board is continually looking at ways to remain a healthy and vibrant ministry. We continue to seek ways to speak into, and connect with, all of our wonderful students at Furman. We have a diverse campus, and it is important for us to live into the whole of United Methodism. We value our role in leadership development and vocational discernment. As each student finds their way into our ministry, it is our desire to help them identify their gifts and discover the ways God may desire to use them for the kingdom. Our hope is that we can help each student find their voice in the mission of Christ. Finally, it is our strong desire at Furman Wesley Fellowship to find ways to engage the larger Greenville and UMC communities by reaching beyond the walls of campus in order to give back to the people who are so gracious in supporting our ministry.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

The ministry at Furman Wesley Fellowship, and all our collegiate ministries across the denomination, is some of the most important work we do as an Annual Conference. Our Furman Wesley Fellowship desires to pour into the lives of young people, and we pray that our Annual Conference will join our collegiate ministries' mission by making ministry with young adults a priority in our church.

Narrative:

"Coming to Furman I had a list of things I wanted to get involved with. Growing up in the UMC all my life I knew one of those things was going to be campus ministry. I have always loved my high school youth group experiences and hoped I would find something similar at Furman. A group that would be inclusive, have fun together, and above all push each other to grow in faith. Not only was I right, but Furman Wesley Fellowship definitely exceeded my expectations. From that first Tuesday I automatically felt at home and as I showed up to each of the weekly events I quickly realized how tight-knit and amazing this group of people is. After that first Wesley retreat to Awanita Valley, our freshman group has grown strong which makes my heart so happy. We have bonded over capri suns and game nights, as well as Wesley freshman group discussions on everything from the fruits of the spirit to enneagram numbers. As my time at Furman progresses, I can't wait to become more involved with the group, form deeper connections, find more opportunities for service, and grow in my faith." [Gretchen Stern, Raleigh, NC]

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Edward Lovell McCutcheon, Director and
Campus Minister, Furman Wesley
edward.mccutcheon@furman.edu, 864-238-7273
Our Furman Wesley Board and Student Leadership Team.

THE WESLEY OF ORANGEBURG (W.O.O.), WESLEY FOUNDATION

Purpose:

The purpose of the Wesley of Orangeburg is to create a space where students of Claffin University and South Carolina State University can discover and live out their purpose through worship and fellowship, and to help them grow deeper in their faith through discipleship and service to the community and world through outreach and witness.

Key moments from the previous year:

- Preaching for Claflin University during Power Hour
- Students provided community service in support of the Granville Hicks Academy
- Students of the WOO won first place in Step Team Competition.
- Scripture and Pant worship service

Objectives for the coming year:

- Continue to bring awareness of ministry opportunities at The W.O.O. to students of Claflin University and South Carolina State University.
- Establish a student leadership mentoring program for the continuity of the ministry of The W.O.O.
- Partnering with BMCR, so students are aware of the ministry of The W.O.O.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

That Jesus is at The W.O.O. and Jesus will woo you, so meet us at The W.O.O. (The Wesley of Orangeburg).

Narrative:

Continue to bring awareness of the Wesley Foundation's ministry to African American churches throughout the state as well as to the students of Claflin University and South Carolina State University. My first group will be graduating this year. So, if you are wondering about The W.O.O., you need to check it out". So, come check us out, and check out our new website and connect with us on the realm.

Respectfully submitted:

Shirley Gordon, Director and Campus Minister
spgordon@umcsc.org, 843.372.2505

WINTHROP WESLEY FOUNDATION

Purpose:

We exist to create a nurturing Christian community where students may express, explore, and nurture their faith.

Key moments from the previous year:

As is true for many congregations, we are continuing to rebuild from the devastating effects of COVID. In 2019-20 we recruited zero new freshmen; thus far in 2022-23 we have nine new members joining us. If we duplicate this recruitment in future years we will return to our steady state attendance of 25 to 30 students.

We are gaining a reputation as a nurturing community. The majority of our students come from non-United Methodist backgrounds and have experienced pain at the hands of the Church in the past. They find Wesley to be a place where they can experience healing and acceptance, while being challenged to grow as disciples of Christ.

At their first event this year, one of our returning students said "It's so great to be back where I can be myself!" We behave authentically at Wesley; our students feel safe doing the same.

Objectives for the coming year:

We are excited to build a wheelchair ramp at our main entrance, one that looks like it is part of the original building design. Like many old buildings, our center is not very accessible and this will be a giant step in the right direction. The ramp is expensive but we have faith in the generosity of our supporters - one local church has already committed to covering 25% of the cost.

As we grow in numbers, we grow in the number of opportunities we can reasonably offer. We are looking forward to offering short-term courses and a Fall retreat this coming year.

More students also typically means more recruiting, so we will attempt to gain more new members in 2023-24 than we did this year, as we seek to grow beyond a 25-30 steady state.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

We are committed to behave authentically, use the Wesleyan quadrilateral, and intentionally include those often excluded. These core values distinguish us from other campus ministries at Winthrop and provide a place to make disciples of Jesus Christ in the Wesleyan tradition: people who will transform the world.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

Charles Farnum, Director
winthropwesley@gmail.com, 586.894.8858

THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

Every clergy and laity on the Board of Ordained Ministry is thoroughly committed in providing faithful servant leadership. We graciously give of our time and share our exceptional gifts to the ministry of leadership development with the candidates. As a team, we constantly pray to affirm the calling of each candidate for ministry. We walk with and nurture candidates who seek ordination. We seek to encourage excellence, to show compassion, to listen attentively, and to finally see the progress from being ready to becoming fit for ministry. We are forever grateful for each member of the Board of Ordained Ministry who serves to walk with the candidates so that we can develop excellent leaders in various ministry settings. We have continued to adapt, and our Executive Committee meetings were held via Zoom. We finally were able to have our retreat in person in August 2022, and all of our Provisional and Full Member interviews were held in person in February 2023. I personally want to thank everyone who assisted in making this transition successful. We are still living into reality that some members have worked longer than their designated time to serve. General Conference 2022 has now been postponed until April 23, 2024 in Charlotte, North Carolina. We thank everyone for their willingness to extend their time of service. The goal is still before us. We still plan to work efficiently and strive to be faithful in our two primary responsibilities: leadership development and clergy credentialing.

On Sunday evening, June 4, 2023 at 7pm, the Service of Commissioning and Ordination will be held at the Florence Center to celebrate the fruit of persons who have answered a call to ministry and successfully navigated the requirements for commissioning and ordination. These persons are valued as meeting the standards of "readiness" and "effectiveness" for ministry in the local church and other ministry settings.

At this recording, twelve persons will be ordained Full Elders: Peter Kent Berntson FE, James Thornton Brown II FE, Carsten Aubrey Bryant FE, Mason Heyward Cantey FE, John Clarence Elmore, Jr. FE, Scott Stephen Gilmer FE, Shirley Peterson Gordon FE, Joseph David Kovas FE, Cameron Thomas Levi FE, Woongchul Daniel Ra FE, Amanda Geddings Richardson FE, and Cynthia Anne Rumsey FE. I will share updated information for this group at Annual Conference.

One person will be ordained Full Deacon: Margaret Rosa Cantey FD.

Five persons will be commissioned Provisional Elders: Arthur Lindburg Gamble PE, Darlene Moore Richardson PE, Leo Wesley Roy PE, Billy Keith Stewart PE, and Steven Matthew Turner PE.

Two persons will be commissioned Provisional Deacons: Kim Moultrie Bryant PD and Laura McCoy Geloni PD.

John Clarence Elmore, Jr. FE who was previously ordained in another tradition will have his orders recognized and is being received as a Full Member of the South Carolina Annual Conference.

We humbly give thanks that each person has responded to a call to ministry and a commitment to the ordination and commissioning process. We ask for God's blessing on their continual journey in ministry, mission, service, and witness. We encourage all local churches and other ministry settings to invite persons to explore a calling to ministry and prayerfully nurture that calling into leadership.

I personally want to say thank you to all churches in the South Carolina Annual Conference for the generous giving you share. This gives the Board of Ordained Ministry the opportunity to offer scholarships to assist persons called to ministry to achieve the necessary education to equip them for ministry. Scholarship recipients for 2023 are: SEMINARY STUDENTS SCHOLARSHIP (\$6,000), Christopher Charles Key and Elizabeth Scott Loughran; BESSIE BELLAMY PARKER SCHOLARSHIP (\$6,000), Elizabeth Scott

Loughran; T. DENNIE SMITH SCHOLARSHIP (\$2,000), Peter Kile Antone, DiAndra Nichole Brooks, Portia Julia Foden, Christopher Charles Key and Wilhelmina Thompson.

The Board of Ordained Ministry would also like to recognize those who have reached an achievement in their continued preparation for effective ministry. The following persons completed the five-year Basic Course of Study in 2022: Marion Loretta Cooper 12/31/2022, Gregory Phillip Davis 12/31/2022, James Lewis 12/31/2022, Leroy Daniel Mason 12/31/2022, James Roscoe McDowell 12/31/2022, Fred Preston Moore, Jr. 12/31/2022, Rickey Levon Stuckey 12/31/2022, Joel Andrew Watson 12/31/2022, and Gwendolyn Thompson White 12/31/2022. Thank you for your commitment for completing this educational goal.

The University Senate approved a policy change that allows United Methodist students the opportunity to engage in a fully online Master of Divinity degree program. This policy change is effective immediately for all 13 United Methodist seminaries as well as Asbury Theological Seminary. The shift to providing a fully online Master of Divinity degree will help to expand opportunities for United Methodist students all over the world. We will make this change in our Board of Ordained Ministry policy.

We are thankful for local churches and the Annual Conference for ongoing support for the Ministry Education Fund. Through your bountiful giving, the Board of Ordained Ministry has been able to provide financial assistance to students reducing the cost of their education. At this present time, we don't have the complete total. We will share this update at Annual Conference. Continue to be faithful in your support of our future leaders as they remain dedicated in their leadership development toward excellence in ministry. Send your offering to the SC Conference Seminary Students Scholarship Fund, an endowment of the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation, which provides scholarship awards to candidates for ministry from South Carolina attending United Methodist seminaries and theological schools. Your financial gifts are truly welcomed.

District Committees on Ordained Ministry are an extension of the Board of Ordained Ministry that are committed to meeting with all candidates for ministry. Their first line of nurture and accountability of persons in the ministry process is needed greatly. The Board of Ordained Ministry is indebted to every District Committee on Ordained Ministry for the hard and gracious work they do.

We celebrate God's call on lives to serve, lead, and experience the joy of ministry. Ministry is a continual journey, and we faithfully provide opportunities for growth to occur. The Board of Ordained Ministry works tirelessly to plan the yearly Bishop's School of Ministry and Clergy Orders. We recruit and engage seminarians as potential and hopeful leaders in the South Carolina Conference, discern and process Extension Ministry requests as the field of ministry shifts, participate in Approval for Service requests for persons seeking to join our Annual Conference, receive and prayerfully process requests for Change of Status of candidates and clergy, and engage persons discerning a call to ministry through the Candidacy Retreats. These are just a few of the ongoing responsibilities of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

We will always need the assistance of our local churches to help nurture and provide candidates who may be willing to embark on this ministry journey. As a collective team, we your South Carolina Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, will strive to faithfully attend to the nurture and holistic accountability of every person called to ministry. Our parish may look different today but serving Jesus Christ is a promising turning point that our days ahead should offer hope, joy, and grace for ministry.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Ordained Ministry, we are grateful for the faithful and skilled leadership of the Rev. Mel Arant, Coordinator of Clergy Services, and the faithful and talented leadership of Mr. Sharome Henry, Executive Assistant, Clergy Services. The work of the Board of Ordained Ministry could not be done as efficiently without the blessing of their direction, leadership, knowledge, proficiency, and love for all people.

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Morris Waymer, Jr.
Board of Ordained Ministry, Chairperson

THE BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS

PENSION SECTION

Report Number One

A. Past Service Rate

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits requests that the South Carolina Annual Conference fix **\$881** per service year as the rate for annuity payments to retired ministers under the Supplement One of the Clergy Retirement Security Plan (otherwise known as Pre-82) for 2024. (This rate was **\$863** for the year 2023.) This shall include service annuity credits approved prior to January 1, 1982. An eligible surviving spouse shall receive 75% of the formula benefit upon the death of the participant.

B. Direct Billing

1. The Board of Pensions requests that direct billings to salary paying units be made to give the Board of Pension and Health Benefits (The Pension Fund), **\$4,556,666** for the pension program of the South Carolina Annual Conference for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2024, and that this sum be apportioned or billed to the churches of the South Carolina Annual Conference.
2. For 2024, each institution, organization or district to which a minister is appointed and enrolled shall pay to the South Carolina Annual Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits an amount equal to **\$497** per month for full-time clergy for the Defined Benefit portion of the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP). This includes all full-time clergy (including deacons) who are under Episcopal appointment (receiving compensation) at a local church, charge, conference or conference responsible unit or entity related to the South Carolina Annual Conference. (This rate was \$497 per month in 2023.) An amount equal to three percent (3%) of the appointed participant's Plan Compensation shall be paid for the defined contribution portion of the CRSP. This amount must be matched by a contribution of 1% by the participating pastor in his/her United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) Account in order to receive credit for the full 3% paid by the church. Any surplus funds collected will be used for actuarial and collection smoothing. An amount equal to 3% of the appointed participant's Plan Compensation, limited by 200% of the Denomination Average Compensation, shall be paid for Comprehensive Protection Plan funding or other benefit plan. Such payments shall be made for each minister so appointed, and paid monthly crediting in twelve equal installments from deposits made in the Deposit Account of the South Carolina Annual Conference with Wespath Benefits & Investments, by the treasurer of the South Carolina Annual Conference. Churches/charges participating in ACH automated payment system (bank draft) may receive up to a \$15.00 per month discount on their pension payment. This is an increase from \$10.00 in 2023.
3. For 2024, the Board of Pension & Health Benefits recommends each institution, organization or district to which a part-time minister is appointed and enrolled contribute to a defined contribution 403(b) pension program called the United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP). For all clergy who are under Episcopal appointment and considered part-time (receiving compensation) at a local church, charge, conference or conference-responsible unit or entity related to the South Carolina Annual Conference, the salary paying unit shall pay an amount equal to 9.0% of the appointed participant's Plan Compensation for the matching portion of the defined contribution portion of the UMPIP. The contribution by the church will be made if the clergy person contributes a minimum of 3% of his/her plan compensation in their United Methodist Personal Investment Account. Each church with a less than full-time clergy will be required to complete an adoption agreement with Wespath Benefits and Investments, a general agency of The United Methodist Church. The pension cost, both the church's share and the participant's match, will be billed from Wespath Benefits & Investments.
4. Beginning January 1, 2024, all churches with direct billing responsibilities will receive paperless statements. Statements will be emailed to the treasurer as reported during charge conference. The monthly statements will also be emailed to the pastor and any additional recipients upon request.

C. Fiscal Year

1. The fiscal year of the Board of Pensions shall be the same as that of the South Carolina Annual Conference.

D. Moving Expenses

1. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits authorizes one-time moving expense reimbursement grants, not to exceed **\$2,000**, and including up to \$350 in verified packing expenses, for newly incapacitated ministers receiving **CPP Incapacity Benefits, surviving spouses of ministers, participants in the Voluntary Transition Program, or newly** retired ministers in benefit, moving from the parsonage provided by the charge. Persons moving must file for the one-time reimbursement grant no later than 90 days after first reception of pensions or disability benefits and may use the funds for moving expenses and/or for connection/tap on or hookup fees in the new residence. This amount was **\$1,800** for 2023.

E. Resolution Relating to Rental/Housing Allowances for Active, Retired or Disabled Clergypersons of the South Carolina Annual Conference

The South Carolina Annual Conference (the "Conference") adopts the following resolutions relating to rental/housing allowances for active, retired, or disabled clergypersons of the Conference:

WHEREAS, the religious denomination known as The United Methodist Church (the "Church"), of which this Conference is a part, has in the past functioned and continues to function through ministers of the gospel (within the meaning of Internal Revenue Code section 107) who were or are duly ordained, commissioned, or licensed ministers of the Church ("Clergypersons");

WHEREAS, the practice of the Church and of this Conference was and is to provide active Clergypersons with a parsonage or a rental/housing allowance as part of their gross compensation;

WHEREAS, pensions or other amounts paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergypersons are considered to be deferred compensation and are paid to active, retired, terminated, and disabled Clergy-persons in consideration of previous active service; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has recognized the Conference (or its predecessors) as the appropriate organization to designate a rental/housing allowance for Clergypersons who are or were members of this Conference and are eligible to receive such deferred compensation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: THAT an amount equal to 100% of the pension or disability payments received from plans authorized under *The Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church (the "*Discipline*"), which includes all such payments from the Wespath Benefits & Investments, during the years 2022, 2023, and 2024 by each active, retired, terminated, or disabled Clergyperson who is or was a member of the Conference, or its predecessors, be and hereby is designated as a rental/housing allowance for each such Clergyperson; and

THAT the pension, severance, or disability payments to which this rental/housing allowance applies will be any pension or disability payments from plans, annuities, or funds authorized under the *Discipline*, including such payments from the Wespath Benefits/Investments and from a commercial annuity company that provides an annuity arising from benefits accrued under a Wespath plan, annuity, or fund authorized under the *Discipline*, that result from any service a Clergyperson rendered to this Conference or that an active, a retired, or a disabled Clergyperson of this Conference rendered to any local church, annual conference of the Church, general agency of the Church, other institution of the Church, former denomination that is now a part of the Church, or any other employer that employed the Clergy-person to perform services related to the ministry of the Church, or its predecessors, and that elected to make contributions to, or accrue a benefit under, such a plan, annuity, or fund for such active, retired, or disabled Clergyperson's pension or disability as part of his or her gross compensation.

NOTE: The rental/housing allowance that may be excluded from a Clergyperson's gross income in any year for federal income tax purposes is limited under Internal Revenue Code section 107(2) and regulations thereunder to the least of: (1) the amount of the rental/housing allowance designated by the Clergyperson's employer or other appropriate body of the Church (such as this Conference in the foregoing resolutions) for such year; (2) the amount actually expended by the Clergyperson to rent or provide a home in such year; or (3) the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances (such as a garage), plus the cost of utilities in such year.

**Report Number Two
2024 Pension and Welfare Operating Budget**

Requirement	2023 Budgeted	2024 Estimated
Clergy Retirement Service Plan (CRSP)		
Defined Benefit Amount	\$2,206,499	\$2,187,154
CRSP Defined Contribution (3%)	\$1,025,633	\$1,085,656
CPP Welfare Plan (3%) or Benefits Funding	\$1,031,478	\$1,083,856
Total Estimated Requirement	\$4,263,610	\$4,356,666
Estimated Income		
Direct Bill Payments	\$4,263,610	\$4,356,666
Total Estimated Income	\$4,263,610	\$4,356,666

Valerie Brooks-Madden, Chairperson

**THE BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS
GROUP INSURANCE SECTION**

Report Number One

The insurance program of the South Carolina Conference is designed to provide its eligible employees (as defined herein), and their eligible dependents, with a comprehensive plan for major medical benefits and a Medicare supplement.

A. Eligibility: The following are eligible for coverage under the program:

1. Those employed and funded by a local church either as Full or Three-Quarter (3/4) time Elders in Full Connection, Associate Members, Local Pastors, Provisional Elders, *Non-retired Supply Pastors (lay persons; and clergy of other denominations), Deacons appointed as pastor in charge*, within the South Carolina Annual Conference and included in the Hospitalization and Medical Expense Program Adoption Agreement. *The salary-paying unit must sign an adoption agreement prior to enrollment for supply pastors and Deacons appointed as pastor in charge.*
2. Ministers who are full time or three-quarter time employees of and funded by the Annual Conference boards, councils or agencies.
3. District Superintendents.
4. Lay persons who are full-time employees of and funded by the Annual Conference.
5. Ordained ministers from other United Methodist Annual Conferences and ordained ministers from other Methodist denominations, and other denominations, under Episcopal appointment fully employed and funded by a local church or charge of the South Carolina Annual Conference under the provisions of Paragraphs 346.1 and 346.2 of the 2008 *Book of Discipline*.
6. Full Deacons, Provisional Deacons, Provisional Deacons/1992, and Diaconal ministers related to and serving a local church enrolled and funded by a local church of the South Carolina Annual Conference currently meeting the underwriting guidelines of the South Carolina Annual Conference group insurance plan. The salary-paying unit will set the cost sharing and must sign a sub-adoption agreement.

B. Eligibility: The following are eligible for coverage under the retiree program:

1. Retired clergy who have been under full-time appointment to a local church with pension responsibility by the South Carolina Annual Conference, and who are immediately eligible to receive pension or incapacity benefits, and who have participation in the active group health plan of the South Carolina Annual Conference, the last ten (10) years of which were continuous and consecutive, shall be eligible for participation in the retiree health care program of the Annual Conference and their respective spouses if spouse is covered at least five continuous and consecutive years immediately prior to retirement. A Retired Participant at the time of his or her Early Retirement Date or Normal Retirement Date, will be allowed to be tolled if coverage under a previous employer's or spouse's group plan is available, during the period of time between the Termination of Employment and the Early Retirement Date or Normal Retirement Date and loss of such coverage.
2. Retired lay employees who have attained age 62 and have been full-time employees of the South Carolina Annual Conference, and who are immediately eligible to receive United Methodist pension or incapacity benefits, and who

have participation in the active group health plan of the South Carolina Annual Conference, the last ten (10) years of which were continuous and consecutive, shall be eligible for participation in the retiree health care program of the Annual Conference and their respective spouses if spouse is covered at least five continuous and consecutive years immediately prior to retirement. A Retired Participant at the time of his or her Early Retirement Date or Normal Retirement Date, will be allowed to be tolled if coverage under a previous employer's or spouse's group plan is available, during the period of time between the Termination of Employment and the Early Retirement Date or Normal Retirement Date and loss of such coverage.

3. Those retired clergy or incapacitated employees, referred to herein as lay persons, immediately eligible to receive pension or disability benefits from the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits at the beginning of the month following the month in which the retired relation or disability leave with disability benefits takes place, and who had a minimum of ten (10) continuous and consecutive years of active participation in the South Carolina Annual Conference group health plan at the time of retirement or the granting of Basic Protection Plan incapacity benefits by the General Board of Pensions, and their respective spouses if spouse is covered at least five continuous and consecutive years immediately prior to retirement.
4. Funding for the group insurance plans upon retirement in benefit from the South Carolina Annual Conference shall be based on full time employment by the Annual Conference, full time appointment to a local church or eligible extension ministry with pension responsibility by the South Carolina Annual Conference. Funding shall be \$100.00 per month for single participants and \$200.00 per month for married participants and an additional \$100 per month for dependents. (This funding is \$200.00 per month for single participants and \$400.00 per month for married participants and an additional \$200 per month for dependents for those retirees who retired in 2015 or earlier). This funding will be paid through a Health Reimbursement Account. This funding cannot be allowed to purchase an employer group policy other than one sponsored or administered by the Annual Conference or its designee. Enrollment in the HRA must be done through the AmWins Benefits Coordinator.

Report Number Two Major Medical Insurance Benefits

During the year 2022-2023 the South Carolina Board of Pension and Health Benefits (the Board) has reviewed options for providing health benefits for both eligible lay employees and clergy and current and future retirees under the health plan. After review of these options, the Board recommends the following:

- A. HealthFlex Exchange**
The South Carolina Annual Conference has elected to participate in the HealthFlex Exchange, managed health care plan of Wespath Benefits and Investments for active participants and eligible dependents. The HealthFlex Exchange provides an array of plans to help the needs of our appointed clergy and eligible lay employees. Plan summaries are located on the conference website at umcsc.org/healthflex.
- B. Dental/Vision Coverage**
Eligible participants are also able to select from two optional benefits: an expanded vision benefit and a dental plan. This will be in addition to coverage selected from the HealthFlex exchange.
- C. Additional Information**
Additional information on medical, dental and vision plans is available from the Board of Pension and Health Benefits by visiting umcsc.org/healthflex.

Report Number Three Retiree Medical Primary Benefits

- A. Post 65 Retirees**
The South Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church will be offering their post 65 retirees one group Medicare supplement or the ability to choose a custom Supplemental plan through the Retiree Benefits Choice™ through AmWINS

Group Benefits. There are two group medical plans offered. The Standard Plan and the Humana Advantage Plan. A custom option is also available and will be a hybrid Medicare Exchange by which a retiree can choose a plan from the Medicare Marketplace. There will be corresponding Rx options with the Standard Plan.

B. Administrator

AmWINS Group Benefits will be the administrator for the retiree benefit plans. AmWINS Group Benefits specializes in retiree benefit programs for companies, municipalities and religious organizations. AmWINS Group Benefits has over 700 retiree benefit clients nationally.

C. Services Provided

AmWINS Group Benefits will provide the following services for retirees of the South Carolina Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.

- Retiree communications enrollment kit
- Group retiree meetings
- Retiree call center services
- Retiree website
- Billing and collecting of premiums
- Ongoing service and support for retirees

D. Handbook

A handbook explaining the provisions of Medicare is available from the Social Security Administration office or by visiting medicare.gov.

Report Number Four Administrative Procedures

A. Enrollment

Enrollment in HealthFlex, the group insurance plan of the South Carolina Annual Conference, must be made within the first thirty days of eligibility or the first day actively at work. Late enrollment or enrollment for January 1 of any year must be completed with Wespath Benefits & Investments during annual election, which is prior to November 30th of the preceding year. It should be noted, that any continuation, changes, or initiation of Flexible Spending Accounts (Medical Reimbursement or dependent care accounts) must be done during this time through the open enrollment process and not on the ministerial support form. Health Savings Account amounts can be updated at any time (H2000, H2500, H5000 plans only).

B. Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements are also set forth in the *HealthFlex Administrative Manual* published by the Center for Health of Wespath Benefits & Investments, 1901 Chestnut Avenue, Glenview, IL 660025-1604.

C. Billing

At the first of each month, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits will send premium statements to the salary-paying unit of the participants enrolled in the Conference Insurance Program and participants with Flexible Spending Accounts. Payments for group health premiums and Flexible Spending Accounts premiums shall be made on a monthly basis.

D. Cancellation of Coverage

It is imperative that each church/charge remit to the Annual Conference the participant's portion of the Health Benefits withheld from the participants compensation on a monthly basis. **The Board of Pension and Health Benefits has instructed the benefits administrator to cancel the Insurance Coverage, Medical Reimbursement Accounts, and/or Dependent Care Accounts of any participant whose payroll withholdings are not paid by the end of the month for which the church/charge has been billed. Clergy whose accounts are 60 days in arrears will be subject to immediate cancellation. Once cancelled the participant's coverage cannot be reinstated until the next open enrollment period, and then only if the unpaid balance has been paid. Churches or salary paying units are responsible for withholding premiums and other Flexible Spending Accounts from the compensation of participants and remitting payment to the Annual Conference when billed.**

E. Ministers Serving in Eligible Extension Ministries

It is required that all Conference Boards and Agencies, served by ministers and others eligible for group insurance participation, pay for the "institutional share" of the insured's premium. This provision shall apply to the District Superintendents, Conference Staff and those serving United Methodist agencies for whom the South Carolina Annual Conference has pension responsibility. In every case, the full cost of the group health premium must be paid by the insured, the employer, or through the combined payments of the insured and the employer. Premium payments shall be made in accordance with the instructions printed on the monthly "Statement of Account". Premium payments are due at the first of the month for which the participant is billed.

F. Applications for Enrollment

Applications for enrollment in the Conference Insurance Program are available from the Board of Pension and Health Benefits, 4908 Colonial Drive, Columbia, SC 29203. The changed enrollment form must be completed and in the hands of the benefits administrator within 30 days from the date of eligibility. If not, the applicant will be ineligible until the next following enrollment period.

G. Board Oversight

The Board of Pension and Health Benefits is charged with oversight of the group insurance program of the South Carolina Annual Conference, the benefits of which program are outlined in the reports of the Board submitted to the Annual Conference. The Annual Conference approves the group insurance budget of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits. The Board is authorized to negotiate and contract with carriers or the Hospitalization and Medical Expense Program Administrator to maintain the level of benefits for the eligible participants, as defined by the Annual Conference.

H. Plan of First Refusal

The group health plan of the South Carolina Annual Conference (Conference Plan) shall be the plan of first refusal for covering dependents of clergy appointed to local churches in the Conference. Where covered clergy wish to cover their dependents, the local church will seek to cover such dependents through the Conference Plan, rather than purchasing outside health insurance. Local churches may be excused from this requirement in cases where such dependents may be covered through the employer of a covered clergyperson's spouse, or through a governmental plan, such as an SCHIP, and in cases of demonstrable financial hardship.

**Report Number Five
Group Health Insurance Operating Budget**

Requirements	2023 Budgeted	2024 Estimated
Active & Non-Medicare Retiree Group	\$8,959,104	\$9,071,988
Medicare Eligible Retiree Group*	\$789,036	\$766,335
Other Unfunded Benefit Obligations	\$150,000	\$200,000
Total Estimated Requirements	\$9,898,140	\$10,038,323
Estimated Income		
Billing to Salary Paying Units	\$8,701,992	\$8,265,276
Apportioned to Churches	\$800,000	\$200,000
HMEP Fund Investments	\$257,112	\$806,712
Retiree Medical Investments	\$139,036	\$766,335
Total Estimated Income	\$9,898,140	\$10,038,323

*to be apportioned.

**Report Number Six
2024 Group Health Costs**

The Board of Pension & Health Benefits makes the following recommendation for action by the 2023 South Carolina Annual Conference.

1. Billing

The sum of \$8,265,276 be billed to the local church/charge and salary paying units for the Conference Insurance Program in 2024.

2. **Apportionment Request**

The Board of Pension & Health Benefits requests an apportionment of \$200,000 for unfunded benefits such as, Transitional Pension Funding, Grants for incapacitated and/or suspended participants.

3. **Premium Payments effective January 1, 2024**

Active personal group insurance health premiums for eligible active clergy/survivor/conference lay employee categories (Categories delineated in A.1, A.2, A.3, A.4, and A.8 or Report Number One) shall be funded as shown below:

a. **Health Benefit Fee**

Churches/Charges who have an eligible appointed clergy/lay participants (see report Number One A.1) will be billed a health benefit fee of \$1,210.00 per month or \$14,520.00 annually. This fee is an increase of \$135 per month or \$1,620 per year from 2023. The Board will offer a Health Fee Subsidy in 2024 in the amount of \$135 per month to offset this increase.

i. **This fee will be billed regardless of the clergy person/eligible participant's enrollment in coverage or waiving coverage**

b. **Premium Credit**

The Premium Credit toward the HealthFlex Exchange according to coverage tier as shown below.

- i. Premium Credit for Participant Only coverage is expected to be \$950 per month (\$11,400 annually).
- ii. Premium Credit for Participant + one dependent coverage is expected to be \$1,750 per month (\$21,000 annually).
- iii. Premium Credit for Participant plus family coverage is expected to be \$2,325 per month (\$27,900 annually).

4. **Total Premium**

Total Premiums for the 2024 HealthFlex Exchange Plans are outline in the table below:

Plan	Participant	Participant +1	Participant + Family
B1000	\$1,287	\$2,455	\$3,346
C2000	\$1,236	\$2,347	\$3,212
C3000	\$1,076	\$2,044	\$2,797
H2000	\$1,205	\$2,289	\$3,132
H2500	\$1,035	\$1,966	\$2,690
H5000	\$971	\$1,844	\$2,524

5. **Default Plan**

If a participant fails to make an election during the annual election (open enrollment) period or within thirty (30) days of becoming newly eligible, that participant and any covered dependents will be automatically enrolled in the H2000 plan. **Note: This does not constitute a recommendation by the Annual Conference; in fact, it may not be the right plan for most participants, but is merely a plan default.**

6. **Optional Coverages**

Participants have the option to select expanded Vision (Vision Core is included) and Dental Coverages.

7. **Dental Care Premiums**

Plan	Participant	Participant +1	Participant + Family
Passive PPO 2000	\$48	\$96	\$144
Dental PPO	\$39	\$79	\$118
Dental HMO	\$16	\$30	\$53

8. **Vision Care Premiums**

Plan	Participant	Participant +1	Participant + Family
Vision Core	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Vision Full Service	\$8.00	\$13.00	\$20.00
Vision Premier	\$14.00	\$23.00	\$36.00

9. **Retiree (Retiree Spouse) Premiums Non Medicare**

- a. Rates for pre-65 retirees covered under HealthFlex would be the premium found in section 4 of this report reduced by the Defined Contributions for retirees. For those retired before July 1, 2015, the Defined Contribution would be \$200 for single Participants and for a couple with a participating spouse it would be \$400 per month under the provisions of Report Number One Paragraph A.5. For those retiring after July 1, 2015, the Defined Contribution would be \$100 for single Participants and for a couple with a participating spouse it would be \$200 per month under the provisions of Report Number One Paragraph A.5.

10. **Covered Participants with Negotiated Service, Compensation, & Benefits**
 The estimated 2024 monthly group health insurance premiums for persons with negotiated service, compensation and benefits, Deacons in Full Connection employed full time, full-time Diaconal Ministers and full-time Lay Employees of local churches, premium for all the plans above and the church or plan sponsor will be billed the entire premium for dental and vision benefits (7-8) and the entire rate for health coverage (section 12). The cost sharing between the participant and the church or plan sponsor will be determined by the church or plan sponsor. Enrollment must be made within 30 days of new hire status, or 60 days prior to January 1, 2024.
11. **Board of Pension & Health Benefit Authority**
 It is recommended that the South Carolina Annual Conference delegate to the South Carolina Annual Conference Board of Pension & Health Benefits the authority to adjust rates and plan designs to meet the requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
12. **2024 HealthFlex Exchange Rates**

**Proposed Monthly HealthFlex Rate Summary for
 Itinerant Clergy, Deacons Employed by the Annual Conference,
 Conference Lay Employees,
 Non-retired Supply Pastors (lay persons; and
 clergy of other denominations), Deacons appointed as pastor in charge.**

Plan Elected	Participant	Participant +1	Participant + Family
B1000	\$337	\$695	\$1,021
C2000	\$286	\$597	\$887
C3000	\$126	\$294	\$472
H2000	\$255	\$539	\$807
H2500	\$85	\$216	\$365
H5000	\$21	\$94	\$199

**Proposed Monthly HealthFlex Rate Summary* for
 Deacons with Negotiated Service, Compensation, & Benefits
 Lay Employees of Local Church**

*Full Amount Billed to the Local Church/Plan Sponsor.

Actual Cost to participant is negotiated between participant and church/plan sponsor.

Plan Elected	Participant	Participant +1	Participant + Family
B1000	\$1,248	\$2,372	\$3,426
C2000	\$1,199	\$2,277	\$3,116
C3000	\$1,044	\$1,983	\$2,713
H2000	\$1,169	\$2,220	\$3,038
H2500	\$1,004	\$1,907	\$2,609
H5000	\$942	\$1,789	\$2,448

13. **Future Years Health Benefit Premium Increase:** As most are aware, the cost of healthcare in the United States continues to rise at a rapid pace. While efforts are being made to reduce the cost to local church and participants in the plan, the Board of Pension and Health expects rates to continue to rise as well. **2025 rates are expected to rise by a minimum of 5% for both the health fee and personal portion of the participants.**

**THE BOARD OF PENSION AND HEALTH BENEFITS
 WELFARE PLAN SECTION**

Welfare Plan Structure

The welfare plan made available to South Carolina Conference clergy is the Comprehensive Protection Plan ("CPP") sponsored by Wespath.

The CPP disability benefits are as follows:

- Clergy disabled on or after January 1, 2002, the CPP disability benefit equals 70 percent of Plan Compensation, with compensation capped at 200 percent of the DAC (Denominational Average Compensation.)
- Clergy disabled prior to January 1, 2002, will continue to receive the same CPP disability benefit per the plan document in-force at the time of their disability claim originated.

The following generally describes the death benefit amounts payable under the CPP to eligible participants and their beneficiaries.

Active Participant Death Benefits: payable upon the death of an eligible active CPP participant, as follows:

- Participant: \$50,000, payable in 12 monthly installments or one lump sum
- Spouse of active participant: 20% of DAC (Denominational Average Compensation) in the year of death
- Surviving spouse of active participant: 15% of DAC in the year of death
- Child of active participant: 10% of DAC in the year of death
- Annual surviving spouse annuity benefit of 20% of DAC, less the annuity benefit payable from CRSP.
- Annual surviving child benefit of 10% of DAC, payable in 12 monthly installments (for those age 17 and younger; benefits are paid through the month in which the child attains age 18)
- Annual surviving child educational benefit up to 20% of DAC, payable in equal installments (for those age 18 through 24 and attending school full-time)

Retired Participant Death Benefits: to be eligible for death benefits in retirement, a clergyperson must have been covered in CPP for a specified number of years. The 2012 General Conference approved a change to the CPP program which increases the length of service requirement for retirees. Retirees with 25 or more years of enrollment in CPP are eligible for the death benefits in retirement, and the eligibility for those with fewer than 25 years in CPP is phased in with one-year increments, as detailed on the following table.

**Those who retire under the 20-year rule are ineligible for CPP Death Benefit.

Retirement Year	CPP Enrollment Requirement for Death Benefit Eligibility
2013	6 of last 10 years
2014	7 of last 10 years
2015	8 of last 11 years
2016	9 of last 12 years
2017	10 of last 13 years
2018	11 of last 14 years
2019+	12 of last 15 years

The Death Benefit amounts associated with retired participants are detailed in the following table:

Plan Provision	Clergy Who Retire Before January 1, 2013	Clergy Who Retire January 1, 2013 or later
Death of retired participant	30% of DAC in year of death	\$20,808
Death of retiree's spouse	20% of DAC in year of death	\$15,606
Death of retiree's surviving spouse	15% of DAC in year of death	\$10,404
Death of retiree's child	10% of DAC in year of death	\$8,323
Annual surviving child benefit, payable in 12 mo. installments	10% of DAC	10% of DAC
Annual payable in installments	20% of DAC	20% of DAC

Denominational Average Compensation

Several of the pension and welfare plans incorporate the Denomination Average Compensation ("DAC") into the formula for determining the plan benefit. As reported by Wespeth, the DAC is projected to increase from 2022 to 2023 as follows: The 2022 DAC is **\$75,570**. The 2023 DAC is **\$76,221**.

2024 COMPREHENSIVE BENEFIT FUNDING PLAN

NEXT PAGE

South Carolina Conference (741)
2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

REDUCE PAGES TO FIT ON EACH PAGE

The way you did it in last year's Journal

Pages 265-284

Thanks!

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

This funding plan incorporates, to the best of our understanding, the plan sponsor's obligations and funding of the benefits provided to clergy and laity, as noted below.

It is understood by the signees that defined benefit plan liabilities [Pre-82 Plan, Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) and Clergy Retirement Security Program Defined Benefit (CRSP DB) and other sponsored defined benefit plans] continue until the last benefit is paid to participants and their surviving spouses irrespective of the funding level of the plan. That is, even if the assets in the plan are larger than the liabilities in the plan, the plan sponsor still has a liability (obligation) and potential future contribution due to the plan.

Benefit Obligations Summary

Plan Contributions for 2024

Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) DB	\$2,187,154
Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) DC	\$1,021,545
Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP)	\$0
Pre-82 Plan (Pre-82)	\$0
United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) Lay	\$110,013
United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) Clergy	\$220,044
Other Defined Contribution (DC) Obligations	\$25,151
Other Defined Benefit (DB) Obligations	\$0
Health—Active Participants	\$8,927,675
Health—Additional Sponsored Coverage	\$546,214
Post-Retirement Medical (PRM)	\$743,172
Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)	\$1,034,761

Ongoing Funding Contributions

Pre-82 Plan (Pre-82)	\$0
Post-Retirement Medical (PRM)	\$0

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Conference Benefit Officer (or equivalent)	Chris Lollis	04/28/2023
Conference Treasurer	E.G. Westbury	04/29/2023
Conference Board of Pension Chair	Valerie Brooks-Madden	05/04/2023
Council on Finance and Administration Chair		



Opinion on **South Carolina Conference 2024** Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

The funding plan meets the standards for a Pre-82 funding plan as established by Wespath Benefits and Investments and the favorable opinion requirements for a funding plan. Note: The statement above and any written opinion provided by Wespath do not imply any representation as to the ability or probability of the applicable plan sponsor to fulfill the obligations included in the funding plan.

Wespath Benefits and Investments

Wespath Benefits and Investments
1901 W Chestnut Ave
Glenview, IL 60025

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Accounts

Wespath Accounts		Market Value as of 12/31/2021	Market Value as of 12/31/2022	
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT		\$16,590,907	\$14,311,662	
Pre-82 designated assets	\$0	Investment Objective	Intermediate-term	
PRM designated assets	\$0	Actual Allocation	Equity	52.97%
			Fixed	28.52%
			Short-term	18.51%
<hr/>				
H M E P ACCOUNT		\$22,430,868	\$18,962,147	
Pre-82 designated assets	\$0	Investment Objective	Intermediate-term	
PRM designated assets	\$0	Actual Allocation	Equity	52.78%
			Fixed	28.42%
			Short-term	18.80%
<hr/>				
\$	RETIREE HEALTH CARE	\$27,171,978	\$22,812,860	
Pre-82 designated assets	\$0	Investment Objective	Intermediate-term	
PRM designated assets	\$22,812,860	Actual Allocation	Equity	65.00%
			Fixed	35.00%
			Short-term	0.00%
<hr/>				
SOUTH CAROLINA SUPERANNUATE		\$1,312,905	\$1,076,508	
Pre-82 designated assets	\$0	Investment Objective	Long-term	
PRM designated assets	\$0	Actual Allocation	Equity	65.00%
			Fixed	35.00%
			Short-term	0.00%

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Non-Wespath Accounts

		Market Value as of 12/31/2021		Market Value as of 12/31/2022
Health Insurance Conference Held		\$982,215		\$0
Pre-82 designated assets	\$0		Investment Objective	Short-term
PRM designated assets	\$0		Actual Allocation	Equity 0.00%
				Fixed 0.00%
				Short-term 100.00%

Pension Fund Conference Held		\$475,108		\$0
Pre-82 designated assets	\$0		Investment Objective	Short-term
PRM designated assets	\$0		Actual Allocation	Equity 0.00%
				Fixed 0.00%
				Short-term 100.00%

\$ *A portion of this account has been designated as plan assets. The allocated amounts will be shown separately on the Allocation screen and will not be included in the Market Value for this account.*

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Incoming Money

Primary Sources

Estimated amount for 2024

Direct Billing

Refer to the following "Allocate Funding Sources" pages for actual amounts allocated from the above funding sources.

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Allocate Funding Sources to Benefit Obligations

Funding Sources		Deposit Account	H M E P Account	South Carolina Superannuate	Direct Billing	Pre-82 Surplus
Available Balance		\$14,311,662	\$18,962,147	\$1,076,508		\$38,710,735
Total Allocated		\$0	\$85,499	\$546,214	\$13,440,844	\$0
Remaining Balance		\$14,311,662	\$18,876,648	\$530,294		\$38,710,735
Plan Contributions for 2024						
CRSP DB	\$2,187,154				\$2,187,154	
CRSP DC	\$1,021,545				\$1,021,545	
MPP						
Pre-82						
UMPIP Lay	\$110,013				\$110,013	
UMPIP Clergy	\$220,044				\$220,044	
Conference Lay Employee Death & Disability	\$16,345				\$16,345	
Death Benefits for Pre BPP Retired Lay Employee	\$8,806				\$8,806	
Health Active	\$8,927,675		\$85,499		\$8,842,176	
Health Additional	\$546,214			\$546,214		
Post-Retirement Medical	\$743,172					
CPP	\$1,034,761				\$1,034,761	
Ongoing Funding Contributions						
Pre-82						
Post-Retirement Medical	\$0					

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Allocate Funding Sources to Benefit Obligations

Funding Sources		Prm In-Plan & Outside Assets
Available Balance		\$22,812,860
Total Allocated		\$743,172
Remaining Balance		\$22,069,688
Plan Contributions for 2024		
CRSP DB	\$2,187,154	
CRSP DC	\$1,021,545	
MPP		
Pre-82		
UMPIP Lay	\$110,013	
UMPIP Clergy	\$220,044	
Conference Lay Employee Death & Disability	\$16,345	
Death Benefits for Pre BPP Retired Lay Employee	\$8,806	
Health Active	\$8,927,675	
Health Additional	\$546,214	
Post-Retirement Medical	\$743,172	\$743,172
CPP	\$1,034,761	
Ongoing Funding Contributions		
Pre-82		
Post-Retirement Medical	\$0	

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Plan Contributions for 2024		Funding Needed
CRSP DB	\$2,187,154	\$0
CRSP DC	\$1,021,545	\$0
MPP		\$0
Pre-82		\$0
UMPIP Lay	\$110,013	\$0
UMPIP Clergy	\$220,044	\$0
Death Benefits for Pre BPP Retired Lay Employees.	\$8,806	\$0
Conference Lay Employee Death & Disability	\$16,345	\$0
Health Active	\$8,927,675	\$0
Health Additional	\$546,214	\$0
Post-Retirement Medical	\$743,172	\$0
CPP	\$1,034,761	\$0

Ongoing Funding Contribution for 2024		Funding Needed
Pre-82		
Post-Retirement Medical	\$0	\$0

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP)

Plan Overview: The Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement program providing lifetime income and account flexibility designed for those who serve as clergy of The United Methodist Church. The plan is designed to provide participants with one portion of their overall retirement benefits. CRSP replaced the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) effective January 1, 2007.

CRSP consists of two components:

- A defined benefit (DB) plan--provides a monthly benefit at retirement based upon years of credited service to the Church
- A defined contribution (DC) plan--provides a retirement account balance established and funded by the annual conferences

Elections and Estimates

	Final
Eligibility requirement	100%
Conference Full Time Equivalents (FTE)	418.00
CRSP Defined Benefit (DB)	
Required contribution for 2024	\$2,187,154
CRSP Defined Contribution (DC)	
Expected average future annual increases	1.50%
Estimated contribution for 2024	\$1,021,545

Rationale for each change

2024 contribution reduced to reflect census/salary change. Churches continue to reduce service time of appointment, thus reducing the number eligible for CRSP.

CRSP DB Denominational Information as of 1/1/2022

Total plan liability	\$(2,285,443,615)
Total plan assets	\$2,829,122,591
Total plan funded status	\$543,678,976
Total plan funded ratio	124%
Plan sponsor's liability percentage	2.7540%

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Key Actuarial Assumptions Used in CRSP DB Cost Calculations

Discount rate	7.00%
Future Denominational Average Compensation (DAC) increases	2.00%
COLA increases for actives	2.00%
Mortality	Pri-2012 TQ Adj, generational projection using MP2020

Calculated values are based upon the assumptions and methods documented in the actuarial valuation report issued in September, 2022.

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP)

Plan Overview: Supplement Three to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Ministerial Pension Plan (MPP) provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church from 1982 through 2006. MPP is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) retirement plan. MPP requires that exactly 65% of the account balance must be annuitized when it is to be distributed. The remainder may be rolled over to UMPIP, another qualified plan or an IRA, or paid in a lump sum.

Elections and Estimates

	Final
Required contributions for 2024	\$0

MPP Denominational Annuities Information as of 1/1/2022

Total MPP annuities liability	\$(3,665,135,772)
Total plan assets	\$4,758,759,842
Total plan funded status	\$1,093,624,070
Total plan funded ratio	130%
Plan sponsor's liability percentage	2.5941%

Future MPP Denominational Annuitants Information as of 1/1/2022

Total participant account balances	\$3,172,631,225
Plan sponsor's participant account balances	\$82,852,438

Key Actuarial Assumptions Used in MPP Annuities Cost Calculations

Discount rate	6.25%
Benefit increases	Based on increases selected by participant
Mortality	Pri-2012 TQ Adj, generational projection using MP2020

Calculated values are based upon the assumptions and methods documented in the actuarial valuation report issued in September, 2022.

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Pre-82 Plan (Pre-82)

Plan Overview: Supplement One to the Clergy Retirement Security Program (CRSP), also known as the Pre-82 Plan, provides clergy with a pension benefit for their years of ministry with The United Methodist Church prior to 1982. The Pre-82 Plan was replaced by MPP effective January 1, 1982. If a clergyperson retires within the conference (and does not terminate), the minimum benefit payable is based on two factors:

- 1) Years of service with pension credit--approved by each conference on the recommendation of the Conference Board of Pensions (CBOP) in accordance with plan provisions and The Book of Discipline.
- 2) The conference pension rate (past service rate)--the dollar amount chosen by the conference as the amount payable for each approved year of service with pension credit (may change from year to year).

The number of years of service with pension credit is multiplied by the PSR, and the product is the minimum annual benefit payable to those clergy eligible for Pre-82 Plan benefits. In certain situations, the benefit received from the Pre-82 plan may vary based on the applicability of what is referred to as Defined Benefit Service Money (DBSM), which is the defined contribution feature of the Pre-1982 Plan. At the time that a participant retires, the DBSM account is converted to a life-based benefit. At that point, the clergy's benefit is the greater of the PSR benefit or DBSM benefit. If the conference increases the PSR, the clergy's benefit is recalculated; however the DBSM-based benefit does not change.

Elections and Estimates

	Final
Past Service Rate (PSR)	881
Estimated PSR cost-of-living increase	2.00%
Contingent Annuitant Percentage (CA%)	75 %
Discount rate	5.5000%
Minimum contribution for 2024	\$0
Advanced funding contribution for 2024 payable in 2023	\$0

Funding Plan Contribution

Funding plan liability as of 1/1/2022	\$(45,348,896)
Total of in-plan and outside assets	\$77,137,249
Funded status	\$31,788,353
Funded ratio	170%
Funded status projection as of 12/31/2023	\$35,381,231
Proposed ongoing funding contribution for 2024	\$0

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Pre-82 Denominational information as of 1/1/2022

Total plan liability	\$(1,654,956,622)
Total plan assets	\$1,987,198,636
Total plan funded status	\$332,242,014
Total plan funded ratio	120%

Calculated values are based upon the assumptions and methods documented in the actuarial valuation report issued in September, 2022.

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Health—Active Participants

Elections and Estimates

	Final
Health plan offered to actives	Self-Funded - HealthFlex
Actual annual plan benefit cost paid in 2022	\$8,350,046
Budgeted annual plan benefit cost for 2023	\$8,502,548
Projected annual plan benefit cost for 2024	\$8,927,675
Expected average future annual increases	5.00%

Rationale for each change

Changed 2022 to reflect actual HealthFlex charges for 2022. 2023 changed to reflect current census. 2024 changed to reflect projected increases.

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Health—Additional Sponsored Coverage

Categories of participants who are provided health benefit coverage during periods of non-employment. Without plan sponsor-funded premiums, these participants would not be provided coverage or benefits.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clergy or lay on disability (including pending disability)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Surviving spouses or children of deceased active participants

Coverage Obligations

Covered Category	Estimated obligation as of 12/31/2021	Estimated obligation as of 12/31/2022
Clergy or lay on disability (including pending disability)	\$466,368	\$623,392
Surviving spouses or children of deceased active participants	\$61,072	\$51,128
Total	\$527,440	\$674,520

Annual cost calculation

The following calculations are not a present value of future costs.

Total estimated obligation as of 12/31/2022		\$674,520
Average number of years of remaining coverage	÷	1.3615
Estimated annual cost as of 12/31/2022	=	\$495,432
Expected average future annual increases	x	5.00%
Projected annual cost as of 12/31/2024	=	\$546,214

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Post-Retirement Medical (PRM)

Valuation

The most recent actuarial valuation was provided by Willis Towers Watson as of 12/31/2022.
Per *The Book of Discipline*, your next PRM biennial actuarial valuation is required as of 12/31/2024.

PRM Actuarial Valuation as of 12/31/2022

Valuation report (in-plan) assets	\$0
EPBO net plan sponsor cost	\$14,797,445
APBO net plan sponsor cost	\$13,074,840
Service cost net plan sponsor cost	\$446,144
Annual plan benefit cost	\$743,172
Intention regarding PRM	Retain current plan benefit

Participant counts by category	
Active participants	489
Active dependents	347
Retirees	251
Surviving spouses	68
Dependents of retired participants	94
Total participants	1,249

Key actuarial assumptions	
Census date	12/31/2022
Discount rate	4.90%
Expected return on assets	0.00%
Valuation year medical trend or inflation rate	7.00%
Ultimate medical trend or inflation rate	5.00%
Fiscal year for ultimate medical trend	2031

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Elections and Estimates

Description of Benefit

\$200/ month subsidy for those retirees and dependents retiring prior to 2016. Those retiring after 2015 would be a \$100 subsidy for each retiree and dependent.

	Final
Health plan benefit offered to retirees	Stipend
Expected average future annual increases	0.00%
Projected annual plan benefit cost as of 2024	\$743,172

Rationale for each change

There is no plan to increase the stipend.

Funding Plan Contribution

The following calculations are not a present value of future costs.

Net PRM assets		\$22,069,688
APBO net plan sponsor cost	-	\$13,074,840
Funded status	=	\$8,994,848
Portion of funded status payable (\$0 if Funded status ≥ \$0)		\$0
Funding plan service cost (\$0 if Net PRM assets ≥ EPBO)	+	\$0
Ongoing funding contribution for 2024	=	\$0

Rationale for each change

Entered plan assets as of 12/31/2022

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP)

Plan Overview: The Comprehensive Protection Plan (CPP) provides death, long-term disability and other welfare benefits for eligible clergy of The United Methodist Church and their families. It is an Internal Revenue Code 414(e) “church plan” funded by plan sponsor insurance premiums. Generally, clergy are eligible to participate in CPP if they satisfy the eligibility requirements, including full-time appointment with plan compensation of at least 25% of the Denominational Average Compensation (DAC). Plan sponsors may elect to cover participants with three-quarter time appointments and/or to continue to cover clergy who, due to certain leaves or appointments, are not otherwise eligible to continue coverage.

The CPP adoption agreement executed by the SOUTH CAROLINA contains its elections to cover or not to cover categories mentioned above.

Elections and Estimates

	Final
Expected average future annual increases	6.00%
Estimated premium for 2024	\$1,034,761

Rationale for each change

Estimated Premium based on current census. Increased annual increases based on inflation rate.

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP)

Plan Overview: The United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) is an Internal Revenue Code section 403(b) defined contribution retirement savings plan for clergy and lay employees of The United Methodist Church and affiliated organizations. Participants may make before-tax, Roth and/or after-tax contributions through payroll deductions. Participant contributions, various optional plan sponsor contributions and investment earnings comprise the individual's retirement account balance.

United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) Lay

Elections and Estimates

	Final
Expected average future annual increases	-1.00%
Estimated contribution for 2024	\$110,013

Rationale for each change

2024 Estimates to reflect current amount. Expect decrease in 2024 due to no salary increases and expected retirements.

United Methodist Personal Investment Plan (UMPIP) Clergy

Elections and Estimates

	Final
Expected average future annual increases	-1.00%
Estimated contribution for 2024	\$220,044

Rationale for each change

Estimated contribution based on current census. Expected decrease due to no salary increases and retirements.

South Carolina Conference (741) 2024 Comprehensive Benefit Funding Plan

Other Defined Contribution (DC) Obligations

Name	Estimated annual contribution
Conference Lay Employee Death & Disability	\$16,345

Description

Conference Lay Employee Death & Disability

	Final
Expected average future annual increases	1.00%
Estimated contribution for 2024	\$16,345

Rationale for each change

2024 Estimated Contribution reflects current census.

Name	Estimated annual contribution
Death Benefits for Pre BPP Retired Lay Employees.	\$8,806

Description

Death Benefits for Pre BPP Retired Lay Employees.

	Final
Expected average future annual increases	0.00%
Estimated contribution for 2024	\$8,806

Rationale for each change

Estimated 2024 contribution reflects current census.

THE SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Purpose:

Encourage preservation of the history of Methodism in South Carolina by encouraging the study of Methodist history and providing resources to local churches. To serve as a “ministry of memory” helping the church remember how God has worked through the Wesleyan-inspired Methodist Movement.

Key moments from the previous year:

We held our annual meeting in April at Wofford College after postponements due to the pandemic and elected a new President and Vice President, had a presentation by the Conference Historian on the 1972 Merger process, and toured the renovated Conference Archives. We provided information to assist local church historians through the annual district set-up meetings, lobbied to have a local church’s organizational date added to charge conference forms, and continued to develop the SC Methodist Historical Trail project. We met in November, 2022 at Claflin University for our fall program continuing the Society’s observance of the 50th anniversary of the 1972 Merger of the two SC Conferences.

Objectives for the coming year:

We hope to continue and complete and publish the SC Methodist Historical Trail project, and continue publication of the Society’s Newsletter, The Mark. We also hope to hold an Annual Meeting in the Fall preferably at a Conference Institution, and have an election of new officers for 2024-2025. We hope to continue to respond to inquiries and research questions, and continue to provide material for a monthly column in the SC UM Advocate.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference:

None

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

The Conference Historical Society has survived the pandemic, is active, welcomes new members, made a significant contribution to the observance of the 50th Anniversary of the two SC Conferences, receives and responds to inquiries from across the conference and outside the conference relative to SC Methodist history, and provides a monthly presence about history through the SC UM Advocate.

Narrative:

Both A.V. Huff, Jr., and Roger M. Gramling serve on the SEJ Commission on Archives and History. Dr. Huff is the representative of the SC Conference, and Dr. Gramling is an ex-officio member as the newly elected President of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Historical Society. Ms. Joyce E. Plyler completed her multi-term service as President of the Conference Historical Society in April, 2022. The Society is deeply appreciative of her many years of significant service to the Society.

Respectfully submitted:

Meredith Marie Dark, President
mmdark@umcsc.org, 8645979525
The Reverend Joseph D. Kovas, Vice President
The Reverend Dr. Roger M. Gramling, Secretary-Treasurer
The Reverend Dr. A. V. Huff, Jr., Editor, The Mark

**THE COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION
(Form Report)**

Purpose:

The main purpose for the Commission on Equitable Compensation (CEC) is to make sure that full time ministers in the South Carolina Conference are paid to meet the minimum wage which the annual conference establishes each year upon recommendation by CEC.

Key Moments From the Previous Year:

The challenges we encountered in 2020 and 2021 continued in 2022. We have adapted to the presence of COVID-19; however, the effects of the pandemic and subsequent inflationary period are still resolving in South Carolina. Our CEC has continued to work hard to ensure our clergy are sufficiently compensated for their time and effort, and we have been able to come in under budget this year thanks to the assistance of the cabinet.

This year has been relatively calm for the CEC. We made a small informational change in section 2.F. of our report clarifying investment goals for the reserve fund stating that, "the reserve fund shall be invested with the aim of preserving the principal investment, targeting its growth rate to meet or exceed inflation over a given ten year period," and we have consulted with Wespeth to be sure reserve funds are invested in such a way as to meet that goal. Otherwise, we have continued with business as usual seeking to ensure that full time ministers in South Carolina are paid to meet the minimum wage established by the annual conference.

Objectives for 2023:

Foremost, to meet any challenges which 2023-2024 will bring for churches struggling to compensate their full time ministers. Continue helping Congregational Development in providing ministry opportunities for this conference. Continue to have a working relationship with the cabinet and extended cabinet.

Actions Required by the 2023 Conference:

Due to the ongoing economic shifts caused by the pandemic and subsequent policy responses, the CEC is recommending a cost of living increase of 6% to our minimum salary in 2024: our aim with this increase is to continue to provide competitive minimum salaries as well as to ensure pastors can pay their bills after the large amount of inflation we saw in 2022. This increase also recognizes that no increase was made in minimum salaries for 2021 and 2022. We have asked for \$565,000 from the CF&A for 2024 which is the same amount as requested for 2021 and 2022; however, we recognize major budgetary adjustments are likely to be made this conference season. We will make the best use of whatever funds are provided by the conference.

If You Take Away Nothing Else From This Report, Know This:

The funds you provide allow ministry to happen in places where we would otherwise not be able to have a presence. CEC has always been, and will continue to be, good stewards with the money supplied by the conference. Your generosity has not been taken lightly by our committee. We are thankful for all that you have done so we can continue to make sure we take care of our pastors. With that being said, we ask that churches make sure your pastors take their designated time off. A rested minister will function better to promote the ministry God has in store for your church.

Respectfully Submitted:

Rev. Jon Hoin, Chair
jahoin@umcsc.org, 704-839-3953

Below are the members of CEC whom I would like to thank:

Cassie Watson, Anthony Hodge, Beth Westbury, Chris Lollis, Blondell Miller, Wayne Hester, Jerry Harrison, Patricia Parrish, Pattie Gordon, Tim Rogers, James Friday, Veronica Clinkscapes, Allen Nesmith, Donald Scott, Sherry Eisom, Morris Waymer, Donald Love, and Barbara Ware

**THE COMMISSION ON EQUITABLE COMPENSATION
(Detail Report)**

Report Number 1

A. The Mission and Changing Focus of the Conference Commission on Equitable Compensation

Historically, the CEC has served to support the full-time clergy in the charges of the South Carolina Annual Conference. Through the years, the CEC has been guided by the United Methodist Book of Discipline; the latest version states the following: "It is the purpose of the commission on equitable compensation to support full-time clergy serving as pastors in the charges of the annual conference by: (a) recommending conference standards for pastoral support; (b) administering funds to be used in base compensation supplementation; and (c) providing counsel and advisory material on pastoral support to district superintendents and committees on pastor-parish relations; and (d) submitting an arrearage policy to be adopted by the annual conference." (The Book of Discipline, 2016, Paragraph 625.2 at pg. 442) The CEC supports the overall ministry of the local church, especially in transitional situations.

B. Total Compensation for Clergy

1. The commission on equitable compensation reminds churches and charges that salary is only one portion of total compensation. Churches and charges are urged to consider dispersing compensation in ways that will assist clergy and their families to retain as great a portion of their income as is legally possible. Churches and charges are reminded to consider total compensation, not just salary, when thinking of clergy family needs. Likewise, clergy are reminded that they are supported in a variety of ways, and total compensation most often exceeds salary.
2. Churches and pastors are urged to keep informed of their income tax responsibilities and rights. Pastors are advised to seek qualified assistance in making decisions that will affect their income tax liabilities.

Report Number 2

A. Budget Request for 2024

The CEC requests that a line item apportionment of \$565,000 be made to fund the CEC operational budget for 2024. These funds will be used for salary support for *base compensation supplements, renewed vitality situations, new church starts, special situations, cooperative parishes, mission situations, and Hispanic/Latino ministries* for clergy and situations who meet the criteria to receive funding.

B. Schedule of Total Minimum Compensation for Clergy Serving in the South Carolina Annual Conference.

1. In accordance with the mandate of the Book of Discipline, the CEC recommends that the South Carolina Annual Conference fix the following as its minimum base compensation scale, effective January 1, 2024 and continuing until changed by action of the annual conference.

FOR FULL TIME CLERGY APPOINTMENTS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

	2024	2023
a. Members in Full Connection, Elders and Deacons	\$52,311	\$49,350
b. Provisional, Commissioned, and Associate Members	\$47,554	\$44,862
c. Licensed Local Pastors	\$44,116	\$41,619

We are recommending a cost of living increase of 6% for the following reasons.

- a. The minimum salaries did not increase in 2021 or 2022.
- b. The Social Security cost of living increases for 2022 and 2021 were 5.9% and 1.3%, respectively. In 2023, the Social Security cost of living increase is 8.7%.
- c. We do not know what inflation will be in 2023 so we must project an increase that will help compensate for a further decrease in purchasing power.
- d. Based on the clergy population and salaries in 2022, the 6% increase would render only 5% of the clergy population at or below the proposed minimum salaries.

- e. The increase has a minimal impact on the variable costs of direct billing, approximately \$150 to \$222 per year.
- 2. Full-time ordained deacons, in accordance with Paragraph 330 of *The Book of Discipline 2016*, beginning at pg. 254, shall be compensated by the local church not less than the minimum amount for an ordained elder of the annual conference. (See Paragraph 331.10(b) of *The Book of Discipline 2016*, pg. 263.) Deacons who are employed by the congregation, charge, or cooperative parish less than full time shall be compensated proportional to the percentage of time being served. (Half time would receive not less than half the minimum salary.) Deacons not employed by a congregation, charge, cooperative ministry, or who are appointed under Paragraph 331.6(d) are not affected.
- 3. Longevity Increases
A clergy person, who has completed 5 or more year's full time service in the United Methodist Church, shall receive in addition to the minimum base, a supplement of \$175.00 per year of service for up to 10 years of service. (In practical terms, this increase would not be applied until the fiscal year following the completed annual conference year. In other words, the first increase would not be applied until the January after the Annual Conference at which the clergy person completes their fifth year.)
Example:
Year 6 Minimum base compensation plus \$ 875.00
Year 7 Minimum base compensation plus \$1050.00
Year 8 Minimum base compensation plus \$1225.00
Year 9 Minimum base compensation plus \$1400.00
Year 10 Minimum base compensation plus \$1575.00
Year 11+ Minimum base compensation plus \$1750.00

C. Housing Allowances

The Commission recommends that all money given to the pastor for housing by the charge he/she serves be considered income if the pastor is not a resident in close proximity to the charge which he/she serves.

D. Cross Racial Appointments

If the Bishop and Cabinet, in making a cross-racial appointment, find it necessary to request an equitable compensation supplement, special consideration will be given on an individual basis.

E. Utilities Allowance

The Commission requests that the South Carolina Annual Conference designate 15% (or estimate of actual expenses as requested by recipient) of base compensation assistance funded by this Commission as parsonage utilities allowance. This request is made to satisfy the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service. Under IRS Guidelines, this money may be used for household expenses including mortgage or rent payments.

F. Investment of Reserve Fund

The Commission on Equitable Compensation recommends that all funds held in reserve be invested and the interest reinvested or used in the Commission's operating account depending on the needs at the time. In accordance with guidelines established with CF&A in 2013 and presented to the 2013 Annual Conference, the floor of the reserve is to be set at \$300,000 in order to meet general projection shortfalls, to allow for the unanticipated start of a new church or missional situation, or to deal with an unexpected disaster. The reserve fund shall be invested with the aim of preserving the principal investment, targeting its growth rate to meet or exceed inflation over a given ten year period.

G. Interpretation

The commission recommends that an interpretation of its task and policy procedures be given as a part of the District Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee Workshops. It is further recommended that this interpretation be done by a member of the Commission upon invitation by the District Superintendent.

H. Compensation Guidance

The Commission recommends that District Superintendents assist churches and charges in setting appropriate compensation and work load packages in accordance with Paragraph 419.4 419.6 of *The Book of Discipline 2016* (pg. 343-344)

I. Reimbursement for Travel and Professional Expenses

- 1. The Commission recommends that each church set up a reimbursement account for travel and professional expenses incurred by the pastor in performing pastoral

duties. Reimbursement for non-commuting church-related travel shall be at the IRS rate in effect at the time of travel. The pastor(s) shall submit a voucher and a log each month for reimbursement. For reimbursement for actual professional expenses (books, subscriptions, periodicals, etc.) the pastor(s) shall submit a voucher with supporting documentation for reimbursement. Remember that failure to submit the proper documentation means the reimbursement funds received becomes taxable income. The amount set by the charge as reimbursement for travel and professional expenses should be determined after consultation with the pastor(s) (and the District Superintendent, if desired or needed) by the Pastor/Staff-Parish Relations Committee. Each charge should annually evaluate the local needs and expectations of its pastors and set an amount for reimbursement accordingly. Also, the procedures for reimbursement should be clearly stated.

2. The Commission recommends that the reimbursement for travel and professional expenses be a part of the administrative cost of each local church and not considered or reported as part of the pastor's compensation.

J. Continuing Education

Each charge shall place in its budget an amount of \$750 or more per year to be used by the pastor as a continuing education fund. If the full amount is not used in a given year, the unused portion may be carried forward from year to year during the tenure of a pastor, not to exceed a total amounting to three year's continuing education allowance inclusive of the current year's amount.

K. Vacation Policy

The Commission reminds churches and ministers that vacation time, plus time for renewal and reflection, are an expected part of compensation. Time away is necessary for personal, spiritual, and family health. It is recommended that all full-time clergy and diaconal ministers be granted, at a minimum, annual vacation and days of renewal according to the following schedule:

Total Years of Service Number of Weeks

Less than 5 years a minimum of 2 (including Sundays)

5 years - 10 years a minimum of 3 (including Sundays)

More than 10 years a minimum of 4 (including Sundays)

In addition to the above, it is recommended that the minister, regardless of years of service, be granted one day of retreat a month for prayer and reflection. Also, it is expected that the minister will have at least one day off a week. "Years of Service" reflects the number of years under appointment in the ministry of the United Methodist Church, and not the number of years of service on a given charge. "Vacation" is meant as freedom from any responsibility in the local church or charge, district, conference area, jurisdiction, or general conference. Vacation should be a time of rest, recreation, and renewal. It should not be interpreted to mean time the pastor works at a church camp, is on a mission trip, or at a meeting of a general board/agency of the conference/district. Time away from the charge for annual conference and continuing education events shall not be considered vacation time. The charge shall make available as necessary the funds for pulpit supply while the pastor is on vacation. It is asked that the Lay Member to the Annual Conference communicate this information to the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee and to the local church.

L. Arrearages

An arrearage occurs when full payment of a regularly scheduled payroll, accountable reimbursement, or housing allowance installment is not made to the appropriate pastor. The current procedure for handling an arrearage is outlined in detail at the conclusion of the Commission on Equitable Compensation's report in the 2013 Journal. The Arrearage Policy is also available on the conference website, www.umcsc.org.

M. CEC Grants

Salary supplementation grants are disbursed by the CEC using the processes and categories described in report 3. All supplements are disbursed utilizing the CEC's annual operational budget and/or reserve funds if the need arises (as outlined in point F. of this report).

2. New Church Starts
 - a. Salary supplementation for new church starts shall be as follows:

Year 1 and 2:	The Commission on Equitable Compensation will pay the minimum base compensation according to the minister's category and half of the payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits. (New church starts that begin in July will receive 100% funding for the first two and a half years.)
Year 3:	Support from Equitable Compensation will not exceed 67% of the minimum base compensation amount. The Commission will pay half of the payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.
Year 4:	Support from Equitable Compensation will not exceed 33% of the minimum base compensation amount. The Commission will pay half of the payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.
Year 5:	Support from Equitable Compensation will cease for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.
 - b. New Church Travel: Upon request and appropriate documentation, the Commission on Equitable Compensation will provide travel allowance for new church pastors at the following rates:

First year and a half:	up to \$4,000.00 annually
Second full year:	up to \$3,000.00 annually
Third full year:	up to \$2,000.00 annually
Fourth full year:	up to \$1,000.00 annually
3. Renewed Vitality Situations (RVS)

RVS are those places that the Conference Committee on Congregational Development has evaluated and determined that short term assistance would possibly greatly enhance the effective ministry taking place. RVS grants would be for a maximum of 2 years and subject to the criteria proposed and adopted by the Conference Committee on Congregational Development. Failure to meet said criteria will result in termination of the grant. Grants will consist of: Up to minimum compensation (as described in Report 2.B.1. above) and up to one-half the appropriate Direct Billing.
4. Mission Situations
 - a. Mission situations are new and existing churches in transitional circumstances that are in areas that demand an effective ministry but are incapable of providing such ministry without equitable compensation assistance. Mission situations may also include intentional ministry to persons of low income.
 - b. Eligibility- To be eligible for equitable compensation assistance in mission situations the following procedures must be followed:
 - The District Board for Congregational Development shall be the authorizing body to project a transitional situation. The District Board for Congregational Development in consultation with the District Superintendent will refer this to the Conference Committee on Congregational Development for verification as a transitional situation.
 - The potential new mission situation will then be referred to the Cabinet for approval. The Cabinet will strive to inform the CEC of potential new mission situations one year ahead of the time the appointment is to start. The CEC will budget for new mission situations after Cabinet approval.
 - At the time of appointment, the Cabinet will then designate a pastor or clergy person and request an appropriate base compensation for that particular mission situation.
 - In all cases where a new mission situation is to be launched, the District Superintendent shall notify the CEC by December 15th preceding the Annual Conference at which an appointment is to be made providing, at that time, the projected base compensation cost to be incurred in July.

Note 1. The local church's share of this base compensation schedule shall take into consideration all sources of income from the local church or from any other source. In all cases where a mission situation is attached to an existing charge, these become charge figures.

Report 3

A. Applying for a CEC Grant

1. The District Superintendent shall request the supplementation assistance required by each charge twice each year (by May 15 for the July through December compensation assistance period and by December 15 for the January through June compensation assistance period); these requests must be approved by the Commission before payment can be made. This request from the District Superintendent shall be accompanied by an application form provided by the Commission and completed by the pastor, the pastor-parish relations committee, and the District Superintendent indicating income from all sources. Grants shall be made based on fiscal years (January to December).
2. Application Procedure
CEC requests the following for initial grant consideration:
 - a. An application form that includes information about the nature of the grant, the reason for the grant request, percentages to be paid to the various churches involved, the email of the pastor, contact information of the church/charge treasurer (name, address, phone number, email) and other information as designated by the CEC Chairperson.
 - b. The above application form is to be presented and approved in accordance with Cabinet policy and then forwarded to the CEC Chairperson by the appropriate District Superintendent.
 - c. At the discretion of the CEC Chairperson or request by a member of the CEC Executive Committee, further financial information may be required including, but not limited to: church budgets, bank statements, audit forms, treasurer's reports, etc. Failure to produce the required documents would be cause for non-approval of the grant.
3. Ineligibility
The Commission on Equitable Compensation recommends that the following not be eligible for Equitable Compensation support:
 - Retired supply pastors
 - Part-time local pastors
 - Pastors on leave of absence except as provided in Standing Rule 99
 - Special appointment categories within the itinerancy of the United Methodist Church as defined in Paragraph 344.1 a, b, c of *The Book of Discipline 2016* (pg. 281-282).
 - Deacons as defined in Paragraphs 329 and 330 of *The Book of Discipline 2016* (pg. 254-255) (except as appointed with regard to Report 2.B.1-2. and Paragraph 625.4 of *The Book of Discipline 2016*, pg. 443).

B. Disbursement of Supplements

All compensation supplements from the CEC shall be paid to the local church involved for disbursement to the pastor or clergyperson, and shall be disbursed monthly. In the case of new mission situations or churches, monies will be disbursed directly to the pastor (as a Conference employee) until there is a church treasurer. Equitable compensation funds will not be used for moving expenses, businesses expenses, or church administration. For charges receiving CEC supplements, changes to the total compensation may be made for longevity (see Report 2.B.3. Longevity Increases above), changes in clergy status, and to reflect changes in minimum base compensation as approved by the Annual Conference. The CEC's maximum salary supplement will be 100% of the minimum salary for the clergy status and applicable longevity increases multiplied by the percentage of support scheduled for that year. The churches on the charge are encouraged to contribute additional monies to the pastor's compensation, but the total salary paid may not exceed 150% of the applicable minimum.

C. Grant Guidelines and Schedules

1. Base Compensation Assistance (BCA)
BCA supplements are designed to help local churches achieve the total minimum compensation for full time clergy. Grants shall be made based on fiscal years (January to December), and unless otherwise designated, shall decrease 25% annually. For grants beginning in July, 100% of the approved amount will be provided for the first eighteen (18) months and will decrease 25% annually thereafter.

Note 2. The District Superintendent may apply to the Commission for a compensation that is more in keeping with the amount received by this pastor in his or her previous appointment.

c. Continuation of Supplements and Annual Evaluation- If the ministry being served is unable to meet the schedule below for two years in a row, support from Equitable Compensation will cease after the next year following. An evaluation shall be done annually on each mission situation. The Conference Director of Congregational Development shall provide a report of this evaluation to the Commission on Equitable Compensation by January 1st.

d. Payment of Direct Billing Costs for Pensions and Health Benefits in Mission Situations Only- The CEC will pay only the direct billing costs of persons in mission situations according to the compensation schedules listed below. The Commission will send its proportional share directly to the conference office of Pensions and Health Benefits.

e. Compensation Schedules for Mission Situations- Equitable Compensation assistance in mission situations will be provided for a pastor or clergy person, when requested by the Cabinet, over a ten and a half year period decreasing as follows:

First Year and a Half: The amount of Equitable Compensation support will be according to the pastor's category. If the sole salary paying unit in this mission situation is the Commission of Equitable Compensation, it will pay 100% of the clergyperson's direct bill for pensions and health benefits. If there are other funding sources included, the grant schedule will remain the same, decreasing from the original grant amount.

After One and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by 5% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Two and Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 5% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Three and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 5% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Four and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Five and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Six and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Seven and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Eight and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 15% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Nine and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 15% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Ten and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will cease for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

Travel for persons in mission situations will be provided by the District(s) in which the ministry is located.

5. Ministry With Hispanic/Latino People

The Commission on Equitable Compensation will operate in light of the Annual Conference's decision to make ministry with the Hispanic/Latino population a priority. Support for clergy working in ministry with Hispanic/Latino people shall be made in accordance with the Schedule for Mission Situations

(Report 3.C.4.e.). CEC recognizes that adjustments may be necessary on a case by case basis. The District Superintendent, after consultation with the Cabinet and the Conference Hispanic Committee may request adjustments in the following areas:

An extension of the initial time period from 1-1/2 years up to 2-1/2 years in which Equitable Compensation shall pay 100% of the clergy person's salary and direct bill for pensions and health benefits. In no case shall this period extend beyond 2-1/2 years. After the extension expires, support will decrease as follows:

After Two and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by 5% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Three and Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 5% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Four and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 5% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Five and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Six and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Seven and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Eight and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 10% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Nine and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 15% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Ten and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will decrease by another 15% for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

After Eleven and a Half Years: Support from Equitable Compensation will cease for both the base compensation supplement and for payment of the direct billing for pensions and health benefits.

A salary supplement for clergy living in areas where the cost of living is high. The maximum yearly supplement shall be \$2,400.

Assistance with travel expenses. In limited circumstances, Equitable Compensation shall provide up to a yearly maximum of \$4,000 to supplement the support provided by the district. When assistance with travel expenses is requested, the District Superintendent shall certify that the district will spend at least \$15,000 in the current year to provide housing and travel for the clergyperson.

A salary supplement for experience in ministry with Hispanic/Latino people. This supplement will be in addition to any experience merit that a clergyperson receives on the basis of the policy set forth in Report 2.B.3. A clergy person who has served 5 or more years full time service in United Methodist ministry with Hispanic/Latino people shall receive a supplement of \$175.00 per year of service for up to fourteen years of service.

Example:

Year 6: \$875 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 7: \$1,050 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 8: \$1,225 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 9: \$1,400 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 10: \$1,575 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 11: \$1,750 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 12: \$1,925 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 13: \$2,100 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 14: \$2,275 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

Year 15+: \$2,450 in addition to Equitable Compensation base and experience merit

All requests for adjustments shall be made in writing. Requests must be approved by the Commission before payment can be made.

6. Special Grants

Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances, both crises and opportunities, arise in which a church or churches would benefit from a short term grant from the CEC. The commission reserves the right to make grants outside of the parameters of the grants outlined above and below, so long as those Special Grants would be consistent with the mission of the CEC and do not exceed a period of 12 months. Special Grants may be issued up to the maximum applicable base compensation without direct billing. Prior to issuing the grant, the CEC will ask for a comprehensive rationale in writing to substantiate the need for a Special Grant.

7. Cooperative Parish Ministries

The initial directors or coordinators of a cooperative parish ministry, which has been approved by the Board of Global Ministries, and application made by the District Superintendent to the commission by January 1st preceding the appointment in June of the same year, may be eligible for funds not to exceed \$7,000.00. No pastor shall be eligible to receive funds unless the charge they serve agrees in writing to release them for these added duties. Assistance will be provided over a 4-1/2 year period and will decrease by 25% each year after the first year and a half.

Report 4

Grant Category	2019		2020		2021		2022	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
New Church	5	194,983	5	175,933	4	110,797	2	71,159
BSA	10	166,040	10	126,068	7	91,923	6	93,407
Special	5	59,401	5	64,897	4	40,084	5	78,210
Low Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic/Latino	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cooperative Parish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mission	2	36,864	2	30,961	1	19,250	2	60,542
RVS	0	0	0	0	1	34,917	1	34,917
Direct Billing Costs		61,811		72,289		46,652		60,108
Total	22	519,099	22	397,859		296,971	16	398,343

Categories of Pastors Receiving Support:

	December 2019	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022
Full Members	13	14	10	8
Provisional Members	4	1	2	2
Associate Members	0	0	0	0
Local Pastors (Full Time)	2	5	2	4
Other	3	2	3	2
Totals	22	22	17	16

Respectfully Submitted:

John Hoin, Chair

THE COMMITTEE ON THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The work of the Committee on the Annual Conference entails planning, implementing, and evaluating the annual conference. The committee always works to be relevant and responsive. The global pandemic has also required the team to be innovative and adaptable in the face of constant change and uncertainty.

Key moments from the previous year: Once again the uncertainty of the pandemic made returning to an in-person format potentially risky. We continued learning from the first two years of Conferencing during the pandemic and conducted both the Clergy and Business Sessions of the Annual Conference virtually over the course of two days. We looked for creative and safe ways to conference while celebrating all that God has done and is doing in the lives of churches, laypeople, and clergy.

The theme chosen for the 2023 Annual Conference is "Seeking A More Excellent Way: Breathe and Believe, Hewing Hope." This theme acknowledges the difficult crossroads at which we stand. We are surrounded by uncertainties that can foster anxious spirits. In the midst of our shifting realities we have the opportunity to be an example of the hope we proclaim.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: ¶603 of *Book of Discipline* provides that the Annual Conference sets the place of the meeting for the sessions of the annual conference, and the presiding bishop sets the date. Under the leadership of Bishop Holston, we projected June 9-12, 2024 as the projected dates.

The standing rules of the conference provide that the Committee on the Annual Conference recommend the site of the annual conference two years in advance. Last year the Committee recommended that the 2024 session be held in the Greenville Center. The Committee on the Annual Conference recommends that the 2025 session also be held in the Greenville Center.

If you take away nothing from this report, know this: The committee expresses its gratitude to the 2023 host team under the leadership of the Rev. Terry Fleming, Florence District Superintendent, for their spirit of adaptability. This team has done tremendous work under some of the most trying circumstances. They have helped care for many of the important details along the way. We owe them tremendous level of thanks. We also express gratitude to our host church, Highland Park United Methodist Church and its team under the leadership of the Rev. Susan Maddox. We are most grateful to our Bishop and the Committee on the Annual Conference for their faithfulness in this season. A special word of gratitude expressed to Pat Mack and Sharome Henry for going above and beyond the call of duty this season.

Respectfully submitted:

Kenneth L. Nelson, Conference Secretary
 L. Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop
 klnelson@umcsc.org, 803.312.2824

THE COMMITTEE OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Purpose:

The purpose of the Committee of 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 some building projects so that we are able 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, ministries 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 and 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:

Like so many others during these interesting times we are facing as a nation with the continuing global effects of Covid-19, church disaffiliations and separations, the 2022-2023 Annual Conference was again a year of constant change, shifts, evaluations and adjustments to an ever-changing culture and world.

Many of our local churches continue to engage our communities through online worship and engagement as many if not all have returned to some form of in-person worship, we as a committee continue to offer opportunities for MissionInsite orientation and training for the Annual Conference so that local churches, pastors and laity may better see, connect, engage, know, disciple and serve the people of their communities better.

We are in the process of having our Annual Conference Demographically Analyzed by ACS Technology so that we are better able to share the love of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ where we see current areas of population and economic growth, decline and where deep pockets of poverty exist in our state.

We are also excited to be able to support eight of the nine of our existing congregation who applied for grants through Existing Church Grants totaling \$146,388.00, 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. Your generosity and investment into the people called United Methodist in South Carolina through the Ministry of Congregational Development allows us to support local congregations in supporting summer and year round educational enrichment for underserved and sometimes at-risk children, construction of ADA compliant accessible facilities, new expressions of cross-cultural and cross ethnic ministries within our communities, and making the necessary facility repairs to make sacred spaces again habitable.

We are also grateful for your generosity and investment of a grand total of \$238,950 through our new church and acquisition funds because it also allowed us opportunities to start new ministry in new places for new people in the various communities in support of New Churches, Revitalization Situations, and Missional Situations in 2022 around the state.

Again, these accomplishments are only made possible because of you and your church's generosity and commitment to our 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 the tender plants of new places for new people that were not able to survive and produce fruitful ministries as we had hoped. Lord In Your Mercy! Hear Our Prayers!

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, 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 so that we can be the best stewards of what we have received 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 be a catalyst for the change 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. The Bishop and Cabinet will be receiving the Mission-InSite analysis of the Annual Conference presently being done by ACS Technologies hopefully sometime during the summer or early fall of this year.

We will continue supporting the current plants and partnerships across the connection, while discerning our next faithful steps or projects as we prayerfully follow God's leading into the known and unknown world.

One of our major goals this year is intentional reflection on **"OUR WHY"** and how do we plan to fulfill God's Mission and Ministries through our Conference four priorities, our alues, our vision, our purpose and how they align with God's promises given to us through Jesus Christ our Lord and God's Word in the Old and New Testaments.

We hope to continue our learning best practices from within this Conference and conversations with other Conferences, so that 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.

And, as a reminder, 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, multiple smaller conference-like workshops on things like staff/team development, how to lead a visioning process, multi-site challenges, multi-ethnic transitions, etc. We are so excited about what could be and the opportunities before us even in such a time as this.

Action(s) required from the 2022 Annual Conference:

There are no specific actions or votes needed for our report, only submitting it to the record.

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 haven't 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 Smith, Chairperson
Rev. James Friday, Director

THE COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY

Purpose:

We offer support to the Bishop in the oversight of spiritual and temporal affairs of the church:

- Interpret nature, function of episcopacy office
- Determine, communicate episcopal needs
- Advise about concerns that affect relationships and people of the conference
- Consultation and appraisal of Bishop's relationship and responsibilities
- Report episcopal leadership needs to SEJ COE

Key moments from the previous year:

The COE agrees that Bishop Holston has continued to lead this conference by example and provided insight, encouragement and motivation for our congregations to grow spiritually.

He has continued to lead the conference in prayer each morning and has remained faithful to the leadership of the clergy and laity by participating in virtual laity sessions and resuming in-person visits in several districts as well.

With Epworth Children's Home, Bishop Holston presented an endowed gift to the Fairfield Children's Home in Zimbabwe representing a 10% tithe from Epworth's Every Child is A Miracle campaign. The funds contributed will have lasting impact both locally and globally.

Through positive, consistent alignment, Bishop Holston has kept SC's focus on ministry more than controversy. We support his encouragement to churches to remain focused on mission and ministry as we await the actions of General Conference in 2024.

The COE celebrates Bishop & Mrs. Holston's continued assignment to this episcopal area effective 1/1/2023.

We thank Tim McClendon & Barbara Ware for their years of service to the SEJCOE. Following Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, Jackie Jenkins and Ken Nelson became the new SC representatives to the SEJCOE.

The Bishop's involvement includes:

- Council of Bishops, Officer, secretary
- SEJ College of Bishops, president
- Columbia College Board of Trustees
- Duke Divinity Board of Visitors
- Emory University Board of Trustees
- Gammon Theological Seminary Board of Trustees, chair
- Africa University Development Board
- Fellowship of SC Bishops
- Lake Junaluska Board of Trustees
- Pan-Methodist Commission
- Strengthening the Black Church for the 21st Century, chair

Objectives for the coming year:

We will continue to support Bishop Holston in the oversight of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church by interpreting to our church members the nature and function of the episcopacy office.

We are to advise the Bishop concerning conditions in the conference as they affect the relationships and the people of the conference.

We will continue to present to the SEJ COE about Bishop Holston's success over the last 10+ years in support of his continued assignment in the South Carolina Conference.

As is stated in the theme of the 2023 Annual Conference, we will continue seeking a more excellent way; breathing, believing and hewing hope.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

This 16 member committee, which includes the two SC members of the SEJ COE and the conference lay leader, meets two to four times per year to provide support for the resident bishop's work in our conference and to interpret the work of the bishop and the conference staff to our conference church members. For 2023, the COE will continue to implement succinct, directed conversations on the work being done, with a summary report being sent to the SEJ COE. The COE offers its unanimous support of Bishop Holston's ministry in SC and his continued assignment to this conference.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

Mr. F. Holbrook Platts, Chairperson
hplatts@earthlink.net, 803-943-2777
Jennifer Pettit, Genevieve Burgess, Ken Jenkins,
Calvin Smith, Barbara Ware, Ken Nelson, Jackie
Jenkins, George Ashford, Jeanette' Cooper, David
Taylor, Ronnie Norton, Loretta McKelvey, Dorothy
Harrison, Herman Lightsey, Martha Thompson

THE OFFICE OF CLERGY SERVICES

The Coordinator of Clergy Services serves as the liaison between the Bishop, the Cabinet and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOM). The Bishop, Cabinet and BOM coordinate through our office in matters pertaining to clergy credentialing, leadership development and records management. We serve as a resource to assist clergy in developing their leadership abilities throughout the course of their ministry. Clergy Services also manages and monitors the processing of the criminal background checks carried out every three years on all candidates, clergy, certified lay ministers, and lay supplies. Clergy personnel files are also maintained by Clergy Services. The Coordinator of Clergy Services is a member of the Conference Ministry Advisory Team, Joint Approval for Service Committee, The Board of Ordained Ministry and the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry.

Clergy Services conducted and processed over 250 Criminal Background Checks this year on candidates, clergy, certified lay ministers and lay supplies. The monitoring process implemented in 2021-22 made a significant difference and insured that Clergy background checks are current. The process of digitizing personnel records for former ministry candidates, former clergy, retired clergy and deceased clergy is ongoing. It is slow, tedious, and often interrupted, but continues to be necessary.

Clergy Services assisted the Chairs of the Clergy Orders and Local Pastor & Associate Member fellowship in the two in person clergy gatherings this year focused on clergy leadership and spiritual development. We worked with the BOM's 2022-23 Bishop's School of Ministry planning team to host a successful program in February focused on proclamation in post-pandemic.

As a conference and a denomination, we are at a turning point. We are preparing to see some of our colleagues and congregations leave the United Methodist Church to pursue other avenues of ministry. The procedure established for congregations by the Conference Board of Trustees is not related to the procedure for clergy departure. The FAQs for Clergy Withdrawals were created by the Office of Clergy Services to give candidates, active clergy, and retired clergy essential procedure information. Our priority is helping the clergy of the South Carolina United Methodist Conference develop and nurture disciples of Jesus Christ in this rapidly shifting environment, even as we continue to support our colleagues who feel called to depart. We'll keep working to offer useful and innovative support, materials, events and trainings to equip the clergy of the South Carolina United Methodist Conference.

Mr. Sha'Rome Henry, executive assistant to the office of clergy services, keeps giving district offices and candidates top-notch assistance. His unending readiness to assist candidates in their journey through the process demonstrates his compassion for each of our congregations and candidates. He handles the process of requesting and receiving the annual reports that our office is in charge of, as well as maintaining our database. Without him, this office's job would not be possible.

I'm still appreciative of the twelve district administrative assistants' efforts. They carefully monitor a vast quantity of data that is important to so many different people. They are profoundly deserving of our thanks. I appreciate all the Board of Ordained Ministry does. During a challenging period in the history of Methodism, their perseverance and commitment allowed us to adapt and continue with excellence both credentialing and leadership development. It is a gift to work with our Bishop and Superintendents on many matters related to our clergy, and to support them as they continue the important and demanding work necessary to identify, nurture, instruct and supervise the clergy of our Conference.

To better serve the evolving leadership requirements of the conference and local churches, this office is still developing. I am grateful for the chance to serve Christ and the church in this way.

Respectfully submitted.

A. Melton Arant, Jr.
Coordinator of Clergy Services

THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCE STAFF RELATIONS

Purpose:

The committee on conference staff relations exists to provide for consistent Annual Conference staff personnel decisions, management and policy.

Key moments from the previous year:

The committee has worked to interpret and update employee compliance needs.

Objectives for the coming year:

The committee will continue to work with the Council on Finance and Administration to recommend conference staff salary adjustments, oversee the evaluation of staff and consider policy issues and employee compliance needs.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

The committee supports personnel in their efforts to provide the highest quality services, support and resources for churches and clergy across the annual conference.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

L. Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop
bishop@umcsc.org, 803-786-9486
Pat Gannaway, Larry McCutcheon, Alphonza Jones,
Pamela Cook, Diana Currence, Mike Galloway,
Jane Smith, Barbara Ware, Mitch Houston, Ross Chellis

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STANDING RULES

The Committee on Standing Rules met in March of 2023 to consider requests to amend existing Standing Rules. While we are not recommending any changes this year, we would like to propose removal of all references to The Methodist Oaks, including the references in Standing Rules 36, 48, and 55.

36. All Annual Conference boards, councils, commissions and committees are considered quadrennial except the following: The Board of Camps and Retreat Ministries; The Board of Pension and Health Benefits; boards of trust for, *The South Carolina United Methodist Advocate*; Belin Property; Claflin University; Columbia College; Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry, Epworth Children's Home; Wesley Commons; ~~The Methodist Oaks~~; The United Methodist Manor of the Pee Dee; Spartanburg Methodist College; Trustees of the Annual Conference; Wofford College; and The United Methodist Center.

Within sixty days of the adjournment of Annual Conference, the Conference Secretary shall notify the non-quadrennial boards, councils, commissions, and committees of the names and addresses of those elected.

The term of office for persons elected to all non-quadrennial boards, councils, commissions, and committees shall begin with the first regular meeting of that body after Annual Conference unless otherwise specified by the Discipline or by written policies of that board, council, commission, or committee.

- 48.VI.D. The **Conference Outreach Ministries** shall be organized, funded as prescribed (Par. 614.3), and function as mandated for the program-related conference agencies, which are described in *The Book of Discipline 2016*.

The Outreach Ministries shall be constituted to include, but not be limited to the following: Health and Welfare (See functions Par. 633.4b), Global Ministries (See functions Par. 633), Disaster Relief (See functions Par. 633), Communications (See functions Par. 646), and emerging community ministries.

The Trustees of the Homes (Pee Dee Manor, ~~The Oaks~~, and Wesley Commons), Epworth Children's Home and Aldersgate Special Needs shall relate to the Board of Health and Welfare.

The Belin Trust and Trustees of Spartanburg Methodist College (SMC) shall relate to the Conference Board of Global Ministries.

Each Outreach Ministry Area shall identify and monitor implementation of the respective disciplinary functions for reporting to the CCM. Additional members for short term committees and task forces may be assigned by the CCM in the implementation of the Outreach Ministries.

Members of Outreach from each district shall be assigned to that Ministry Area along with mandated ex-officio members and other representatives. Each board, commission or committee in the Ministry Area shall elect a chairperson. This Ministry Area shall include:

- a. Board of Health & Welfare (Par. 633.4b) (chairperson plus up to 7 members)
- b. Board of Global Ministries (Par. 633) (chairperson plus up to 7 members, including the conference secretary of Global Ministries)
- c. Committee on Disaster Relief (Par. 633) (chairperson plus up to 7 members)
- d. Commission on Communications (Par. 646) (chairperson plus up to 7 members) (See SR 67)

Outreach ex-officio members mandated by *The Discipline* and other representatives:

1. Conference Members to corresponding general agencies or their equivalent structures (Par. 710.6)
2. Cabinet Liaison may be appointed by the Bishop
3. UMW-Mission Coordinator of Education & Interpretation
4. Chair of Short term task force as determined by the Ministry Area
5. The Editor of the Advocate and a designated member of the Advocate Board

55. There shall be Boards of Trustees of Epworth Children's Home, Wesley Commons, ~~The Methodist Oaks~~ and the United Methodist Manor of the Pee Dee. Each board shall be composed of a minimum of eleven (11) but may have up to a maximum of twenty-one (21) members, as determined by their own bylaws. It is recommended that the smallest possible majority be laypersons and the remainder be clergy persons and at least one-third be women. Ex-officio members may serve as designated in the bylaws of their respective boards, having the right to voice, but not vote.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Dear Siblings In Christ, Conference Cabinet Members and Bishop Holston,

The Trustees of The South Carolina Annual Conference (Trustees) offer greetings and Peace in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ, and offer this narrative as well as the associated documents as a review of our activities over the time period since our last Annual Conference. This past year has been one of unprecedented activities by the Conference Trustees. We have put to sail ships of United Methodism in the South Carolina Annual Conference, within waters that even a few years ago we could not fathom.

First and foremost, we wish to express our firm belief that within the connection we call United Methodism, as well as those who serve the Living God be other expressions, we realize that we are all wonderfully made by our God, and all are called to be both witness to, and beneficiaries of God's amazing Grace in our individual and collective lives.

The Trustees have been charged by *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (2016 ed.) with the task of stewardship and administration of those assets, debts and final administrations of local churches who have elected to separate and close their respective churches and separate from the connection. Likewise we are equally charged with the oversight and provision of those individuals and stewardship of those local churches whose membership has elected to remain in connection with United Methodism. Our love of and sincere fellowship with both groups of those people who identify as Wesleyan has been one of our primary concerns in all we have attempted to do over the past year.

We realize that no plan will, nor could be crafted by us which would satisfy all individuals and groups who are stakeholders in these complex times. With emotions keen as they

are, it is often difficult to craft a plan whereby all are completely satisfied. In our attempts to nonetheless author a practicable, equitable and forward thinking plan, we are reminded of the Prophet Jeremiah's (29:11-13) writings: *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."*

God has plans, great plans, prosperous plans, for The United Methodist Church, and for all Disciples of the Risen Christ, regardless of their denomination, or expression of our love of God, and His love of us. We as Trustees encourage all to remember that how we choose to understand God, how we worship Him, can never cast away the fact that "we worship."

As a group, Trustees also ask for your prayers and grace, as well as the intercession of the Holy Spirit during these times. I think I speak for all of the Trustees in saying that none of us had fully prepared to take on the task these issues have presented. It is one thing to mentally think that you comprehend an issue; but it is entirely another to put plow to field and begin the work. We had anticipated our Disciplinary role in the process, but the complexities and interwoven aspects of this process have proven to be monumental. But with God's help, and the support of our Conference leadership, as well as your fellowship we have found it possible to *"Rise up...take courage and do it."* Ezra (10:4).

Over the next months, and into the future our work will continue, and with the Grace of Christ may we all pass through these times with love and peace for all. If you, your leadership, or your local church have any constructive input or questions for Trustees, please feel free to contact your District Superintendent, and we stand ready to be of assistance. In closing, Wesley found the traditions of the Ancient to be of such importance that he included it in the Quadrilateral. This part of our theology reminds me of a quote from St Isaac the Syrian when he wrote: "When you pray, bring to mind the ploughman who sows in hope. He who causes to return twofold the seed that the ploughman sows with hope, Who has esteemed the seeking of His kingdom and His righteousness to be greater than temporal things, He himself will reward your entreaty according to His promise." *St. Isaac the Syrian - "Ascetical Homilies" (Homily Twenty-Five). May this Spirit of Hope abide with us all as we traverse these unknown waters. And we ask that this report and addendum be entered as the report of the Trustees.*

Blessings and His Peace,
Michael D. Wood
Chair, SC Annual Conference Trustees

(SEE CHARTS NEXT TWO PAGES)
SC Conference of the United Methodist Church
Summary of Insurance Coverages

Trustees of the Annual Conference
Accounting by Property for the AC Trustees
December 31, 2022

SC Conference of the United Methodist Church Summary of Insurance Coverages Policy Begin Date: 09/01/2022 Policy End Date: 09/01/2023 Broker: HUB International Southeast, Columbia, SC		
Insurance Company	Coverage type	Description of Coverage
Philadelphia Insurance Companies	Claims made	Directors and Officers, Employment Practices
Philadelphia Insurance Companies	Discovery	Crime Coverage
Philadelphia Insurance Companies	Occurrence	General Liability, Auto, Property, Professional Liability, Sexual/Physical Abuse
Philadelphia Insurance Companies	Occurrence	Umbrella Liability
Philadelphia Insurance Companies	Claims made	Cyber Liability
United States Liability Insurance Group	Occurrence	General Liability on Vacant Properties
Accident Fund	Occurrence	Workers Compensation

Trustees of the Annual Conference Accounting by Property for AC Trustees December 31, 2022										
Property	District	12/31/2021 Balance	Sale Proceeds	Other Receipts	Expenses	Transfer to beneficiary	Retained by Trustees	Ending Balance	Designation	
McKinney Chapel	Anderson	(94.68)			(2,756.80)			(2,851.48)	Sold In 2023	
Orville (South Main Chapel & Mercy Center)	Anderson	(24,906.84)			(7,204.00)			(32,110.84)	Urban Center/Mission Church	
Smiths Chapel	Anderson	(1,638.88)			(114.96)			(1,753.84)	Undesignated	
Union	Anderson	(2,396.80)						(2,396.80)		
Zion Wallalla	Anderson	13,295.09	82,398.50	5,232.13	(1,858.13)	(29,731.49)	(11,562.24)	99,066.59	Sold	
Berea (Cordesville)	Charleston	13,608.17	30,000.00	20.00	(2,222.81)			109.63	Sold	
Berea (Cordesville) cemetery	Charleston	16,209.17						15,209.17	Pending resolution	
Cherokee Place	Charleston	212,462.03	2,768,238.91	4,000.00	(43,325.92)	(1,038,868.21)	(1,902,526.81)	-	Resolved	
Cherokee Place, Shalom Funds	Charleston	18,972.46				(18,972.46)		-	Resolved	
Tw o Rivers (new church start)	Charleston	-		47,655.48	(1,731.11)			45,924.37		
College Place	Columbia	-	-	58,650.32	(58,257.35)			422.97	Urban Center	
St. James	Columbia	57,152.91			(2,600.00)			54,552.91	Urban Center	
Bowers Chapel	Florence	(478.44)	60,100.00	1,268.82	(3,051.87)	(9,538.39)	(49,174.37)	(1,783.06)	Sale pending	
Greelyville	Florence	659.99			(3,143.76)			-	Resolved	
Trinity	Florence	-						(2,443.77)		
Trinity cemetery	Florence	-						-		
Concord (Greenville Korean Mission)	Greenville	22,323.01			(4,684.00)			17,639.01	Urban Center	
Zion-Andrew s (New Beginnings)	Greenville	59,626.78						59,626.78	Urban Center	
Bath	Greenwood	(13,323.32)	105,179.75		(1,580.00)	(64,999.03)	(25,277.40)	-	Resolved	
Bath (parsonage)	Greenwood	(2,000.18)	29,905.30	1,000.00	(619.16)	(20,365.89)	(7,920.07)	-	Resolved	
Gasaw ay	Greenwood	(1,532.10)	-	59.00	(2,116.99)			(3,590.09)	Transferred to Crossroads LMC	
Sandy Springs	Greenwood	43,669.36				(31,441.94)	(12,227.42)	-	Resolved	
Sandy Springs cemetery fund	Greenwood	-						-	Resolved	
Mt. Tabor (Crestfield)	Hartsville	(1,181.73)	31,325.50		(2,129.26)			28,014.51		
Snow hill	Hartsville	(620.80)						(620.80)		
Wilkes Chapel	Hartsville	(66.32)	10,000.00		(494.98)			9,438.70	Sold	
Chris/Myrtle Beach	Marion	(239,134.09)		704.96	518.10			(237,911.02)	Urban Center	
Iona	Marion	(2,048.87)			(114.96)			(2,163.83)		
Old Galliee	Marion	(240.41)						(240.41)		
Central Row esville	Orangeburg	(1,368.68)			(2,117.64)			(3,476.32)		
Rocky Sw amp Mission Church	Orangeburg	96,498.46	42,500.00		(1,515.40)	(96,287.80)	(36,215.26)	-	Resolved	
St. John/Orange Circuit	Orangeburg	-	98,487.25	-	(2,719.32)			95,767.93	Sold	
Loree	Spartanburg	-	95,000.00	12,468.08	(6,885.21)			100,582.87	Sold	
Broomfield	Waterboro	(282.68)	36,761.11		(1,622.20)			33,846.23	Sold	
Jerusalem	Waterboro	(773.88)	20,000.00	-	(2,969.43)	(11,786.75)	(4,583.74)	(113.80)	Sold	
Retained by Trustees, all funds	Conference	418,334.25	17,231.34	17,231.34	(6,247.79)		2,051,487.31	2,478,805.11		
Total		678,780.99	3,408,896.32	148,320.13	(164,474.75)	(1,323,971.96)	-	2,747,560.73		

SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST ADVOCATE

Purpose:

The Advocate is the newspaper for South Carolina United Methodists. Founded in 1836, the mission of the Advocate 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; special emphasis this year on disaffiliation and church conflict, mental health, racial healing, and the church post-pandemic;
- Had our articles consistently featured in the United Methodist News daily digest;
- Met ad sales goals and brought in significant tax-deductible contributions thanks to the generosity of Advocate supporters;
- Successfully navigated new subscription rates (to reflect print/postage increases and logical pricing tiers) and increased circulation income;
- Experienced best year yet in book sales for our Advocate Press, with 16 titles as of this writing and several more releasing this spring. To purchase any of these (paperback or ebook) go to Advocatesc.org/books;
- Launched a redesigned Advocate website (advocatesc.org); and
- Continued website traffic increases and strong social media presence through daily Facebook and Instagram posts.

Objectives for the coming year:

- Continue with 12 more strong editions of the Advocate, and continued focus on connectionalism and shining the light of Jesus in a difficult world;
- Continue commitment to fair, balanced news and journalistic excellence;
- Increase ad sales and contributions;
- Increase subscribers; and
- Release at least four more books this year and increase book sales over last year.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

The Advocate helps our United Methodist churches in South Carolina stay connected and prevent us from operating in isolation. It also helps your church members become stronger disciples. Encourage individual and group subscriptions to the Advocate at your church.

- Individual Subscriptions: Print \$20/year, Online-only \$10/year
- Church Leadership Plan: Select 5 church leaders for \$15 apiece (\$75 total)
- Group Print Plan: \$10/person per year (minimum six people)
- Online Whole-Church Plan: \$1/member based on your church's average weekly attendance In the conference journal
- New Members Free: Your new members get a free subscription. Just send their name/address to atrussell@umcsc.org.

Sign up at www.advocatesc.org/subscribe, call 803-786-9486 or email atrussell@umcsc.org

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

Jessica Brodie, Editor
jbrodie@umcsc.org, 803.807.0018

2022-2023 members:

Enid Jenkins, chairperson David Bryant, treasurer Linda DuRant,
Rev. Eleanora Coaxum Ellington, Rev. John Elmore, Rev. Sharon Spann Gamble
Rev. Michael Henderson, Clara Horton, Glen Levine, Rev. Karen Radcliffe
Licita Rogers, Selena Ruth Smith

Ex officio: Rev. Millie Nelson Smith, Rev. Cameron Levi

Staff: Editor Jessica Brodie; Assistant Editor Allison Trussell

Editors emeritus: Maryneal Jones, Willie S. Teague, Allison Askins, Karl F. Davie Burgdorf, Emily L. Cooper

THE TRUSTEES OF THE UNITED METHODIST CENTER

Purpose:

The Trustees provide, operate, supervise, and maintain office and meeting space for the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Key moments from the previous year:

The Trustees inspected the property in October 2022 for the first time since July 2019. During the inspection meeting, the Trustees discussed the aging components of the building and the financial implications of caring for the building and its occupants in the near future. Recognizing the need to prepare for such expenses and the inflationary pressures that come with time, the Trustees revised the rent methodology for the building occupants. The actual square footage used by each area was updated. The rate charged to each area for 2024 will be \$8.50. The rate per square foot will increase to \$8.75 in 2025 and to \$9.00 in 2026. It is anticipated that this change will increase the total rent revenue by approximately \$4,000 in 2024.

Objectives for the coming year:

The Trustees will continue to seek opportunities to operate the building in a manner reflecting good stewardship of Conference resources and to provide suitable office and meeting space to support the mission and ministry to which we are called.

Actions required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

The Trustees of the United Methodist Center appreciate the continued support of the churches through the apportionment system. The Trustees strive to be superb stewards of the funds for ensuring the facilities are safe, secure, and properly maintained. The building stands ready to support the various ministries of the Annual Conference.

Narrative:

The Trustees thank all who have taken on additional responsibilities by occasionally working as the building receptionist since the partial retirement of Ms. Alice Bouknight. Special acknowledgment and thanks go to Gail Corn, Tammy Fulmer, Stephanie Henry, Laura Hill, Lynn Jenkins, Heather Nordeoff, Betty Stalnaker, and Susan Williams.

Submitted by:

Rev. Thessa Smith, Chairperson
Email: bwestbury@umcsc.org

THE MINISTRY ADVISORY TEAM

Purpose:

The Ministry Advisory Team exists to create excellence in ministry by advising the Bishop, District Superintendents, programmatic, administrative and personnel teams of the Annual Conference. This team also provides oversight for the Bobo Trust Fund which is designated for leadership development.

Key moments from the previous year:

While meeting during the 2022-2023 year, the team echoed the belief of remaining faithful to the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Together with the extended cabinet and congregational specialists, the Ministry Advisory Team is working to align conference resources toward the identified areas that are Our Four Priorities - developing leaders, engaging our communities, connecting with & growing disciples, and measuring & evaluating current realities & missional possibilities.

In 2022, funds from the Bobo Trust were dispersed as grants for leadership development training. The current fund balance is \$48,674.

Objectives for the coming year:

The Ministry Advisory Team will continue to build on partnerships across ministry areas of the annual conference in an effort to increase alignment of resources with identified needs.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference:

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

This team works together to keep the annual conference bodies focused on how to best support the efforts of local churches working to strengthen connections with their communities to witness to the grace, mercy and love of Jesus Christ.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

L. Jonathan Holston, Resident Bishop
bishop@umcsc.org, 803-786-9486

Stephen Love, Dean of the Cabinet, Barbara Ware, Conference Lay Leader,
Millie Nelson Smith, Director of Connectional Ministries
Ross Chellis, Convener, Conference Connectional Ministries Team
James Friday, Director of Congregational Development
James Smith, Chair, Conf. Committee on Congregational Development
Laura Hill, MAT Secretary, Beth Westbury, Conference Treasurer
Smith Patterson, Vice Chair, CF&A, Mel Arant, Coordinator of Clergy Services
Morris Waymer, Chair, Conference Board of Ordained Ministry
Chris Lollis, Conference Benefits Officer, Valerie Brooks-Madden, Chair,
Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits

THE REPORT OF THE CABINET

Learning How to Wait: Breathing, Believing and Hewing Hope

¹⁸Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. ¹⁹I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:18-19

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:3)

This passage is used to begin Episcopal greetings to all people of United Methodism in our *Book of Discipline*. It reminds me of the primacy of scripture which has been given to us. Today I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is good for us to be here! We are back in person. Not because we are so good, but because our God is an awesome God and reigns from heaven above! We have learned much about waiting in recent years. Our Conference Theme, “Breath and Believe and Hewing Hope,” captures the essence of our lessons of recent years.

We are grateful for our Episcopal leader, Bishop Jonathan Holston and his wife Felecia, who have continued to lead us with integrity and grace. We continue to serve with Bishop Holston as the extended Cabinet (Appointive Cabinet, Conference Lay Leader, Conference Treasurer, Coordinator of Clergy Services, Director of Congregational Development, and Director of Connectional Ministries). We thank our administrative assistants for going the extra mile as they serve faithfully. We are blessed to serve with the laity of our conference (District Lay Servants, District lay leaders, and the laity of every local church) to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

The General Conference scheduled for 2024 will be the postponed 2020 General conference. We are still waiting to hear, see, and experience how God will move in our midst. Some of us have grown weary; some of us have chosen a different path and will be embarking upon new directions to accomplish the biblical mandate of “Making disciples of Jesus Christ. We all have the same goal as we serve a risen Savior who is still in the world today and lives because He lives down in our heart and soul. We are all children of God seeking to fulfill the purposes for which we have been charged. That is enough to be excited about! That is enough to get excited about! Sometimes it is draining and frustrating and yet we are reminded that we are God’s people. And that’s enough, Church. This conference year we have been busy and remained focus in spite of the challenges.

Bishop Holston established a task force of clergy and laity from every district. The purpose was to offer insights to assist our conference trustees as they develop a plan to guide our conference in property-related matters. The trustees created a guide to assist churches who were considering separation. We were introduced to the discernment process which is a reminder of how important it is to seek God and listen for God’s voice. Some of the highlights of this year are:

- We have continued to look forward and support the vital ministries of our conference that have helped the least of these through our missional giving.
- We have engaged in updated training for our safe sanctuaries policies and are beginning another forward focus leader training.
- We have introduced the discernment process which can be used to guide us through self- assessment and prepare us to develop our vision for the future.

There are many other ways in which we have been blessed while we are waiting. In all of this we are living into our four priorities more effectively: 1. Developing Lay and Clergy Leaders 2. Engaging Our Communities 3. Connecting with and Growing Disciples 4. Measuring Current Realities and Evaluating Missional Possibilities.

This past conference year has been full of amazing ministries from some of the remote places of our conference as well as some of the larger cities. Many of our churches have increased their worship and faith community through their online presence. Others have created new ministries and revitalized existing ministries. We are at a much different place than we were the last time we met in person.

We are family! We will celebrate ministries of a number of churches who will be closing as United Methodist Churches but who will always have as a part of their history the United Methodist Church and the blessings that God has bestowed upon them. We, the Cabinet, along with many of you are saddened. We also rejoice in knowing the commitment to being servants of Jesus Christ and making disciples has not waned. The South Carolina Annual Conference remains faithful as we follow Jesus Christ and the leadership of Bishop L. Jonathan Holston. May we all find the strength to remain faithful in our walk with Jesus Christ and with one another. We have had an amazing and challenging year. We have been able to reflect on who and whose we are and we face a field ripe for the harvest. We are growing in our faith and understanding of what it is to love, to serve, and to live as we seek to lead like Jesus through times of joy and sadness. Bishop Holston, the appointive and extended cabinet are committed to serving faithfully by following our scriptures and *Book of Discipline* in South Carolina. May we all walk together and by faith claim the victory that is in Jesus Christ as we grow in our waiting and are encouraged hewing out hope for the future. May we hear God's voice through the prophet Isaiah

¹⁸Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. ¹⁹I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

I invite you to join us as we continue to pray for unity in our community-those who remain United Methodist and those who may be led to separate. Pray without ceasing for our denomination, Conference, and all of our local churches and communities. While we are in this season of waiting let us follow the words of scripture, "But those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31 NRSV) "

In the words of an old spiritual sung by the Rev. James Cleveland: "I don't feel no ways tired. I've come to far from where we started from, nobody told me that the road would be easy, but I don't believe he brought me this far to leave me." The Lord has not brought us this far to leave us now. Let us not give up. Let us walk together as family as we renew our strength and serve this present age, sharing the love of Jesus Christ with the world.

We are still learning and growing as we wait;
Breathing in the spirit of God, Believing in the power of God and Hewing out hope as we stand on the solid Rock, who is Jesus Christ. May we all experience God's blessings on this journey of faith.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. Stephen L. Love, Dean of the Cabinet

THE REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE CHANCELLOR

It is my privilege to serve this conference as Conference Chancellor, legal advisor to the Bishop and the Annual Conference. By Conference standing rule 98, requests for my services are made through the Episcopal office.

Thank you for allowing me to serve the Conference. I appreciate and look forward to the opportunity to continue work with the dedicated clergy, staff and laypersons of the Conference.

My work this year has included serving as a resource for lawyers defending local Churches and the Conference in litigation, working with the Conference Board of Trustees by preparing leases, deeds sales contracts and other legal documents, and assisting in drafting resolutions and resources for the Conference and local churches. I have continued to monitor the filings in the Boy Scout Bankruptcy. The order of the Bankruptcy Judge has been affirmed by the District Court. There are more potential appeals, but the stay of the Order has been lifted and we expect that the payments by the UMC Conference will begin soon, and these will provide the releases for the UMC churches from the claims for sexual abuse during the time covered by the Bankruptcy. There will be a change in the structure of Scouting but with the affiliation agreement, Boy Scouting will continue.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to serve this Conference and the United Methodist Church.

Kay Gaffney Crowe,
Conference Chancellor

SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE MENnMINISTRY

Areas of Work and Ministry

Charters

We continue to struggle in South Carolina to get increases in Chartered Churches. The Pandemic had huge effect. There are Men's Groups in parts of South Carolina continue not to meet In-Person. We currently have 223 Active Chartered Churches and continue to be one of leaders in the Southeast Jurisdiction. We have 85 Churches that have lapsed, some of these are because Men are not meeting. Hopefully some of these will come back in the next few months as we move past the Covid fear.

EMS

We did have a decrease in EMS this year. Most of our EMS come from our Conference Leadership Team. At this point we have 30 active EMS members and 28 expired in 2022

Upper Room Prayer Ministry

We continue to promote the Upper Room Prayer Ministry, however it has to have lost momentum with close of prayer line and start of Prayer Wall. In February, Dennis Sullen our Prayer Advocate along with Rev. Chris Snelgrove, our MennMinistry Chaplain, had a Prayer Room at the "Full-Filled" Event. A text number was set up for Men attending the daylong Event to text prayer needs and concerns to the Prayer Room.

Spiritual Retreat

On February 25, 2023 at Mt Horeb UMC our 1st In-Person Event in two years took place. A golf tournament on Friday February 24 open the event. Close to 40 golfers (largest number) enjoyed 80 degree weather at The Spur at Northwood. Mt. Horeb sponsored an Oyster Roast from 6 to 8 pm with Dr. Derwin Gray giving a challenging message. Saturday's main event began following registration at 8 am with message from Dr. Gray followed by 5 breakout sessions. After lunch Dr. Gray concluded with his last message then Communion.

It was great to be In-person again, Virtual is good, but the fellowship is missing. There was over 250 men in attendance. There were 18 sponsor Churches this Year.

Teaching Churches

Last year, 2022, 6 of the 12 Districts held Events with Rev. Trevor Miller leading them on the subject three things men need to know. There are 4 districts planning events in 2023 and we hope to have 4 more before end of year. The Conference MnM has matching funds of up to \$400.00 per District for these events. We need more Districts to step up to use what God has provided.

Leadership

With Pastor Trevor's Leadership Living Word Devotional is being provide to our Email Constant Contact list every Monday morning with follow up Scripture each day. We hope to expand this ministry in 2023.

YoungER Men

We continue to focus on YoungER Men's Ministry. Several of our Districts have provided contact information for men to work to help build leadership. Some of our District Leadership Teams have younger men on them.

Scouting

Roland Finch, now in his third year leading scouting in South Carolina, has assembled an awesome leadership team. With Scouting now moving past the problems of last several years the outlook is once again bright for future.

Goal for 2023

The Conference Leadership Team set as main goal to help the Districts without Teams, to work with DS and District Lay Leader in locating men to fill these opportunities. As a personal Goal, I have committed to visit each District. At this point I have attended 7 of 12 districts.

The pandemic has brought change to our way of operating. Some have gone in hiding but some have seen this as positive change. A time to explore new and different ways of doing Ministry. We are certainly Blessed by having a connecting tool like Zoom. Our February Event has been key to our success in past years. God has use that time in so many special ways. He is already working to help us see new opportunities in new direction. When we yield to His call Great and Awesome things happen
Glory to God. Amen

Respectfully Submitted,
Marvin Horton President
MennMinistry. S C Conference

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Purpose:

We shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Key moments from the previous year:

Our membership continues to increase. We are still the largest in the nation with over 10,000 members.

Our virtual Legislative Advocacy Days had over 200 registered attendees. Our four workshops were; Predatory Lending, Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Diabetes Prevention and Kinship Care. The presenters enriched our understanding on critical topics we face in our state.

We donated \$10,000 to the Legacy Endowment Fund during the annual March 23rd Day of Giving.

Four young ladies were awarded Presidential Scholarships.

Spiritual Growth Event was hosted by the Spartanburg District virtually on April 23rd. The theme was "Surrounded by Prayer" with 284 people coming together to hear an inspired message from Annie Crocker of Beaumont United Methodist Church.

Assembly was held on May 20-22 at the Orlando Convention Center. We had 72 people attending with one person making a donation. Fifty of the ladies were in-person and 22 attended virtually. The theme Turn It Up was uplifting and exciting to give us new focus as United Women in Faith.

Our Come Together Be Together virtual program was hosted by the Charleston District on June 25th. The speaker was Rev. Debra Dowdle of Goose Creek United Methodist Church. She spoke to the 200 guest about the love and support she has experienced in her life and times when prayers of love encouraged her.

We gathered at Spartanburg Methodist College on July 21-23 for our in person Mission u. The theme "Who Can We Be Together? Building Communities of Hope and Joy" gave 103 students engaging discussions and group learning experiences.

Objectives for the coming year:

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.

We will continue our emphasis engaging in mission work; invite, encourage and seek new members to join UWF; work for social justice and use our power/voice toward positive action.

We have 40 ladies taking the 2023 Mission Trip on March 27-30, 2023. The Asheville to Nashville Adventure will include tour of Brooks-Howell Home, Beautiful Lake Junaluska, Scarritt Bennett, Bethlehem Centers, Nashville. We will donate gift cards collected to share with the residents.

We are working with SEJ to assist in the need of clean drinking water for Jackson, Mississippi school children. Conference Social Action project concerning the Jackson, Mississippi water crisis included an article in the February issue of the Advocate giving the background and update on reason for solicitation of donations to be collected and sent to Bethlehem Center in Jackson, Mississippi.

We are planning a new Charter for Racial Justice event with an emphasis on environmental impacts on minority communities. This new Racial and Environmental Justice virtual event will be held on June 24, 2023 at 10:00 am. We will focus on water issues for communities of color in South Carolina. We are teaming up with the South Carolina Environmental Law Project to provide resources on environmental hazards threatening underserved and overburdened communities. We will use Environmental Equity and Justice Specialist to help us take on critical issues across the state.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference:

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

We celebrated our 50th South Carolina Conference United Women in Faith Annual Meeting in October with our new name and banner on display. We are committed to more inclusivity, action and impact showing passion and power, united in God's love.

We have a wealth of new resources and toolkits to help equip women and young ladies to grow spiritually and as leaders.

We are advocates for justice, equality and diversity through our service and outreach to change unfair policies and systems. We are striving to "Embrace Change and Share Grace".

We support our four mission project and solicit your prayers and contributions for Bethlehem Center Spartanburg, Columbia Bethlehem Community Center, Killingsworth and Wallace Family Life Center who work to enable women, children and youth to be successful.

You can read about our service work and highlights in the Mission Echo newsletter and the *Advocate*.

Narrative:

Our mission project representative share on a quarterly basis the many lives that are impacted because of the giving and volunteers who so willingly give of their time and support.

United Women in Faith CEO Harriett Olson will retire Spring of 2023. She took the helm of the Women's Division of the General board of global Ministries in 2007 and began a 15-year tenure marked by programmatic and structural innovations and bold changes to strengthen the organization and position it for a future of growth and increased impact. In 2022, Ms. Olson ushered in a broad refreshing of the organization's brand that opened opportunities for women to join and participate through online All Access National Membership option and introduced the new name United Women in Faith, making clear the organization's lifetime open door to women within and beyond The United Methodist church. Programmatically, during her tenure the Schools of Mission was updated to the 21st century Mission u program. The United Women in Faith board of directors is following the organization's by-law guidelines to search for Ms. Olson's successor.

Respectfully submitted:

Clarice Blakeney, Conference President 2023-2024
cblakeney@shtc.net, 843-672-9789; c 843-680-4076

Vice-president Kathy Roys, Secretary-Ann Alexander, Treasurer- Ruby Hannah
Communications-Wanda Chandler-Flowers, Secretary of Program Resources-Shirley
Crosby, Education & Interpretation- Beth Addis
Membership Nurture and Outreach-Angela Allen, Social Action- Patricia Armstrong
Spiritual Growth-Vickie Harvey, Chair of Committee on Nominations-Azilee Dickey
Dean of Mission u-Vanessa Key, Assistant Dean Michelline Cooper-Williams

SALKEHATCHIE SUMMER SERVICE LLC

Purpose:

Purposes include among other things (i) upgrading housing for families in need; (ii) creating the opportunity for high school age youth and adult leaders to experience being God's hands and feet in communities across the state; and (iii) fostering caring relationships among the families being served and youth, adults, local churches and communities.

Key moments from the previous year:

Successes of 2022:

1. With Covid restrictions in place, including a mandate for vaccines for all who attended, Salkehatchie reopened 11 camps with a total of 318 participants with no COVID outbreaks.
2. Repaired 33 houses, including 9 ramps for veterans.
3. Hired part-time staff in January of 2023, after 2 1/2 years of relying on a volunteer to manage all administrative duties.
4. Published "Faith in Action: Stories of Salkehatchie Summer Service". Books sale profits amounted to \$803.86 since January 2022.
5. Held January 19-20, 2023, Camp Director's Retreat at Clark's Inn in Santee for the first time since 2020.

Challenges:

1. The aversion to Covid vaccines and boosters caused a multitude of youth and adults to not participate.
2. Creating safe environments at camps for eating, working, sleeping and worshipping.
3. Finishing building projects with smaller camps and inexperienced youth and adults
4. Increasing costs of building supplies and distribution issues.

Objectives for the coming year:

1. Promoting Salkehatchie through new opportunities like supporting Black Church Summit, Revolution, the Bishop's School of Ministry and being present. Creating new promotional materials.
2. After 3 years of Covid, reopening 38 Salkehatchie camps, including 3 new camps with no Covid Vaccine mandates.
3. Exploring new ways to work with local churches and schools.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference:

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

Thirty-eight Salkehatchie Summer Service LLC 2023 camps are preparing to get back to work being God's hands and feet, rebuilding and repairing homes across the state.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

Kathryn F Hart, Administrative Assistant
salkehatchie@umcsc.org, 803-691-6606
Ward Smith, Chair, Haley McLaughlin, Vice Chair
Ivey Hart, Secretary, John Culp
Joyce and Steve Barrow, Treasurer
Caroline Lawson, Les Marchant, Fred Murray, Shawn Crews
Art Jordan, Rachel Carter, Kathy Hart, staff

SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST CAMPS AND RETREAT MINISTRIES 2022 Report to the Annual Conference

Blessings all! As we close the books on 2022 we continue to be in awe of the miraculous things God continues to do in the lives of so many that enter our camp gates. While on a boat ride with several kids from the housing authority on Lake Hartwell, a little girl looked over the edge of the boat and then back at me and said, "Mr. Arthur, are there mermaids in this water?" Our kids are so in need of the out-of-doors, more so today than ever before.

In the last 10 years the ministry has tripled in growth. Additionally, a day camp (Camp Providence) has been added in Anderson, SC with a primary focus on serving underprivileged youth. We have also acquired and opened a small 68 bed overnight camp (Sea Islands Camp & Retreat Center) on John's Island. Although we are excited about these new opportunities, we know that its only because of the continued strength and rich heritage of Asbury Hills that we are able to do these things.

Summer camp at Asbury Hills continues to be strong, in April, Asbury Hills summer camp was voted once again by Newsweek to be one of the top camps in the US, in a field of more than 114,000 camps across America. Go God...Go!!!

SC Camps & Retreat Ministries joins with the church to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" by seeking, welcoming, and gathering persons into the community of the body of Christ through outdoor camping experiences at a place set apart which nurtures persons in Christian living by providing HOPE! **Hospitality** – Reach out to all persons, **Opportunity** – Offer them Christ, **Purpose** – Nurture persons in Christian Living, and **Engagement** – Send persons out to live their faith. All of this happens at a place set apart from one's own creative work, a place of solitude, where creation formation leads to faith formation, building relationships with trust and confidence to more than 5,000 guests annually at Asbury Hills, Camp Providence, and now the new Sea Islands Camp & Retreat Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

Arthur W. Spriggs
Executive Director

Rev. James Friday
Board Chair

SOUTH CAROLINA METHODIST CONFERENCE CREDIT UNION

Purpose:

The year 2023 marks sixty-eight years of service by the South Carolina Methodist Conference Credit Union to United Methodists in South Carolina.

Key moments from the previous year:

The Credit Union was chartered on September 19, 1955, by ten elders of the South Carolina Conference (1785). The Reverend Hawley B. Lynn was elected to serve as the first President. Initially the Credit Union was chartered to serve ministerial members of the annual conference and others under appointment of the bishop, employees of the Boards and Agencies of the annual conference, and their family members.

Today, membership encompasses not only the clergy of the South Carolina Conference and their families, but also members of the churches, and employees of the local churches, the Annual Conference, and the United Methodist Colleges, and Retirement Homes of the South Carolina Conference.

In 2022 the Credit Union saw a turnaround from the negative impacts of the COVID19 endemic. For the year, the credit union saw deposits increase by \$475,696, loans increase by \$166,388 and assets increase by \$425,008. But more than numbers, this is an indication that we have been able to provide greater service to our members during the year.

The credit union is currently blessed with a small but very experienced staff with a total of 70 years of combined experience working for credit unions and other financial institutions. This enables the credit union to provide exceptional service with a knowledgeable but personal approach. Alicia Reese currently serves as the Member Service Representative, Bruce Douglass serves as the Loan Officer and Andy Cox continues to serve as the President and CEO. Carolyn Lucas retired as Member Service Receptionist in December.

Objectives for the coming year:

On February 27, 2023, the Credit Union's Annual Meeting was once again held at Epworth Children's Home after a hiatus during the pandemic. At the meeting, the members elected Board Directors, Credit Committee members and Supervisory Committee members. The financial condition of the credit union was reported. We encourage all members to attend the Annual Meeting to learn more about your credit union.

Service to our members will continue to be the focus of the credit union.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

You are most likely a pastor or member of a United Methodist Church in South Carolina. As a pastor or member you are invited to join the South Carolina Methodist Conference Credit Union as it continues to serve United Methodists in South Carolina. Visit our website, www.scmccu.org, to learn more about the benefits of belonging to a faith based financial cooperative.

Narrative:

Respectfully submitted:

Andy Cox, President and CEO

tacox@scmccu.org, 803-691-0037

Directors: Mr. James Bradley Jr., Mr. Robert J. Barham, Rev. Eugene L. Curry, Rev. Roger M. Gramling, Mrs. Lisa L. Fusco, Rev. Ronald A. Pettit, Rev. B. Susan Ulmer, Rev. Robert M. Vincent, Rev. Lillian H. Washington

Credit Committee: Rev. Leatha M. Brown, Rev. John E. Holler, Jr., Rev. Hope R.A. Morris

Supervisory Committee: Mr. Alston Brooks, Mrs. Christine C. Dominick, Rev. Willis E. Haselden IV.

AFRICA UNIVERSITY

United Methodists worldwide celebrated an ‘Ebenezer’ moment in the ministry of Africa University in 2022, marking 30 years of faithfulness, generosity, growth, and impact within and beyond The United Methodist Church.

God’s presence in the life of Africa University is evident, thanks to the prayers and generous support of the South Carolina Conference. Thank you Bishop L. Jonathan Holston, conference leaders, and member congregations for your hope-filled, transformative witness to the goodness of God. In 2022, the South Carolina Conference invested 100 percent of its share of general church giving to support the day-to-day operations of Africa University and responded to student access challenges by creating a pathway for more orphans to enroll at the institution. Thank you, South Carolina United Methodists, for being attentive to the needs of Africa University’s ministry and giving sacrificially to ensure its continuing vitality.

Supported by South Carolina United Methodists and others across the denomination, Africa University embraced new opportunities as it emerged from pandemic-related restrictions in 2022.

- **Enrollment:** Africa University achieved a total enrollment at 2,791 students in August 2022. Female students comprised 58 percent of the student population and 23 African nations were represented.
- **Academic Growth:** Africa University launched its first new academic unit in almost twenty years—The School of Law—with a pioneer cohort of 20 students pursuing the Bachelor of Laws (Honors) (LL.B.) degree program. The institution is launching five new undergraduate and graduate programs approved by the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE), the national accreditation and quality assurance agency.
- **Infrastructure expansion:** The new residence hall for female students at Africa University is under construction, funded by the South Carolina Conference’s \$1.5 million **Teach * Reach * Bless** campaign. Once completed, the building will boost the available on campus housing for students to around 1200 beds.
- **Outcomes:** 712 graduates from 18 African countries became Africa University alumni in June 2022. The university’s almost 11,000 graduates to date are making vital contributions as clergy, educators, agriculturalists, health professionals, entrepreneurs, and innovators. Faculty and student research efforts to address endemic challenges such as malaria and tuberculosis, food insecurity, and climate change are gaining continental attention and significant international funding.

Africa University’s year-long 30th anniversary program culminated in October 2022 with a gathering of more than 3,000 people at its main campus in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Amidst the commemoration and joyful thanksgiving livestreamed to the world, the Rev. Dr. Peter Mageto was installed as the fifth vice chancellor (president) of the institution.

Mageto, a Kenyan and academician specializing in theological ethics, echoed the gratitude of the students, faculty, staff, trustees, and alumni of Africa University for the many answered prayers represented in the Africa University story. His inaugural address highlighted the optimism and commitment to purpose that are the foundation of the university's unfolding vision.

"Today, Africa University turns thirty. The number 30 is a blessed figure. Thirty was the age of our Lord Jesus Christ when he commenced his ministry here on earth. It gives us great faith to be walking resolutely towards the fourth decade," Mageto said.

Thank you, South Carolina Conference, for equipping change leaders and building an enduring legacy through the ministry of Africa University. Let us continue to journey together—learning, leading, and serving God, all the time, everywhere.

James H. Salley, President and Chief Executive Officer,
Africa University (Tennessee) Inc. &
Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Advancement
Africa University

LAKE JUNALUSKA ASSEMBLY, INC.

In 2022, Lake Junaluska Assembly continued to live into its mission to be a place of Christian hospitality where lives are transformed through renewal of soul, mind and body. Future projections during the pandemic in 2020 were that 2023 would be the first year organizations like Lake Junaluska would see the "new normal." That is indeed the case at Lake Junaluska.

Large group gatherings are returning this year, with all six large groups back for the first time since 2019. The Seventh Day Adventist Camp Meeting will be here May 28-June 4. This is the traditional kickoff of the season and will be followed by Holston Annual Conference (June 4-7), WNC Annual Conference (June 15-18) and Music and Worship Arts Week (June 18-23). The Salvation Army Southern Bible Conference will be here August 5-13 and the Church of the Brethren Older Adult Conference is scheduled for September 4-8. Each of these events will be held in Stuart Auditorium and includes worship and other events open to the community.

Financial Review

Lake Junaluska ended 2022 with a balanced budget. This is in part because of a \$500,000 Pandemic Recovery Grant from the state of N.C. and significant charitable support to our ministry.

Charitable Giving and Capital Improvements

Charitable giving remains strong and, in 2022, we exceeded our fundraising goal to the Annual Fund for the fourth straight year. The Annual Fund is a budget-relieving initiative that is a line-item in Lake Junaluska's annual operating budget.

Since generous charitable giving provides opportunities for Lake Junaluska to reinvest into its facilities and grounds, great strides have been made toward improving our infrastructure that will enable the conference center to continue to meet the needs of all guests.

Capital improvement projects continue, focusing on code compliance/safety as first priority and guest/revenue production areas as secondary. Bandwidth across the grounds has seen a 150% increase, and work is underway to double the number of Wi-Fi access points and replace network switches with new managed network switches in 10 buildings. Media Services has purchased new lightweight tables and chairs, upgraded Stuart Auditorium video production to 4K digital and expanded live-streaming services to include all locations on the grounds. In addition, there have been \$212,500 in utility improvements and \$140,000 in road improvements invested throughout the grounds in 2022.

Work on the Warren Center multi-function event space (the former Methodist Museum building) is currently underway. A walkway to make it easier to access Susanna Wesley Garden from The Terrace Hotel is expected to be finished later this summer. Architectural plans for the interior are almost ready to be sent out for bid. The renovation is expected to take 6-10 months to complete, and we are hopeful that the interior work will begin as early as June. We anticipate being able to book events in this space by 2025.

Lake Junaluska Dredging and Dam Preservation

In 2022, Haywood County received a \$1.5M provision in the N.C. state budget that is available to be used to pay dredging expenses at Lake Junaluska. Approximately 500 to 800 truckloads of sediment that results from runoff from Richland Creek and Factory Branch must be removed each year. The total amount spent on the dredge completed in the winter of 2022-2023 is \$214,103. This provision will expire in 2023, however we are applying for an extension until 2025.

Recovery and Fresh Expressions of Ministry and a Bright Future

Seven theologians participated in the inaugural Theologian in Residence program in the summer of 2022, and plans are almost complete for the 2023 season. Summer worship attendance nearly doubled in 2022, and summer activity programs returned with offerings such as yoga, bonfires, devotions and special events. These, along with over 100 hosted events, brought over 50,000 people to experience the ministry of Lake Junaluska.

Looking toward the future, Lake Junaluska continues to focus on the following guiding aspirations, which were adopted by the board of trustees in 2020:

- **Aspiration 1:** To preserve and enhance the lake and grounds so that more people will recognize the natural beauty of God's creation.
- **Aspiration 2:** To be a conference center that rivals hospitality industry-facilities.
- **Aspiration 3:** To be the place that connects more youth to Christ through meaningful ministry, recreation, and education programs.
- **Aspiration 4:** To identify, uphold, and strengthen the Lake Junaluska tradition of implementing innovative, shared experiences – for both individuals and families – that celebrate faith, recreation, the arts, and education.
- **Aspiration 5:** To be an involved, inclusive community that provides the highest quality of life for residents and guests.

Lake Junaluska appreciates your continued support as it lives into God's purpose for this special place. The leadership and staff invite you to visit Lake Junaluska for a conference, retreat or vacation. The lake and surrounding mountains will provide the perfect setting for you to experience transformation and renewal.

To plan your next visit, please visit lakejunaluska.com.

Ken Howle, Executive Director

GULFSIDE ASSEMBLY REPORT

Greetings from the Gulf Coast!

As a General Board of Global Ministries Missionary and Church and Community Worker, I have the honor and privilege of serving in ministry with Gulfside Assembly in Waveland Mississippi as the Community Outreach Coordinator. Gulfside's ministries are inclusive, family centered, and restorative. They provide consistency of engagement, opportunities, and exposure. Many have had the Gulfside experience.

We are grateful to God that our ministries are growing. Since its inception in 1923, Gulfside's ministries continue to serve communities in Mississippi. These ministries include, but are not limited to our Youth Development Program, Senior Lunch & Learn, Faith-based Collaborative, Veterans Support Initiative, Gulfside Open Alliance Leadership Support, School Uniform Voucher Program, and a Community Garden.

Gulfside has a transformative story to tell. To showcase past and present ministry events, Gulfside has a historical exhibit at the Ground Zero Museum in Waveland Museum. This exhibit will be featured until May 6, 2023. Additionally, Gulfside will celebrate 100 years of ministry with scheduled anniversary events April 27-29, 2023.

HINTON RURAL LIFE CENTER

Purpose:

Our Mission: Inspired by Jesus Christ, Hinton Center serves individuals, congregations, and rural communities through retreat ministries, educational opportunities, and missions. Hinton serves SEJ conferences, equipping clergy/churches and offering opportunities for individuals and groups to serve in Safe & Healthy Home Repair and firewood ministries and/or to retreat and renew in the Appalachian mountains.

Key moments from the previous year:

Some of our 2022 ministry highlights include:

- Launched Theotokos Confirmation Retreats, providing a United Methodist confirmation experience for 314 young people from 20 different churches. Also developed and provided Theotokos Connections, a digital confirmation resource that is small church relevant, but meaningful for all ministry settings. We received orders from 55 churches in 2022 and continue to receive orders. www.hintontheotokos.org
- Entered our House on Wheels (HOW) mobile teaching unit in multiple parades and community resource events to promote home safety awareness and practices.
- Facilitated poverty simulations for 550 people, helping those serving in missions to better understand the dynamics/challenges of rural poverty and what it means to “walk alongside” our neighbors in need.
- Completed 186 home repair projects on 48 different homes, prioritizing and addressing the health and safety of homeowners, with the volunteer efforts of over 725 mission participants. Mission team participants and local volunteers recorded 16,760 hours, a value of \$501,962 to our community.
- Provided over 700 loads of firewood to families and individuals who heat primarily with wood, a value of \$179,240.

Objectives for the coming year:

One of our objectives in 2023 includes completion of our Ervin Sanctuary Trails & Gardens, with the installation of a new Lakeside Trail and completion of our Tohi Trail (multi-purpose with recreation and meditation offerings; “tohi” is Cherokee for health, in a holistic sense). Hinton is embracing our dual offerings of retreat and outreach ministries following the example of Christ, who took time to retreat AND cared for others. Another goal is the construction and launching of our new educational Tool Barn, funded by the Duke Endowment and part of our Safe & Healthy Homes initiatives. The Tool Barn will not only house supplies, equipment, tools, and resources for our local volunteers and mission teams, but will be designed in such a way to teach mission volunteers and community members about Safe & Healthy Home maintenance and the direct connection between poor health and inadequate housing. The Tool Barn will be completed and ready for use by year end.

Action(s) required from the 2023 Annual Conference: None

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

Hinton Rural Life Center, located in the southwest corner of North Carolina, is a jurisdictional resource for United Methodist clergy and churches, offering space and place for retreat and renewal for individuals, families, and groups; virtual training in Mental Health First Aid; supporting rural ministry; providing opportunities for mission outreach through Safe & Healthy Home Repair and firewood ministries in our Appalachian mountain community; and offering discipleship opportunities for young people through Theotokos Confirmation Retreats and curriculum, summer missions, and mission outreach focused leadership training.

Narrative:

Even our 12-week Leadership Chatuge Community Builders course, primarily for adults in our 3-county service area, is open to high school students. Hinton believes that long-term transformation of rural communities must involve the education, equipping, and engagement of young people. One to three local high school students have participated in Leadership Chatuge classes since 2019. Clay County resident and Hayesville First UMC member Lauren, one of the high school participants, was grateful for her experience: “This program has largely affected how I view business and economics. It gave me the opportunity to gain new connections with business owners. Also, it opened my eyes to all that our area has to offer in resources.”

Respectfully submitted:

Karen Kluever, Minister of Church Relations & Development
karen@hintoncenter.org, 828-389-8336

CANDLER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Since 1914, **Candler School of Theology at Emory University** has educated faithful and creative leaders for the church’s ministries throughout the world. An official seminary of The United Methodist Church, Candler holds true to the Methodist value of ecumenical

openness, enthusiastically welcoming students from more than 42 denominations, with nearly half of Master of Divinity students coming from the Wesleyan tradition, including United Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Wesleyan, Free Methodist, Church of the Nazarene, and others. Our student body reflects the diversity and breadth of the Christian faithful, with an enrollment of 417 from 16 countries and 33 states, and 43% persons of color. This diversity is a blessing, enriching our life together and providing a “learning laboratory” for ministry in the 21st century—ministry that cultivates community across difference, welcomes all to contribute and belong, and embodies Christ’s love in and among us.

Candler offers six single degrees and ten dual degrees, most of which are available in hybrid or online formats so students can remain rooted in their home communities as they pursue their degrees. Our new hybrid Master of Divinity blending online classes and in-person intensives launches in Fall 2023, and our successful Doctor of Ministry—with its high 87% completion rate—is 90% online. Hybrid and online options are also available in the Master of Religious Leadership and the Master of Religion and Public Life programs. Plus, Candler’s Teaching Parish program allows student pastors to earn contextual education credit as they serve their churches. We are excited that these flexible learning formats make a first-rate Candler education possible for even more people who are called to ministry.

Alleviating student debt through generous financial aid is a top priority for Candler. In 2021-2022, we awarded \$7.3 million in scholarship support, with 100% of MDiv students receiving aid. All MDiv students who are certified candidates for ordained ministry in the UMC receive full-tuition scholarships, and all MDiv, MTS, MRL, and ThM students receive a scholarship covering at least 50% of tuition. MDiv students also complete a financial literacy program to strengthen their financial and budgeting skills and reduce debt.

Candler was recently honored as one of 16 theological schools to receive a “Pathways to Tomorrow” grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The \$5 million grant will support Candler in establishing a set of initiatives to create an interconnected continuum of offerings for the education of pastoral leaders. This will position Candler as a hub of theological learning with multiple entry points, including The Candler Foundry, our innovative program to make theological education accessible to the public, the United Methodist Course of Study, undergraduate classes, and a new venture, La Mesa Academy for Theological Studies. Set to launch in Fall 2023, La Mesa Academy will offer diplomas in pastoral leadership via a two-year hybrid program with courses in Spanish and English. An optional third year of study will be offered to those aspiring to continue to a graduate professional degree at Candler.

This year, we welcomed the Rev. Dr. Brett Opalinski as Assistant Dean of Methodist Studies, a position made available by the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Anne Burkholder. Brett is an elder in full connection in the Florida Annual Conference and most recently served for nine years as senior pastor of Christ Church United Methodist in Ft. Lauderdale. In addition to other pastoral appointments, he has held a variety of leadership roles in the Florida Conference, including chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry. He is deeply committed to working with students in discerning their call, spiritual formation, and guiding them through the commissioning and ordination process.

Candler’s ability to fulfill our mission to provide the church with the faithful and creative leaders it needs depends upon your prayers, partnership, and support. Thank you for the countless ways you advance this essential ministry in the life of our denomination. We invite you to visit us online at candler.emory.edu.

– Jan Love
*Mary Lee Hardin Willard Dean and
Professor of Christianity and World Politics
Candler School of Theology, Emory University*

DREW UNIVERSITY THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

Drew educates and mentors pastors, preachers, deacons, activists, teachers, thought leaders, and change agents. In Fall 2022 Drew welcomed 77 new students, and as of February 2023 Drew has a total enrollment of 408 students. Many Drew students are just beginning their ministry, while others come to graduate theological education with substantial ministry experience. The latter reflects a growing trend among all theological schools in the United States and Canada. During 2022, Drew classes met on campus in

Madison, New Jersey, but also some classes met exclusively online, while other met in hybrid fashion, i.e., partially online, partially in-person. This was also the case with chapel worship. This reflects both our ongoing emergence from the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, but also Drew leaning into what it means to be a global school with a global student population. With 35% of students coming from 28 different countries Drew Theological School is truly global and diverse in theology, vocations, age, as well as racial, ethnic, national, and international identities. Drew's interdisciplinary degree programs foster out-of-the-box thinking, provide real-world apprenticeships, promotes adaptive leadership skills, and encourages innovation through a team-taught core courses reflecting the integration of the theological disciplines and practices characteristic of the life of faith. The faculty articulated shared values are infused across the teaching and learning at Drew: a commitment to anti-racism; gender and sexual-identity equality; eco-sustainability and environmental justice; and interfaith understanding and cooperation. The Theological School has seen an increase in United Methodist students. Moreover, Drew has many United Methodist Global Fellows who chose to pursue education for ministry at Drew. UMC graduates are serving in conferences across the United States as well as in our regional conferences in Greater New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and New York Annual Conference.

Edwin David Aponte, Dean

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Duke Divinity School has been blessed to be part of the fresh work of the Holy Spirit this year and to participate in “little Pentecosts”—signs and foretastes of the hope we profess and the calling we follow. In his Opening Convocations sermon, Dean Edgardo Colón-Emeric said: “If Duke Divinity School is to keep on its Pentecost journey, it needs to devote itself to being guided by the marker of mercy. Our motto of *Eruditio et Religio* only makes sense when we add mercy. ... How we care for the needy is the measure for the apostolicity of our studies, the holiness of our communion, and the power of our prayers.”

The school has continued in its commitment to form ministers of the gospel who will seek God's justice and mercy. Our faculty have been leaders in the Duke Climate Initiative participating with colleagues from the Nicholas School for the Environment in the event “Pastoral Care for Climate Change: Weaving Together Science and Theology for Justice,” at the Duke University Marine Lab in Beaufort, N.C. Divinity faculty have also co-taught a university course titled “Let's Talk about Climate Change,” and welcomed 30 young faith leaders from various religious traditions and places worldwide to understand better how to engage their faith communities in the fight for our climate.

The Office of Black Church Studies, which has been commemorating its 50th anniversary year, hosted “Justice Ministry Reimagined: Reentry Simulation” for pastors, students, and lay leaders to learn more about how to support people reentering the community after incarceration. We launched the Prison Engagement Initiative with the Kenan Institute for Ethics. Divinity faculty taught a “Trauma Engaged Duke” seminar and led the project team Developing Best Practices for Trauma-Informed Teaching and Learning. These programs and events complement the ongoing work of field education and ministerial formation that puts Duke Divinity students in contexts ranging from rural churches to hospital chaplaincy to farm ministry, and many more.

This fall, we welcomed 226 entering students from 35 different states and eight other countries, including Canada, Colombia, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, and South Korea. The Master of Divinity program gained 130 new students, with 88 residential students and 42 in the hybrid program. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled 13 new students; the Doctor of Ministry, 28; Master of Theology, six; Master of Theological Studies, 22; the Doctor of Theology welcomed six new students to campus, and one special student has enrolled. The Certificate in Theology and Health Care welcomed four residential students to campus and 16 in the hybrid program. Across all degree programs at the Divinity School, 30 percent of the incoming class identified as a race or ethnicity other than white. Black students made up 18 percent of all students; Latinx students, six percent; Asian students, five percent; and American Indian students, one percent. Fifty-seven percent of students in the incoming class are female.

There were 33 denominations represented in the M.Div. entering class, with 30 percent affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Baptists made up 17 percent of the incoming students; Anglican-Episcopal students, 12 percent; and nondenominational students, 12 percent.

Dean Colón-Emeric said: "It is with the guidance of the acts of the apostles, their communal praxis, that the Divinity School continues to build that most delicate and often discredited of structures: an ecumenical community, a community that boldly professes the Apostles' creed, a community where Christians from estranged churches study together, a community of generous, joyful Pentecost orthodoxy."

The school continued to build on its rich tradition of ecumenical engagement, with Dean Colón-Emeric participating in the Methodist-Roman Catholic International Commission Dialogue meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican. Student Eliza Love, M.Div.'23, was awarded the \$10,000 Bossey Institute scholarship from the United Methodist Church Council of Bishops to attend the World Council of Church Ecumenical Institute. The Houses of Study at Duke Divinity School—Methodist House, Anglican Episcopal House, Presbyterian/Reformed House, Baptist House, Office of Black Church Studies, Asian House, and Hispanic House—all enrich the Duke Divinity community through theological formation, student support, dynamic lectures, and robust programming.

The school has also welcomed new leaders who bring their gifts to the work of advancing the mission to serve Christ and the church. Three new associate deans have accepted appointments: Daniel Castelo, William Kellon Quick Professor of Theology and Methodist Studies, as associate dean for Academic Formation; Jung Choi, a consulting professor and director of the Asian House of Studies, as associate dean for Global and Intercultural Formation; and Sangwoo Kim, a consulting professor and senior director of the Methodist House of Studies and the Wesleyan Formation Initiatives, as associate dean for Vocational Formation. Linda Coley, who earned an M.Div. from Duke Divinity along with M.S., M.B.A., and Ph.D. degrees, has also joined as the executive director for the Ormond Center.

Several new programs demonstrate Duke's sustained commitment to connecting with churches and ministers. The Ormond Center launched the Community Craft Collaborative to create resources for equipping lay and congregational leaders. The Certificate in Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation (CCTR), facilitated by leading scholars and practitioners in the fields of conflict transformation and reconciliation from Duke University and other institutions, provides a timely learning opportunity for pastors and other church leaders seeking theological and practical skills to foster reconciliation in their congregations and surrounding communities. The Clergy Health Initiative supports healthy practices for vibrant ministry. The research and programming from other Duke Divinity initiatives, including Theology, Medicine, and Culture; Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts; Leadership Education at Duke Divinity; and Thriving Rural Communities, continue to provide numerous opportunities to bear witness to God's creativity, compassion, and care for communities and congregations.

Our Convocation & Pastors' School (CPS) returned to an in-person format for the first time since the start of the pandemic with the theme, *Creativity & Courage: From Trauma to Tough Hope*. The presenters—professional dancers, visual artists, musicians, and scholars—guided participants in facing brokenness and sin honestly, as they offered glimpses of "the beauty of holiness." *NY Times Best Selling Author & Associate Professor of Christian History, Kate Bowler led a live taping of her Everything Happens podcast to kick off CPS with over 1000 registered participants.*

Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church and partnership with this annual conference. We celebrate the expansion of our connection to UMC colleges through a partnership with Wesleyan College in Macon, Ga., to enable qualified undergraduates to take master's level course through the Duke Accelerated Pastoral Formation Program. We look forward to our ongoing work with you as we join the leading of God's Spirit in the task of preparing men and women for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

Respectfully submitted by Edgardo Colón-Emeric
Dean of Duke Divinity School

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Gammon Theological Seminary is the Interdenominational Theological Center's United Methodist constituent member in Atlanta, Georgia. The Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) is a Christian Africentric ecumenical consortium of seminaries and fellowships that educate students to commit to practicing justice and peace through a liberating and transforming spirituality to become leaders in the church and local/global communities. Gammon was founded in 1883, bearing the name of the Rev. Elijah H. Gammon, a generous

clergyman, businessman, and philanthropist. Rev. Elijah H. Gammon invested and endowed the founding of Gammon Seminary in partnership with Bishop Henry Warren and the Freedman's Aid Society. Gammon has educated Black Clergy for almost 140 years, with graduates serving every level of the church, including Bishops, Superintendents, General church leaders, Conference staff, and Clergy in every jurisdiction. Today, Gammon Theological Seminary is the only predominately Black Seminary of the thirteen approved United Methodist-related Theological Institutions. The ITC's accreditation is with the Association of Theological Schools and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Gammon/ITC offers the following degree programs: the Master of Divinity, the Master of Arts in Religion and Education, and the Doctor of Ministry. The support given to The United Methodist Ministerial Education Fund by United Methodist Conferences continues to enable Gammon students to be grounded in the Wesleyan tradition of theological education. Our 17th President/Dean, Rev. Dr. Candace M Lewis, is the first woman to lead the Seminary in our 139-year history. Dr. Lewis and the Gammon staff team continue to lead innovatively in chartering a "Brand New Day" for Gammon's recruitment, retention, research and resources, fund development, and scholarship endowments in her first two years of service.

Our new initiatives and celebrations this year, 2022-2023, at Gammon include:

- **We established The Rev. Walter H. McKelvey Endowed Scholarship Fund with the South Carolina Methodist Foundation.** Dr. McKelvey was Gammon's 14th President/Dean, serving from 1997-2010. Under Dr. McKelvey's leadership, Gammon's enrollment and graduation rate increased, and buildings were renovated. Our initial goal is to raise \$100,000.00. We have already received a matching fund pledge of \$50,000.00 from Dr. Loretta F. McKelvey (wife of the late Rev. McKelvey).
- **Spring 2023 – International Student travel.** Gammon students traveled to Belfast, Ireland, with the North Georgia Conference as a part of the Rethinking Conflict experience. Gammon students also traveled to Johannesburg, South Africa, on the Doctor of Ministry Immersion experience.
- **Commissioned two National Research Projects**, the first one related to the Impact of COVID on UMC BIPOC Clergy in partnership with Wespeth Benefits and Investments – CFWI – Clergy Financial Wellbeing Initiative. The second research project is "Perspectives" The Future of Blacks in the United Methodist Church—public release of research reports of the Gammon Research Institute scheduled for Summer 2023.

The greatest challenge facing Gammon Seminary is the rising cost of theological education and the significant debt our students incur as they answer their call to full-time ministry. Therefore, Gammon is committed to raising a million dollars in the next two years to offer full-tuition scholarships to students called and committed to full-time ministry in the United Methodist Church. We are grateful to this Annual Conference for your support of theological education and your commitment to ensuring pastoral leadership is theologically trained to lead us forward in the Wesleyan tradition.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dr. Candace M. Lewis, President-Dean

METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO
www.mtso.edu

Thank you for this opportunity to bring you news from MTSO.

International Institute on Theology and Disability meets at MTSO

MTSO was pleased to host the four-day international Institute on Theology and Disability in June 2022. Founded in 2010, the institute celebrates, explores and investigates the ways that disability impacts many dimensions of religious life; theology and practice mutually inform and support one another; and diverse perspectives enrich and inform theological formation and religious practice.

MTSO and WomanPreach! share \$1 million Lilly Endowment grant

Lilly Endowment Inc. has awarded MTSO a grant of \$1 million to support prophetic preaching through a partnership with WomanPreach! Inc. The grant period extends from Nov. 1, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2027. WomanPreach! was founded 12 years ago by MTSO Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs Rev. Valerie Bridgeman, Ph.D., who serves

as the organization's CEO. It provides practical training and nurturing community spaces that empower preachers across the country. Begun as a way to train women, Woman-Preach! has since grown to include programming for people of all genders. Its numerous programs include the biennial Jarena Lee Preaching Academy, a week-long intensive academy that equips women of the African Diaspora to speak in their own prophetic voices; Sophie's Table: A Conversation Among Siblings, an all-genders program that amplifies voices of people of marginalized genders, women and children; and Chloe's Circle, which gathers women from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to sharpen preaching that reflects a commitment to justice based in God's call through Jesus.

Mount Union joins MTSO to offer 3+2 program

The University of Mount Union and MTSO have begun offering incoming college students a 3+2 program, leading to a Master of Arts in Social Justice degree in five years of study rather than the six years typically required. Students will begin the program at the University of Mount Union in Alliance, Ohio. After completing the program's requirements at Mount Union, they are eligible to begin two years of study at MTSO, where they will finish requirements for a Mount Union bachelor's degree and earn an MA in Social Justice degree from MTSO. Students in the 3+2 program are eligible for MTSO's exceptional scholarships.

Respectfully submitted,

Danny Russell, director of communications

SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Educating tomorrow's leaders by offering on-campus, online, and hybrid learning courses at a FLEXible schedule, Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary serving a diverse community committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry through rigorous academic life. Grounded in the academic study of faith and ministry, theology is practiced in a traditional classroom and in remote spaces. Our contextual curriculum features Ministry Collaboration Groups, Practicums, Spiritual Formation Retreats, and Seminars. Students learn from dedicated faculty, experienced pastors, and community leaders about best ministry practices leaving our graduates with the tools and first-hand experience necessary to meet the needs of a changing world.

We continue to implement the changes the last few years have integrated into our daily lives. Our weekly chapel service utilizes a hybrid format, where participants may join in-person or online, allowing staff and students to come together as one institution where all are invited to create a sacred atmosphere from wherever they are. In addition, Saint Paul offers weekly Spiritual Formation allowing students to engage in spiritual practices led by Rev. Jen Logsdon-Kellogg. Some practices will take us outdoors or to other sacred spaces, and others will have us connect with community leaders.

Saint Paul welcomed over 30 new students for the 2022-2023 academic year. Enrollment remained solid for the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree program with promising growth on our Oklahoma campus. With COVID-19 restrictions lifted yet monitored, prospective students returned to in-person visits on both campuses, experiencing community meals, worship, and the newly implemented "Hammock ministry" on the Oklahoma campus. The Admissions team continues to expand travel to meet new students, including the Carolinas, Washington, D.C., and various parts of Texas.

This year we have focused on strengthening the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry by creating two specializations: Women, Society, and Church; and Social Justice and Advocacy. In each case, the student takes 22 hours of MACM required courses, and then the remaining 12 hours of the degree are comprised of courses focusing upon the specialization. The two existing specializations, Prophetic Witness and Service; and Deacon Ministries, will continue to be offered as well. The Women, Society, and Church Studies specialization is also available in the MDiv program, as is a specialization in Wesleyan Studies.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue contributing to the academy, church, and society. This year, we welcomed Rev. Dr. Sharon Betsworth as our new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean and Professor of New Testament. The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology maintains high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and engagement. Over the past year, their many activities and publications have been so numerous that space permits only sharing selected highlights.

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- Rev. Dr. Sharon Betsworth co-authored a journal article with Julie Faith Parker, “Where Have All the Young Girls Gone? Discovering the Girls of the Bible through Childist Analysis of Exodus 2 and Mark 5–7,” in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 38, no. 2 (Fall 2022).
- Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Contextual Education, was the keynote speaker for the United Methodist Church Missouri Preaching Academy “Offering the Word to a Digital World.” She published “Failure to Discern the Online/Hybrid Body: A Captivity of the Eucharist” for the special issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission: Eucharist and Online Worship: Toward Extended Theological Reflection*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2023) and published the chapter “Liturgical Authority and the Table in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)” in *Liturgical Authority in Free Church Traditions*, edited by Sarah Johnson and Andrew Wymer, *Calvin Worship and Witness Series*.
- Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, Assistant Professor of Ethics, Church, and Society, led a “Race, Liberation, and Political Economics” series at Second Presbyterian. He also spoke at The Open Table KC on “Race, Liberation, and Economics.”
- Dr. Amy Oden, Adjunct Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality, was a guest speaker at numerous events around the country this year, including at a Five Day Academy for Spiritual Formation in Oklahoma, the Beyond Conference in St. Louis, and the Academy for Spiritual Formation in Alabama.

In October, Saint Paul hosted a forum on “Innovative, Creative Ministry” featuring alumni Matt Austin ‘18, Fabian Gonzalez ‘20, Bo Ireland ‘18, Matt Patrick ‘18, & Abby Peper ‘22, with each sharing their personal stories of innovation in ministry. In November, Saint Paul Evangelical Society, led by Dr. Israel Kamudzandu, hosted a forum given by Rev. Mike Slaughter, former lead pastor at Ginghamburg Church, on “Spiritual Awakening: the here and the not yet.” Later in the year, the Evangelical Society hosted a lecture featuring Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns, Visiting Professor of Pentecostal Studies and Director of the Global Pentecostal House of Study at United Theological Seminary. And on May 12, Saint Paul again held a hybrid commencement celebration via Zoom, allowing graduates to come together from both campuses with attendees viewing from around the country. During the ceremony, we honored the 2023 Distinguished Graduate Award Winner and Commencement Speaker Bishop Delores J. “Dee” Williamston.

Saint Paul Board of Trustees changed leadership this year as long-time faculty and board member Rev. Dr. Tex Sample concluded his term as chair of the Board. Dr. Amy Hogan, Professor of Education and Dean of the School of Education at Ottawa University, has succeeded him as chair. Dr. Hogan possesses a deep reservoir of experience in teaching, research, and accreditation. In response to President Neil Blair’s announcement that he will retire on December 31, 2023, Dr. Hogan appointed a search committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and trustees charged with identifying Saint Paul’s next president. The search committee is currently conferring with Saint Paul’s constituent groups to prepare the position prospectus that will describe Saint Paul’s needs and aspirations to candidates.

In September 2022, Saint Paul School of Theology hosted a review team from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), one of Saint Paul’s primary accreditation agencies, as part of the Seminary’s regular reaffirmation cycle. On November 18, 2022, the Higher Learning Commission notified Saint Paul that the Commission “continued the accreditation of Saint Paul School of Theology with the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2028-2029.” The Seminary’s Board of Trustees also devoted considerable time to improving its governance capacity. For example, in April 2022, trustees invested a significant portion of their meeting in a facilitated Emotional Intelligence and Trust-Building workshop. The workshop was led by Gail Parker, a noted management consultant who has worked with clients such as KPMG, Goldman Sachs, and Disney, among many others. In October 2022, former executive director of the Association of Theological Schools, Dan Aleshire, offered an overview of demographic and enrollment trends in the nation’s seminaries, focusing on how those trends affect institutions’ diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. As these activities suggest, the Board remains deeply committed to enhancing its capabilities to guide Saint Paul effectively and knowledgeably.

We are happy to report that Saint Paul School of Theology is financially sound. We operate with a balanced budget, no debt, and an endowment 9-10 times the size of our annual expenses. As always, we continue to be grateful for donations from the community that provide technology, scholarships, and evolving academic programs to students. As of the close of 2022, over one hundred alumni and friends of Saint Paul contributed more

than \$60,000 to create the Tex and Peggy Sample Endowed Scholarship Fund honoring the life and work of Tex and Peggy Sample. Sustainability has been our focus over the past five years, and we have achieved our goal. Investments in our future bring exciting new opportunities for our students, staff, and faculty. Our significant technological investments have allowed us to maintain a hybrid educational delivery model providing a flexible working arrangement for our students.

We are continuing to enhance our partnership with Zoom and Neat. Late last Spring, in conjunction with our Neat Board electronic whiteboards and Neat Bars, we implemented Neat's newest product, their Neat Bar Pros, in our large classrooms. These new bars are designed to offer a superior video and audio experience in large spaces and the ability to output to multiple large screens to enhance the overall classroom experience significantly. We have rolled out additional Zoom Room Neat Boards in numerous common areas to encourage ad-hoc use of the technology for breakout groups and other miscellaneous meetings between our two campuses and remote students. One of the best features of this technology is its ability to receive automatic real-time over-the-air features upgrades. Several significant enhancements have rolled out this past year, including improved voice cancellation, Zoom Room Breakout Groups, real-time Closed Captions with transcripts, and updated use of AI to split each in-classroom student into their individual zoomed-in Zoom window. In addition, our Neat equipment continuously monitors several environmental factors within our classrooms; air quality, temperature, humidity, VOC, and CO2, as well as being able to tell if the classrooms are occupied and how many individuals are in the room. We can also monitor the audio/video quality and network connectivity in each of our classrooms, as well as the connection quality for all remote students attending the class. We are excited about the additional enhancements that will come to our classrooms from Neat and Zoom over this next year and look forward to our continued partnership with Neat and Zoom on this groundbreaking technology.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to discover more and answer the call. We are grateful for your support of our students and our seminary. May we continue to live into the call of Jesus Christ to be faithful witnesses for generations to come.

President Neil Blair, Saint Paul trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, and students thank you for your prayers and support.



spst.edu

Where Theology Meets Life

WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT 2023

Wesley Theological Seminary continues to grow and thrive through research, innovation, and equipping Christian leaders for real-life ministries.

Course offerings and support that respond to students' needs

Get the education you need in the format you want.

- Pursue your call in a dynamic community within the corridors of power in Washington, DC, or earn a degree through flexible hybrid and online options from your home! Learn more: wesleyseminary.edu/study/
- Our **FlexMA** is a 36-hour flexible M.A. degree for those preparing for bi-vocational or specialized ministries. Learn more: www.wesleyseminary.edu/flexma/
- **Wesley offers specializations** in African American church leadership, public theology, military chaplaincy, and certifications in Christian studies, children and youth ministry and advocacy, and health ministry. Learn more: wesleyseminary.edu

Wesley provides \$2 million annually in scholarships, including **full-tuition scholarships** for master's applicants recommended by alums, campus ministers, or Christian service ministries; **Next Call in Ministry scholarships** for students working 10+ years in a non-ministry setting; and **Generación Latinx Scholarships** for emerging Latinx leaders in ministry.

Wesley's **Doctor of Ministry programs** includes relevant tracks such as Church Leadership Excellence, Soul Care, Global Church Leadership, Howard Thurman, and the ground-breaking track on Trauma, Moral Injury, and Christian Life. Journey with a cohort of leaders with online classes and hybrid week-long intensive sessions. Learn more: wesleyseminary.edu/doctorofministry/

Research projects support congregational thriving and envision future ministry.

Over \$11 million in Grants from Lilly Endowment Inc. undergird Wesley's research into and support of congregational thriving and innovation.

- In collaboration with Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology, Wesley Theological Seminary is developing professional courses and certificates for pastors.
- The **Wesley Innovation Hub** brings together diverse congregational cohorts to learn and practice ministry innovations that engage young adults for social change. Learn more: wesleyseminary.edu/wesley-innovation-hub/
- The **Wesley Ministry Innovation Fellowship** is a one-year, cohort-based experience with community formation, spiritual direction, graduate-level courses, and hands-on experience leading innovation. Each innovator earns a stipend and four graduate academic course credits. Learn more: wesleyseminary.edu/wesley-innovation-hub/design-fellows/
- The **Lewis Center for Church Leadership's Religious Workforce Project** offers multi-denominational research into current and future needs. [Visit religious-workforce.com/](http://visitreligious-workforce.com/)

Enrich your congregational outreach and explore new dimensions of ministry.

The **Lewis Center for Church Leadership** conducts leading-edge research for the local church. Find the **Leading Ideas e-newsletter** and **Leading Ideas podcast**, a weekly resource for over 20,000 leaders, at churchleadership.com.

The **Community Engagement Institute** embraces a vibrant vision to be the premier center for churches and faith-based organization engaging their communities.

- The online **Health Minister Certificate Program** prepares congregations for public health work in their parishes. Contact: Dr. Tom Pruski, tpruski@wesleyseminary.edu.
- The **Center for Public Theology** creates spaces for civil dialogue at the intersection of religion and politics. Visit wesleyseminary.edu/ice/programs/public-theology/.

The **Henry Luce III Center for the Arts and Religion** explores the intersection of the arts and theology. Visit luceartsandreligion.org.

Stay connected

Contact us at (202) 885-8659 or admissions@wesleyseminary.edu. Follow us on social media— Facebook [wesleyseminary](https://www.facebook.com/wesleyseminary), Instagram [@wesleyseminary](https://www.instagram.com/wesleyseminary), LinkedIn [wesleytheologicalseminary](https://www.linkedin.com/company/wesleytheologicalseminary), and Twitter [@WesTheoSem](https://twitter.com/WesTheoSem).

The Rev. David McAllister-Wilson
President, Wesley Theological Seminary

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