

THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY

We appreciate you reviewing our report to the 2025 South Carolina Annual Conference, which you can read at umcsc.org/ac2025.

The Board of Ordained Ministry comprises clergy and lay members who provide faithful servant leadership. We invest our time and share our unique gifts in leadership development with the candidates. We continually pray to affirm each candidate's call to ministry. We walk alongside and nurture candidates who seek ordination to encourage excellence, demonstrate compassion, listen attentively, and ultimately guide candidates toward progress—from being prepared to becoming fit for ministry.

We are forever grateful for each member of the Board of Ordained Ministry so that we can develop excellent leaders in various ministry settings. The Board is divided into seven reading teams. The team comprises two members from each subcommittee: Bible Study, Call and Disciplined Life, Proclamation and Preaching, and Theology and Doctrine. Each member reads all work submitted to gain a holistic approach from the four evaluative areas. The hope is that the interview will be more conversational. The goal remains the same. We will continue to work efficiently and be faithful in our two primary responsibilities: developing leaders and credentialing clergy.

On Sunday evening, June 8, 2025, at 7 p.m., the Service of Commissioning and Ordination will be held at the Greenville Convention Center to celebrate the fruit of persons who have answered a call to ministry and successfully navigated the requirements for commissioning and ordination. These people are valued as meeting the standards of readiness and effectiveness for ministry in the local church and other ministry settings.

Three people are scheduled to be ordained as full elders: Leo Wesley Roy, Thessa Goodwin Smith, and Billy Keith Stewart.

One person will be ordained as a full deacon: Kim Moultrie Bryant.

Eight people will be commissioned as provisional elders: Grayson Edward Fallaw, Joseph Brannon Gambrell, Rachel Elizabeth Headden, Faye Juanita Jones, Fred Preston Moore, Jr., Larry McCray, Adrienne Elaine Stokes, and Sheera Disher Yates.

Two people will be commissioned as provisional deacons: Heather Roberts Connor and Ronald Brent Crimm.

Gary Rivas, who was previously ordained in another Methodist denomination, will have his orders recognized and will be received as a full member of the South Carolina Annual Conference.

Patrick Taylor, who was previously ordained in another Methodist Denomination, will have his ordination recognized and is being received as a local pastor of the South Carolina Annual Conference.

We sincerely thank everyone who has answered the call to ministry and committed themselves to their education, commissioning, and ordination. We ask for God's blessings on their ministry, mission, service, and witness journey. We encourage all local churches and ministry settings to invite individuals to explore their calling to ministry and to nurture that calling into leadership through prayer.

The Board of Ordained Ministry will recognize the people who have completed the five-year Basic Course of Study for 2024 and received United Methodist Special Sunday scholarships at the Annual Conference.

We want to express our gratitude to local churches and the Annual Conference for their support of the Ministry Education Fund. Your generous contributions have enabled the Board of Ordained Ministry to assist students financially, significantly reducing educational costs.

We encourage you to continue your faithful support for our future leaders who are committed to their leadership development and strive for excellence in ministry. Please send your offerings to the S.C. Conference Seminary Students Scholarship Fund, which the South Carolina United Methodist Foundation manages. This endowment provides scholarships to candidates for ministry from South Carolina attending United Methodist seminaries and theological schools.

1 We genuinely appreciate your financial gifts, and will update you on the recipients during the Annual
2 Conference.

3 District Committees on Ordained Ministry play a vital role in the ministry process by meeting with all
4 candidates for ministry. They serve as an extension of the Board of Ordained Ministry, providing essential
5 support and accountability for individuals. The Board of Ordained Ministry profoundly appreciates the hard work
6 and dedicated service of every District Committee.

7 We celebrate God's call for individuals to serve, lead, and experience the joy of ministry. Ministry is a continuous
8 journey, and we are committed to providing growth opportunities. The Board of Ordained Ministry works diligently
9 to plan the annual Bishop's School of Ministry and Clergy Orders gatherings. We actively recruit and engage
10 seminarians as potential leaders in the South Carolina Conference. Additionally, we discern and process Extension
11 Ministry requests as the ministry landscape evolves, and we participate in the Approval for Service requests for
12 those seeking to join our Annual Conference. We actively receive and carefully consider requests for status changes
13 from candidates and clergy. Additionally, we engage with individuals who feel a call to ministry through our
14 Candidacy Retreats. These are just a few of the Board of Ordained Ministry's ongoing responsibilities.

15 As the Board of Ordained Ministry in the South Carolina Conference, we depend on the support of our local
16 churches to identify and nurture candidates interested in pursuing ministry. We are committed to providing holistic
17 and accountable care to everyone called to serve Jesus Christ. Although our congregations may have evolved, we
18 firmly believe that ministry can bring hope, joy, and grace to our lives. As a team, we pledge to address the needs of
19 everyone on their ministry journey attentively.

20 The Board of Ordained Ministry would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the dedicated and capable
21 leadership of two extraordinary individuals. First, we want to acknowledge the efforts of Rev. Mel Arant, the
22 Coordinator of Clergy Services. Second, we recognize the exceptional contributions of Mr. Sharome Henry, the
23 Executive Assistant for Clergy Services. Their expertise, guidance, and compassion for everyone have been
24 invaluable to our Board. We understand that the efficient execution of our tasks would not have been possible
25 without their direction, leadership, knowledge, proficiency, and unwavering dedication.

26 Thank you for taking a moment to consider the work of the Board of Ordained Ministry as you prepare for
27 the 2025 South Carolina Annual Conference session. Again, you can read our full report at umcsc.org/ac2025.

28 Rev. Morris Waymer
29 Chairperson
30

31 THE COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

32 The commission on archives and history maintains the conference's historical records and helps researchers –
33 conference officials, local church historians, genealogists, or scholars – learn about Methodism in South Carolina. We
34 maintain archival repositories at Wofford College and Claflin University. We are also responsible for recommending
35 historic sites and promoting history in the conference.

36 The biggest challenge we've faced this year is taking the records of churches that were separating from the
37 conference. In the separation agreement, churches had to submit digital copies of their membership and some
38 administrative and historical records. We had to manage the transfer of those records and insist that some churches
39 comply. And then, we had to process those records and make them available in our digital repository.

40 Our archivist, Phillip Stone, published a book of his columns on Methodist history in South Carolina with the
41 Advocate Press.

42 With all the work of collecting and processing separating church records, we still managed to help 227
43 researchers with history or genealogy questions.

44 The archives tries to make more records available for researchers and will continue to do that this year.

45 We have a group of new archives and history commission members that we hope will bring new ideas.

1 We are ready to collaborate with any group who wants help in sharing history, but also in using history to
2 help share the story of United Methodism in South Carolina.

3 We would like to express our gratitude to Chancellor Kay Crowe for her strong support of the commission's
4 efforts to collect records from the separating churches.

5 You don't always realize how much you need the archives until you suddenly need them. The archives is here not
6 just to maintain the records of the past, but to maintain the records we produce today so that the future also has a
7 past. Archives and history are as much about who we are today as who we were in the past. And, ultimately, archives is
8 about stories that connect us together across the generations.
9

10 Dr. Phillip Stone, Conference Archivist
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12 ***Commission on Archives & History Resolution of Thanks to Chancellor Kay Gaffney Crowe***

13 Whereas, in 2023 and 2024, 225 congregations in the South Carolina Annual Conference separated from the
14 conference; and

15 Whereas, the United Methodist Book of Discipline places the responsibility of caring for the records of closed local
16 churches with the Conference Commission on Archives and History; and

17 Whereas, as part of the separation process, congregations were requested to deposit certain of their membership,
18 administrative, property, and historical records with the Commission on Archives and History; and

19 Whereas, as the South Carolina Annual Conference Chancellor, Kay Gaffney Crowe was responsible for enforcing
20 the various separation agreements signed by the separating churches, and

21 Whereas, her insistence that local churches comply with their agreement to deposit copies of their historically
22 significant records with the Commission on Archives and History resulted in the preservation of over 200 sets
23 of church records, and

24 Whereas, the preservation of these records provides an invaluable service to those individuals in the future who will
25 be able to access those records for genealogical and historical research, now,

26 Therefore, be it resolved by the South Carolina Annual Conference Commission on Archives and History, that we
27 are grateful for the support of Conference Chancellor Kay Gaffney Crowe in ensuring the transfer of local
28 church records to the archives; and

29 Be it further resolved, that we extend our sincere thanks to her for her firm insistence that separating churches
30 fulfill their responsibilities in transferring their permanently valuable records to the archives before leaving
31 the conference.

32 *Adopted by the Commission on Archives and History*
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34 **THE COMMITTEE ON THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

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40 **THIS REPORT WILL BE RELEASED IN EARLY MAY.**
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THIS REPORT WILL BE RELEASED IN EARLY MAY.

THE COMMITTEE OF CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT 2024-2025

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 of local congregations as we seek more excellent ways to share the loving gospel of Jesus Christ and Christ Church in extending the Kingdom of God to all of creation.

Key moments from the previous year:

The Conference Committee formed a Task Committee to consider how we would utilize the one million dollars granted to Congregational Development from the Conference Trustees from the 2023 Separation Church funds. The task committee discussed over several meeting the best use of the Separating Church Funds received from the Conference Trustees. After several meetings and much discussion, the Task Force presented to the full committee for approval of the following distribution of the funds:

Campus Ministry Grants – \$150k available to ensure programming monies are available for campus ministry areas so that campus ministries can continue investing in discipleship, growth, and development of present and future transformative leaders of college aged young adults. We see this an investment in the present and future of the kingdom of God and the ministries of the United Methodist Church Campus Ministries. All the campus ministries in our Conference received an initial grant of \$8,333.00 in support of developing or enhancing their discipleship ministries on each of the sponsoring campuses across the state.

Secondly, 6 Beta Cohorts - \$100k to develop Bi-District cohorts across six months with three modules to help local churches (clergy and lay people) to cultivate discipleship pathways for the greatest missional impact. The funds will be used to help cover administrative costs and to invest in the findings of those churches participating. We believe this will foster a collaborative learning environment among our local congregations and communities across the Annual Conference.

Third, support for Annual Conference Mission and Ministry Grants - \$450k—these funds will support initiatives for new churches, new faith expressions, and new ministries opportunities to reach new people in new places throughout the Annual Conference as try to develop new and emerging ministries.

Fourth, support Digital Grants - \$150k. The availability of these funds to local churches and ministries with hopes of enhancing digital storytelling of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the digital age.

Fifth, in support of Conference Events/Emergency Funding - \$150k. As of writing this report, we are working in committees to work out details for funding criteria for each of these buckets for funding the ministries for church development and redevelopment of local churches of our Annual Conference.

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, invite, connect, engage, know, disciple and serve the people of their communities better. We are planning for four tri-district training modules in the fall of 2025 at a site near you. So be on the lookout for the training dates in your areas.

We were be able to support four of our existing congregations who applied for grants through Existing Church Grants funds totaling \$120,000.00, grant support that span the spectrum of vital ministries, missional situations, and capital improvements to improve and provide needed support for people in our various communities across this conference.

Your generosity and financial investments from local congregations into our mission, ministries, and services of the people called United Methodist in South Carolina has allowed us to support local congregations in variety of ways. Thank You!!!

We are also grateful for your generosity and financial investments of \$245,144.53 through our new church and acquisition funds. This allows and gives us opportunities to support new ministries in new places for new people in the various communities in 2024-2025 around the state.

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

While we celebrate all you have given and allowed us to collaborate with our sisters and brothers across the connection here in South Carolina through your generosity and investments, we also grieve another round of our siblings in our United Methodist Family in South Carolina and across the Connection who decided to disaffiliate or separate from our family. "Lord In Your Mercy! Hear Our Prayers!"

Yet, while we grieve the last round of disaffiliations and separations of this past conference year, we celebrate God's gathering of United Methodist and other people of faith who continue to love God, love neighbor, love oneself and love like Jesus across the Annual Conference.

We celebrate and support the following missional ministries in 2025 and beyond.

- **Carolina Forest** is a new church start in the Myrtle Beach area. First/Conway UMC is collaborating by being an anchor church and providing administrative support and shared space for this new church plant. Rev. Tyler Strange has been meeting with people, establishing relationships, creating an emerging core team in the Carolina Forest area.
- **The Circuit of the Rock Hill District** is a new missional situation pastored by Rev. Mallory Nickerson and Rev. Michael Jarrell. They currently have five small groups meeting. The Circuit is more of a missional rather than a typical new church start, meeting in small groups. They are creating church in the community similar mostly on the Fresh Expressions models of church.
- **Open Hearts/Greenville** is in its second year and seeing steady growth. They have begun a community ministry, Let's Break Bread, where they meet in homes for fellowship and discussions among several other ministry opportunities in the community.
- **Grace/North Augusta Sweetwater Satellite Campus** now has a new pastor appointed in the person of Rev. Patrick Taylor since July 1, 2024 and working with Lead Pastor Cathy Jamieson to bring a fresh approach of Evangelistic Love to the Sweetwater Community of Edgefield County and the North Augusta area.
- **Hartsville District Cooperative Parish** continues their good work under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Reginald Lee and staff, despite one of the churches dropping out.
- **Harris-Trinity/Greenwood** is a missional situation supported by Congregational Development and Equitable Compensation. It is a partnership between an African- American church and a Euro-American church under the leadership of Rev. Thessa Smith.
- **Good Samaritan/Lake Wylie** was receiving Congregational Development funds to support pastor's housing expenses. It is currently an interim closure and slated to be officially closed at Annual Conference in June 2025.
- **South Main Street Chapel and Mercy Center/Anderson** ended their 10-year support from the conference as a missional situation. They have requested permanent classification as a missional situation to assure financial stability. If granted, funding would continue from the conference level. I hope we can find a way to support a permanent missional status for this ministry under the leadership of Rev. Kurt Stutler.
- **Mt. Zion/Kingstree** received two years of support from Congregational Development as a part of a Renewed Vitality Situation under the leadership of Rev. Keith Hunter.
- **The Brook/Myrtle Beach** is a new church start that came as the result of a merger of three existing local churches in 2023 under the leadership Rev. Deborah Patterson.
- **O'Neal Street/Newberry** designated as a missional situation July 2024 under the leadership of Rev. Edward (Ed) Stallworth serves as pastor of the church and this mission.
- **Waters Edge/Lady's Island** receives support for property acquisitions for this church with hopes of having the mortgage paid off by the end of 2026.

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 in the Annual Conference. One of our goals is be the best stewards of what we have received from our local congregations of the annual conference and be as generous as we are able to support local congregations.

Objectives for the coming year:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 We look forward with hope to partnering and sponsoring multiple smaller conference-like workshops on
16 things like **staff/team development**, how to lead a visioning process, multi-site challenges, and multi-
17 ethnic/culture transitions into **Acts 2** faith communities. We are excited about missional possibilities and
18 opportunities before us even in such a time as this.

19 **Action(s) required from the 2025 Annual Conference:**

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

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

27 Respectfully submitted:

28 Rev. Dr. James P. Smith, Chairperson

29 Rev. James L. Friday, Director

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31 **THE COMMITTEE ON EPISCOPACY**

32 The Committee on Episcopacy is charged with enhancing the work and life of our Bishop, through support
33 and evaluations.

34 This committee made recommendations to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy,
35 through our representatives, Dr. Ken Nelson and Judge Jackie Jenkins. From our work over the quadrennium, we
36 were able to collate information from yearly conversations and evaluations for this process.

37 Bishop and Mrs. Holston were not reappointed to our conference. Therefore, this committee made strides
38 towards a smooth transition, in regard to housing and staffing information.

39 During this past conference year, this committee had the responsibility of carrying out its charge with two
40 bishops. We planned and implemented the farewell of Bishop and Mrs. Holston, as well as the welcome and
41 installation of Bishop and Mrs. Fairley. Both events went well.

42 Michael Jennings and Lollie Haselden did hands on work to get the parsonage ready for the transition. Each
43 committee member aided in making the new episcopal family welcomed to be a part of the South Carolina
44 Annual Conference.

Additionally, this committee was supportive of Bishop Fairley, in the loss of his mother, during the installation week.

We miss the Holstons yet open our arms and hearts to the Fairleys.

The budget for our work has been properly submitted.

Respectfully Submitted by:

J. Jeannetté Cooper, Chair

THE COMMITTEE ON STANDING RULES

The Committee on Standing Rules offers the following Standing Rule change recommendations.

50. The Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall be composed of eighteen (18) members nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. It is recommended that six (6) be lay men, six (6) be lay women, and six (6) be clergy persons who are active participants in the pension and group insurance plans in which the Annual Conference is the Plan Sponsor. There shall be a Board of Pension and Health Benefits composed of not less than twelve (12) members nominated by the Conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the Annual Conference. It is recommended one-third be laymen, one-third be laywomen, and one-third be clergy persons who are active participants in the pension and group insurance plans in which the Annual Conference is the Plan Sponsor. In addition to fulfilling the responsibilities mandated by the *Book of Discipline*, the Board of Pension and Health Benefits shall supervise the Annual Conference group insurance program. The Conference Benefits Officer shall be nominated by the Board of Pension and Health Benefits and elected by the Conference Staff Relations Committee. The chairperson of the Council on Finance and Administration shall be an ex-officio member with voice but without vote.

Rationale: This change was requested by the Board of Pensions and Health Benefits. It reduces the number of members on the board in response to a smaller conference. It also brings the language in line with that of the 2020/2024 *Book of Discipline*.

46. There shall be an Annual Conference Ministry Advisory Team to facilitate conversation and interaction between Program Services, Administrative Services and Clergy Services. The membership shall consist of: The Resident Bishop, as convener; the Conference Lay Leader; the Conference Council on Connectional Ministries Convener; the Conference Director of Connectional Ministries; the Treasurer/Statistician; the President of the Council on Finance and Administration; the Chairperson of the Board of Ordained Ministry; the Coordinator of Clergy Services; the Cabinet President; the Secretary of the Annual Conference, and the Conference Benefits Officer; the chairperson of the Board of Pension and Health Benefits; and the Director of Congregational Development and the chairperson of the Committee on Congregational Development.

Rationale: This change was requested by the Ministry Advisory Team to add the Secretary of the Annual Conference to membership. In recent years the work of the Ministry Advisory Team involved the Office of the Conference Secretary. Currently the Coordinator of Clergy Services and the Secretary of the Annual Conference are the same person, but does not have to be. This will insure the Conference Secretary is part of the Ministry Advisory Team in the event that the Secretary is not also the Coordinator of Clergy Services.

Rev. Michael Hood

Chairperson

THE OFFICE OF CLERGY SERVICES

The primary purpose of the Office of Clergy Services continues to be to serve as a support for and liaison between the Bishop and Cabinet and the Board of Ordained Ministry in areas related to clergy licensing, ordination and status.

Mr. Sharome Henry, the Executive Assistant for Clergy Services, continues to provide excellent support to district offices and candidates with patience and passion. His concern for each of our candidates is expressed with through his willingness to help guide them through the process. He is a blessing to both to the candidates and to our church.

Our office inputs, updates and maintains the information in our database for all active and retired clergy, lay ministers, pulpit supplies and candidates in various stages of the process. That work is made possible by the help and guidance of Jim Crews and Russ McKissick in the Conference Information Technology department. The accuracy of this database is pivotal for the completion of the many annual reports for which this office is responsible.

This office continues to oversee the annual update of the clergy/candidates criminal background checks in accordance with the conference's Safe Sanctuary policy. The policy requires all active clergy, candidates and those assigned to congregations to have a current background check every three years. This year Clergy Services has processed over 400 background checks.

Clergy Services is dedicated to providing quality opportunities for leadership development. This office has also collaborated with the Chairs of the Clergy Orders and Fellowship to provide the first sexual ethics training of the quadrennium, led by the Interim Director of the Lewis Center for Church Leadership, Rev. Dr. Jessica L. Anschutz. Clergy Services also collaborated with the Board of Ordained Ministry to invite Dr. Lovett Weems to lead the main session at the 2025 Bishop's School of Ministry. In conjunction with the Board of Ordained Ministry, Clergy Services oversees the Licensing School of Pastoral Ministry. This year in addition to the quality instructors from among our clergy membership, we partnered with Candler and the Lewis Center to provide training for the new licensed clergy.

The work of this office is only possible with the assistance of the district admins. I am grateful for their work and for their diligent oversight of so much information, vital to so many different people. And it is a pleasure to work with our Bishop and Superintendents on many matters related to our clergy, and to attempt to support them as they continue the vital and demanding work necessary to identify, nurture, instruct and supervise the clergy of our Conference. The Conference Board of Ordained Ministry continues to seek the most effective and faithful ways to fulfill its remarkably broad role in evaluating and approving clergy to serve the local churches and various ministries of our Conference. The importance of this work cannot be overstated. The genuine concern and great wisdom of the members of the Board is continually demonstrated in the work that they do on behalf of the conference. The Rev. Morris Waymer continues to provide outstanding leadership to the Board. It has been a privilege to assist the Board in its work.

Without trying to list every event or undertaking of the past year, I continue to respond to requests by phone, email, and correspondence related to licensing, ordination, and all matters related to clergy and their status within the conference, and have met with individuals seeking personal guidance in these areas. It remains an honor to continue to encourage, guide and support clergy as they navigate, pursue and answer their calling. It has been a pleasure to serve in this area of ministry for the past five years, and I look forward to continued service in the coming year.

Rev. A. Melton Arant, Jr.
Coordinator of Clergy Services

THE SOUTH CAROLINA METHODIST CONFERENCE CREDIT UNION

The year 2025 marks seventy years of service by the South Carolina Methodist Conference Credit Union (SCMCCU) to the Ministers and their families, the churches and their members, and the institutions of the South Carolina United Methodist Conference.

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 2024 the Credit Union grew in assets, and reserves while loans declined slightly. Because of increasing rates and improved operations, the credit union was able to increase dividends paid to our members by 244 % from 2023 on top of increasing dividends 230% from 2022! But more than numbers, this is an indication that we have been able to provide greater service to our members during the year. Service to our members will always be the focus of the credit union.

The credit union is currently blessed with a small, stable, and very experienced staff with a total of 100 plus 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 serves as the Member Service Representative, Bruce Douglass serves as the Loan Officer, Christine Dominick serves as Operations Manager and Andy Cox serves as the President and CEO.

On February 27, 2025, the Credit Union's Annual Meeting was once again held at Epworth Children's Home. 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.

You are most likely a member of a United Methodist Church in South Carolina. As a 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 financial cooperative.

Talmadge A. (Andy) Cox

THE SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society is an organization of persons who seek to encourage the study and preservation of Methodist history in the South Carolina Conference, and its predecessor conferences.

The Society was present at Annual Conference in June of 2024 providing an informational table in the exhibit hall. Twelve persons attended the Annual Meeting of the SEJ Historical Society at Lake Junaluska, NC in September 2024. This meeting was hosted by the Executive Committee of the SEJ Historical Society under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Roger M. Gramling who was elected to a second term as President of the SEJ Historical Society. The Reverend Dr. A.V. Huff, Jr., our Conference Historian, has completed the list of the Historical Trail sites, bringing the total to forty-four sites in twenty geographical areas throughout South Carolina. We continue to contribute a column in The Advocate and publish and distribute The Mark. Two books by members of the Conference Society were published by The Advocate Press in late 2024, "From The Vault," by Dr. R. Phillip, the Conference Archivist, and "Stories From My Life in the Ministry," by the Rev. Dr. Roger M. Gramling. Both are available from The Advocate Press as well as Amazon.com. Both provide helpful insights into the history of the South Carolina Conference and its predecessor conferences.

1 In 2025 we are planning a joint meeting of the Commission on Archives & History and the Conference Historical
2 Society at Wofford College in the Fall. We will continue contributing to The Advocate, publishing and distributing The
3 Mark, and celebrating the milestones of local churches. An exhibit table is again planned for Annual Conference. If
4 you would like to join the Historical Society, visit the Society's page on the Conference website or contact the Rev. Dr.
5 Roger M. Gramling.

6 There are no actions from the previous Annual Conference.

7 The Historical Society would like to celebrate your church's milestones. If you would like to contact us, we
8 would be glad to write an article for The Advocate regarding your historical celebrations. Also, please be sure to
9 elect a church historian to keep track of your church's history as you move forward. Notes for the local church
10 historian may be found at:

11 <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/-church-historian>. Also there are a number of helpful publications under
12 "Recommended Reading" on the Society's page on the Conference website.

13 The Conference Historical Society is pleased to be an active supporter of the SEJ Historical Society. Two of
14 our members currently serve on the Executive Committee of the SEJ Historical Society, and the Society is well
15 represented at annual meetings of the SEJ organization.

16 Meredith Marie Dark, President

18 **TRUSTEES OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

19 To our Conference, Cabinet Members and Bishop Fairley,

20 We, The Trustees of The South Carolina Annual Conference have worked diligently to maintain the sacred
21 trust of our conference. We are hopeful that the coming years will offer much in the way of healing any discord
22 that separation caused. We extend to you our deep peace of this hope.

23 While The United Methodist Church has been in uncharted waters, we as a Conference Board have been
24 asked to do things that have seldom or never been done. We have done all within the jurisdiction of an ethic of
25 love and extending fair consideration to all. To the utmost, we have attempted to maintain the high ethical
26 standards of the Conference and the United Methodist Church writ large.

27 Through *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* the Trustees are to hold in trust, along with
28 the stewardship, administration, and investments, of assets pursuant to the properties of those churches that
29 have elected to disaffiliate from The South Carolina Conference. In 2023, 113 churches chose to disaffiliate from
30 the South Carolina United Methodist Conference. It was a part of the process to address from each church its
31 financial obligations to both the conference and those who chose to remain in the conference. In 2024, there
32 were 112 churches that chose to separate alongside the same financial obligations.

33 Decision 1512 put forth from the Judicial Council in October of 2024, cited that separations utilizing Paragraph
34 2549 from the Book of Discipline are no longer allowed. The Judicial Council ruled that using Paragraph 2549 in this
35 way was a "misapplication of law." It was deemed unconstitutional.

36 In an ad hoc committee of the Board of Trustees, funding from the separated churches has gone to
37 unfunded pension obligations, reserves for Boy Scouts litigation, reserves for legal fees, and reserves for
38 operating funds. Trustees have also met to establish best practices for remaining funds, including the litigations
39 expected from the Judicial Council ruling alongside missions and ministry. We have done our due diligence to do
40 no harm and to be good stewards of the funds remaining.

1 We have benefitted from the excellent leadership and insight of our Conference Treasurer, Chancellor, and
2 Bishop. At times we have leaned upon the Cabinet, the Conference Secretary, Clergy Services, and many District
3 Superintendents.

4 **Rev. Shannon Bullion**
5 **Chairperson**

SC Conference of the United Methodist Church
Summary of Insurance Coverages
Policy Begin Date: 09/01/2024
Policy End Date: 09/01/2025
Broker: HUB International Southeast, Columbia, SC

Insurance Company	Coverage type	Description of Coverage
Professional Solutions Insurance Co.	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
at bay	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, 2024

Property	District	12/31/2023 Balance	Sale Proceeds	Other Receipts	Expenses	Transfer to beneficiary	Retained by Trustees	Ending Balance	Designation
McKinney Chapel	Anderson	52,038.58	-	-	(1,688.32)	(52,038.58)	-	(1,688.32)	Sold in 2023
Moores Chapel	Anderson	-	-	-	(9,600.00)	-	-	(9,600.00)	Urban Center/Mission Church
Orville (South Main Chapel & Mercy Center)	Anderson	(40,418.84)	-	-	(114.96)	-	-	(40,533.80)	Undesignated
Smiths Chapel	Anderson	(1,868.80)	-	-	-	-	-	(1,868.80)	Sold. Funds held for cemetery
Zion Walhalla	Anderson	99,066.59	-	-	-	(84,066.59)	-	15,000.00	Sold. Funds held for cemetery
Berea (Cordesville)	Charleston	109.63	-	-	-	-	-	109.63	Sold
Berea (Cordesville) cemetery	Charleston	15,209.17	-	-	-	-	-	15,209.17	Funds held for cemetery
Two Rivers (new church start)	Charleston	45,661.61	-	-	(273.64)	-	-	45,387.97	Pending resolution
College Place	Columbia	(100.00)	-	-	(125.73)	-	-	(225.73)	Urban Center
St James	Columbia	52,359.31	-	-	-	(52,359.31)	-	-	Urban Center
Bowers Chapel	Florence	(771.52)	-	-	-	-	-	(771.52)	Sold in 2023
Trinity	Florence	(4,447.87)	59,724.50	-	(595.04)	-	-	54,681.59	Sold in 2024
Trinity cemetery	Florence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Sold in 2024
Concord (Greenville Korean Mission)	Greenville	12,291.01	-	-	(6,180.00)	-	-	6,111.01	Urban Center
Trinity (new church Open Hearts)	Greenville	(20,819.96)	-	-	(37,846.40)	-	-	(58,666.36)	Urban Center/New Church
Zion-Andrews (New Beginnings)	Greenville	59,626.78	-	-	-	-	-	59,626.78	Urban Center
Bath church	Greenwood	20,413.83	-	-	-	(20,413.83)	-	-	Resolved in 2024
Belvedere	Greenwood	-	-	92,645.25	(7,680.72)	-	-	84,964.53	Held for sale
Mt Vernon	Greenwood	-	-	-	(8,978.70)	-	-	(8,978.70)	Held for sale
Ashland/Bishopville	Hartsville	(112.32)	-	-	(2,624.33)	-	-	(2,736.65)	Closed AC 2024. Broker engaged.
Friendship	Hartsville	-	-	19,487.71	(4,019.76)	-	-	15,467.95	Closed AC 2024. Broker engaged.
Hebron	Hartsville	-	-	8,365.15	(907.95)	-	-	7,457.20	-
Snowhill	Hartsville	(620.80)	-	-	-	-	-	(620.80)	-
Christ/Myrtle Beach	Marion	(237,935.95)	-	-	(24.93)	-	-	(237,960.88)	Urban Center
Iona	Marion	(2,278.79)	-	-	(114.96)	-	-	(2,393.75)	-
Old Galilee	Marion	(240.41)	-	-	-	-	-	(240.41)	-
Central Rowsville	Orangeburg	(3,720.88)	16,593.40	-	(796.64)	-	-	12,075.88	Sold in 2024
Clafin	Orangeburg	-	-	-	(628.00)	-	-	(628.00)	-
Good Samaritan	Rock Hill	-	-	6,847.50	(378,731.80)	-	-	(371,884.30)	Closed ad interim. Held for sale.
Asbury Park	Spartanburg	-	-	-	(37,450.00)	-	-	(37,450.00)	Broker engaged
Lockhart	Spartanburg	(2,247.57)	-	-	(5,516.12)	-	-	(7,763.69)	Ownership questions
Unity	Spartanburg	(3,027.13)	-	2,086.00	(4,181.18)	-	-	(5,122.31)	Broker engaged
Retained by Trustees, all funds	Conference	5,565,470.56	-	10,513,218.10	(106,636.14)	79,153.53	-	16,051,206.05	-
Held for Cabinet	Conference	7,476,335.63	-	-	-	(7,476,335.63)	-	-	-
Held for Congregational Development	Conference	1,000,000.00	-	-	-	(1,000,000.00)	-	-	-
Total		14,079,971.86	76,317.90	10,642,649.71	(614,715.32)	(8,606,060.41)	-	15,578,163.74	-

SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST ADVOCATE

The Advocate is the voice of the people of the South Carolina UMC, transparently sharing news of relevance around advancing knowledge, spiritual growth and discipleship. Its mission is to inform and connect United Methodists by independently reporting relevant news, engaging readers, providing a forum for dialogue and sharing the Gospel.

- Produced 12 strong editions of the Advocate, each designed to inform, inspire, encourage, or connect United Methodists across the state;
- Hired a marketing coordinator who is helping the Advocate rebrand, redesign its website and overall design, and begin marketing research (including surveys and listening sessions) across the state.
- Produced 10 titles by the Advocate Press (total 32), available via the Advocate website and on Amazon:
 1. Seriously Seeking God, Suzan Phillips
 2. Laughing All the Way to Heaven, Kim Strong
 3. What I Want My Kids (And Me) to Know: Building Better Humans One Napkin at a Time, Tyler Strange
 4. Eyes for Haiti, Hal H. Crosswell Jr.
 5. Send Me! The Story of Salkehatchie Summer Service, 2nd Edition
 6. God's Disaster Warriors: Into the Danger Zone with South Carolina's UMVIM Early Response Team
 7. Loving Hands: A 40-Day Devotional for Caregivers, Stephon Void
 8. From the Vault: Stories You Probably Never Knew About South Carolina Methodism, Phillip Stone
 9. Recollections: Stories from My Life in the Ministry, Roger M. Gramling
 10. Raise Your Ebenezer: A Field Guide to Suffering, Ted Goshorn
- Earned three more awards from the South Carolina Press Association: first place for overall newspaper in our division, second place for Jessica Brodie for faith reporting for an article titled "Disciplined Body and Soul," and third place for faith reporting for Brodie's "A Church and Then Some"; and
- Started listening sessions and surveys across the state to improve the Advocate and better understand readers' needs.

Objectives:

- Continue with 12 more strong, encouraging and informative editions of the Advocate, with continued focus on connectionalism and shining the light of Christ in a difficult world;
- Launch website, new logo, and new app;
- Continue hosting informative and engaging listening sessions across the state;
- Continue commitment to fair, balanced news and journalistic excellence; and
- Release several more books this year and increase book sales over last year.

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

The Advocate helps United Methodist churches in South Carolina stay connected and helps church members become stronger disciples. All news is welcome. Call 803-786-9486, email advocate@umcsc.org or visit www.advocatesc.org.

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

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

10 Staff: Jessica Brodie, editor; Allison Trussell, assistant editor; Katy Renfroe, marketing coordinator

12 **JAMES L. BELIN BOARD OF TRUST**

13 The James L. Belin Board of Trust exists to ensure that ministry will take place as directed by the intent of
14 the James L. Belin Trust and that all property of the James L. Belin estate, both real and personal, be directed
15 and appropriated for the benefit of missions.

16 The James L. Belin Board of Trust met March 7, May 9, September 12, and December 11, 2024. As of March
17 18, 2024 Vanguard moved charitable assets to Mercer Investments; the assets of the Trust are now overseen by
18 Mercer Investments. Mercer Investments is a global consulting company and is well known in the institutional
19 space. An external audit was conducted by the Brittingham Group in West Columbia. We completed a five year
20 commitment to give Epworth \$110,000 towards an endowment for their Foster program. In 2025, the Belin
21 Trust will complete a five-year funding plan for a Belin Endowment at the SC Methodist Foundation for
22 scholarship funding for seminarians. The total endowment contribution over five years is \$50,000. In 2024 the
23 net assets reserved for grants was \$231,266 for 2025. Challenges include that we pay a substantial amount in
24 fees. We are considering other avenues to lower these fees. Also, much of the funds that are distributed
25 through the Board of Global Ministries have recently been used for audio-visual equipment. We would like to
26 hear more success stories from local churches about how they used the funds.

27 Objectives include continuing to look into ways that we can lower fees, and have a way to follow-up with
28 local churches use of funds so that the Belin Trust can be a better partner in ministry.

29 There are no actions required from the previous Annual Conference.

30 The James L. Belin Board of Trust would like to be a partner in your ministry. Please contact your District
31 Superintendent to find out how to apply for funding for your next ministerial project.

33 **THE UNITED METHODIST CENTER BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

34 The United Methodist Center Board of Trustees works to provide office space for the South Carolina
35 Conference of The United Methodist Church, and to operate, supervise and maintain such facilities, renting the
36 space therein to offices, agencies, and affiliates of the Conference.

37 The Trustees have completed several projects during 2024. The Trustees continued to seek energy savings
38 incentives available through Dominion Energy with lighting upgrades to LED bulbs. The gutters were cleaned and
39 repaired. The carpets and floors were professionally cleaned. However, maintenance and repair expenses for
40 HVAC continue to be a challenge.

41 The Trustees modified the rent charged to the offices and agencies in the building in 2024. In preparation for
42 the change in rents, the office space was measured and assigned to the appropriate occupant, the common
43 areas were measured and allocated to the occupants, and a new rent per square foot established. The rent per
44 square foot in 2024 was \$8.50 per month.

We continue to monitor the efficacy of major building components such as the heating and cooling. We recognize the building is approaching an age where renovation and/or refurbishment will be needed. The Trustees will seek alternatives for office space with the goal of reducing the cost. However, this project is paused while we await decisions from the Jeremiah Teams that may influence future office space and meeting needs.

The Trustees are at work to provide the space needed in cost effective ways and to be excellent stewards of the fund provided.

Rev. Thessa Smith, Chair