

The Committee of Congregational Development 2025-2026

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 Bishop, 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:

We were able to participate in one District Orientation and Tri-district meeting. Our director was able to help lead training for the Charleston/Orangeburg/Walterboro districts in August 2025. The director also shared online the PowerPoint presentation used during the Tri-District meeting with the Hartsville District pastors.

We as a committee have continued to offer opportunities for MissionInsite orientation and training for the local congregations of 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. The plan is to offer a training session of MissionInsite Training for training the trainer for clergy and laity across the Annual Conference during the summer or early fall of 2026 through ASC Technology. The purpose of training will be to have trained personnel across the Annual Conference to help local congregations better know, connect, engage, invite, disciple, and transform the lives of the people in their communities with the love and grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We were able to support four of our existing congregations who applied for grants through Existing Church Grant funds totaling **\$54,496.00**, 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 of **\$639,408.17** or **79.42%** of our **\$805,000.00** budget line of our **2025** Conference Apportionment for Congregational Development has allowed us to support local congregations in variety of ways. Thank You!!!

We are also grateful for your generosity and financial investments of **\$163,489.09** 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 2025-2026 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 many of our siblings in our United Methodist Family in South Carolina and across the Connection who has decided to take legal steps and efforts to leave from our faith family after the Judicial Council ruling concerning the process we used for local congregation separations. "Lord In Your Mercy! Hear Our Prayers!"

Yet, while we grieve the events of this past conference year, we celebrate God's gathering of United Methodist and other people of faith who continue to love boldly, God, neighbor, oneself, love more and more like Jesus, serve joyfully, and lead courageously across the Annual Conference.

We celebrate and continue to support the following new plants and 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. She is currently leading the small groups meetings started by her and her former ministry partner the Rev. Michael Jarrell who died and join the Church Triumphant in the fall 2025. 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 third 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Aldersgate/Sumter**—is a Renewal Vitality Situation where we assist a local congregation for two years when and where the District Superintendent and Cabinet believe there is hope for renewal.
- **Cokesbury/North Charleston**—is also a Renewal Vitality Situation where we assist a local congregation for two years when and where the District Superintendent and Cabinet believe there is hope for congregational renewal.
- **St. John/Rock Hill**—is also Renewal Vitality Situation where we assist a local congregation for two years when and where the District Superintendent and Cabinet believe there is hope for congregational renewal.
- **Easley Charge/Easley**—is also Renewal Vitality Situation where we assist a local congregation for two years when and where the District Superintendent and Cabinet believe there is hope for congregational renewal.

As a committee, we will continue working as a team as we transition to the new office of Innovation and Strategy as of July 1, 2026 that was created by our vote at the called Annual Conference on October 18, 2025. 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 continuing and improving upon our ideal of being a supportive resource for local churches interested in new ministry opportunities and possibilities, and being 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 through the Conference Committee on Congregational Development and our District Boards of Congregational Development.

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.

Action(s) required from the 2026 Annual Conference:

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

