

CONFERENCE CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, ‘Are You for us or for our adversaries?’ So He said, ‘No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, ‘What does my Lord say to His servant?’ Then the Commander of the Lord’s army said to Joshua, ‘Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.’ And Joshua did so. – Joshua 5:13-15 (NKJV)

In Joshua 5:13-15, we are presented with a profound encounter between Joshua and a divine commander, which underscores the significance of spiritual preparedness and obedience before confronting imminent challenges. This narrative, reminiscent of Moses’ encounter at the burning bush, serves as a poignant reminder of the sacredness inherent in their mission and the importance of aligning oneself with divine guidance.

In light of this, our collective focus is directed toward the Conference’s “Our 4 Priorities”:

Developing Leaders – This entails the deliberate nurturing and enhancement of individuals’ skills, qualities and capacities to equip them for leadership roles within their respective spheres. Through mentorship, training programs, and the cultivation of essential leadership attributes, we endeavor to build a cadre of capable and empowered leaders who can effectively guide and inspire others toward shared goals.

Engaging Our Communities – Central to our mission is the active involvement and collaboration with members of our communities. By fostering relationships, building trust, and promoting dialogue and participation, we seek to create inclusive spaces where all voices are heard and valued. Through community-driven initiatives and collaborative projects, we strive to address common challenges, amplify the voices of marginalized groups, and foster collective action toward positive change.

Connecting With & Growing Disciples – This priority revolves around the holistic spiritual development and maturation of individuals within our faith communities. Through intentional guidance, support and the provision of resources, we aim to deepen individuals’ understanding of their faith, cultivate a personal relationship with their spiritual beliefs, and empower them to integrate these principles into their daily lives. By fostering environments conducive to questioning, exploration and growth, we seek to nurture committed followers of faith who are equipped to make meaningful contributions to their communities and the world.

Measuring Current Realities & Evaluating Missional Opportunities – At the heart of effective mission is a clear understanding of the prevailing realities and discernment of opportunities for impactful action. Through rigorous assessment, data analysis and stakeholder engagement, we endeavor to gain insight into the specific needs, strengths and aspirations of our communities. By leveraging this understanding and identifying strategic opportunities for mission-focused intervention, we aim to align our efforts with the broader mission and values of our organization, ultimately contributing to positive transformation and the fulfillment of our collective purpose.

In essence, these four priorities serve as guiding principles, shaping our collective endeavors and informing our strategic decision-making processes. For more information on our approach and initiatives, please visit umcsc.org/4p. May these efforts be blessed with success and bear fruit in the service of our communities and the greater good.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pamela Goodwine-Glover, Co-Convener
Conference Connectional Ministries

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

The work of Connectional Ministries is to be the steward of the vision of the Church and to keep that vision in front of the people of this Annual Conference. That vision is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

No one can do that work alone, so we have a Connection that works together so that local congregations and their leaders – both clergy and lay – have what they need to be effective and fruitful in their work of making disciples. Our work is to equip and connect local churches beyond themselves to be in ministry effectively and fruitfully.

Through the work of our Conference Connectional Ministries, the District Connectional Ministries, and the conference staff, we have a team that is well prepared and fully equipped to assist local churches with training and resources, visioning, strategic planning, and discerning their next faithful steps of ministry.

We focus this work through the lens of “Our 4 Priorities” – Engaging Our Communities, Developing Leaders, Growing Disciples, and Evaluating and Measuring Our Current Realities and Missional Possibilities. This puts the work we do, together with you, “On the Leading EDGE of Ministry.”

This United Methodist Church is at a crossroads; however, God’s mission has not changed and neither has ours. We still need to be the church in all places and at all times – giving hope and demonstrating God’s love.

We were reminded of that by the ongoing work of the Ministry Advisory Team, which has been meeting regularly to have conversations and to begin to put together a plan, a strategy for moving forward in this time of separation and change. We have kept before us who we are responsible for – the local church – every congregation, those who serve the local churches in all capacities, the communities that our churches serve, and those who have not yet known the saving grace of Jesus Christ. As we move forward with budgets and strategies, these are our most crucial treasures.

We were reminded in early January, when tornados swept through the small town of Bamberg causing devastation to property but by the grace of God, no loss of life. We were reminded that Jesus is Lord, even in the storm. You were there to make a difference immediately, as our Disaster Response Ministries went into action. Through our connectional giving and serving, our Early Response Teams under the leadership of Billy Robinson and Mike Evans went to work to make safe Main Street United Methodist Church and several homes damaged by the storm.

Through our connection with the United Methodist Committee on Relief, a solidarity grant of \$10,000 was provided to do the work that was needed to help begin the process of restoring that church, community, and town to wholeness. We have been and are continuing to work with UMCOR to strengthen our conference Disaster

Response Ministries to prepare local congregations in the event of a disaster in their community.

We were reminded later in January that God's mission has not changed at Revolution, the discipleship event hosted by our South Carolina Ministries With Young People. More than 1,000 youth gathered at the Township Auditorium in Columbia under the theme, "We Are One." When the invitation to discipleship was given on Saturday evening, a multitude of young people stood to invite Jesus Christ into their hearts so that they might become his disciples. This was followed by a powerful time of prayer.

On Sunday morning, another invitation was given that asked young people if they believed that they had a calling upon their lives to come forward, and there were a number of our young people who came forward to present themselves as having heard a calling on their lives. My friends, this is the hope of our church.

Other key moments in ministry from the past year:

- A group of United Methodist lay and clergy volunteers launched the South Carolina Cognitive Connection Ministry, which is dedicated to teaching how to be in ministry with those living with dementia.
- The Native American Committee provided a Native American cultural experience for three congregations in the Columbia area for their Vacation Bible School.
- The Committee on the Status and Role of Women produced and distributed fliers to every district in the Annual Conference as a resource for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
- The Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns provided scholarships to five clergy and five laypersons from small ethnic local churches for travel on the mission trip to Africa University.
- Lay Servant Ministries has seen an increased interest in the Certified Lay Minister training program over the past year.
- United Women in Faith awarded five Presidential Scholarships to young women to assist with their education.
- MenNMinistry hosted four "Teaching Church" district events to help keep men connected to God and to each other in order to be better husbands, fathers, brothers and uncles.

Meeting people in their times of deepest need, as Jesus did, and helping people to discover that they have a calling and a purpose in their lives as disciples of Jesus Christ – that is the work that we are called to do.

My hope and prayer is that, together, we will continue developing a plan to help this whole body of Connectional Ministries be the ligaments that strengthen and support this Connection as we move forward into our new future.

There will be changes and adjustments. We will need to bring on many new people and provide training and orientation for them. We will move into a new era, but we move into it knowing that God is with us so that we can be "On the Leading EDGE of Ministry."

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Connectional Ministries Team – the staff of Connectional Ministries, who stand ready to assist you; the Four Ministry Areas, Advocacy, Discipleship, Lay Leadership, and Outreach; the boards and agencies; and the local churches. I would particularly like to thank those who have served on Connectional Ministries and its Executive Committee above and beyond

their time. We thank them for all that they have done in a time that no one could have anticipated nor could have understood beforehand. They have remained faithful through it all. That is leadership, and I am grateful to have served with them.

Finally, to each of you, thank you for all that you do. I believe that our best days are ahead of us, and I have been honored to serve you in this challenging time that has been filled with opportunity. To God be the glory! Amen!

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Millie Nelson Smith, Director
Conference Connectional Ministries

**REPORT 2 – PART I
SPECIAL DAYS FOR 2025**

A. MANDATED BY GENERAL CONFERENCE

Human Relations Day (GBGM, GBCS, CORR)	January 12
Ecumenical Sunday (CUIC)	January 19
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (CUIC)	January 19-24
Black History Month	February 2025
Boy Scouts Sunday / Scouting Ministries Sunday (UMM)	February 2
Women’s History Month	March 2025
World Day of Prayer	March 2
Girl Scouts Sunday / Alt. Scouting Min. Sunday (UMM)	March 9
UMCOR Sunday	March 9
Holy Week	April 13-20
Native American Awareness Sunday (GBGM)	April 13
Asian Pacific American Heritage Month	May 2025
Christian Home Month (GBOD)	May 2025
Older Adult Recognition Day	(any day in May)
National Day of Prayer	May 4
Aldersgate Day/Heritage Sunday (Archives and History)	May 25
Peace with Justice Sunday (GBCS)	May 25
Hispanic Heritage Month (GBGM)	Sept. 15-Oct.15
World Communion Sunday (GBGM, GBGH, CORR)	October 5
Children’s Sabbath: A National Observance	October 12
Laity Sunday (GBOD)	October 12
Reformation Day	October 26
Native American Heritage Month	November 2025
All Saints Sunday	November 2
Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday (GBGM)	November 9
National Bible Week	November 16-22
United Methodist Student Day (GBHEM)	November 23
World AIDS Day	December 7

B. S.C. ANNUAL CONFERENCE DESIGNATED SPECIAL DAYS 2025

Human Relations Day	January 12, 2025
Golden Cross Sunday	February 5, 2025
United Methodist Camps and Retreats Sunday	March 2, 2025
UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing)	March 9, 2025
Native American Awareness Sunday	April 13, 2025
Advocate Awareness Sunday	May 18, 2025
Epworth Children’s Home Mother’s Day	May 11, 2025
United Methodist Men’s Day	June 1, 2025
Peace with Justice Sunday	May 25, 2025
Aldersgate Special Needs Sunday	August 10, 2025
Call to Ministry Sunday	August 17, 2025
Epworth Children’s Home Work Day	September 14, 2025
Youth Service Fund Sunday	September 21, 2025
World Communion Sunday	October 5, 2025
Conference Advance Special Ministries Sunday	November 2, 2025
United Methodist Student Day	November 23, 2025

ADVANCED SPECIAL MINISTRIES FOR 2025

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.

BENNETTSVILLE-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.

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 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 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 strengthen and sustain a culture of excellence that is needed in today's COVID -19 world.

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 VOLUNEERS 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 OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

Purpose:

Lay Leadership falls under the 4 areas of ministry in the SC UMC 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 the district. From the smallest membership churches to larger membership churches, all churches are important.

Key moments from the previous year:

Lay Servant Ministries has seen an increased interest in the CLM (Certified Lay Minister) training program over the past year. Annie Crocker, CLM, and Spartanburg LSM Director, presented a testimony as the first CLM in SC before the CLM Network Conference/AC Directors LSM meeting in Nashville.

United Women in Faith were busy this year with activities to meet their \$10,000 challenge to the Legacy Endowment Fund. They contributed \$112, 947.57 over the last 9 years. UWF awarded 5 Presidential Scholarships to young ladies to assist with their education. The Spiritual Growth Event was held in April with over 200 attendees.

MenNMinistry had 4 District "Teaching Church" events this past year. These events kept men connected to each other and God. A conference was held in February at Journey Church with 180 men attending. The men were encouraged to stay close to God and be better husbands, fathers, brothers, and uncles.

Youth around the Conference enjoyed Revolution and Immerse, two very well attended events. A retreat for youth was held at Asbury. SC Ministries with Young People (SCMYO) sponsored a coaching cohort to equip youth leaders. A "Collaborative Youth Ministry Think Tank" event was held for youth leaders.

Laity were given the opportunity to spend time with Bishop Holston as he traveled to each district. We are grateful for all the laity who give of their time and talents through Lay Servant Ministries, United Women in Faith, MenNMinistry, District Lay Leaders, our youth, and our older adults.

Objectives for the coming year:

Continue our work to engage and equip the laity across the Annual Conference with the resources and information needed to assist local churches.

Continue to partner with groups in our local communities and share the love of Jesus Christ.

Continue to embrace our new reality and work actively to 'be the church' wherever we are.

Continue to find avenues to bring churches and local communities to the table to focus on mission, ministry, and the response to racism and homelessness.

Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:

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

We must continue to embrace where we are as a United Methodist Church and Conference. The church is still the church. We are called to be disciples and to show the love of Christ to others. We must continue to be diligent in our missions and ministries. There are persons around us who need to hear the Gospel. Let us continue to be the disciple God calls us to be.

Narrative:

These are extraordinary times in our church and our world. As we navigate the future, may we show God’s love and light to others. Jesus said we are to “love one another as I have loved you.” May the world see us as people who love and respect each other even though we may not all agree on a variety of issues. May we live out our faith in Christ, by impacting lives, and being living testimonies of His love.

Respectfully submitted:

Barbara Ware, Conference Lay Leader
conferencelayleader@umcsc.org, 803.786.9486

We appreciate the support our District Lay Leaders (DLL) give to the twelve districts. 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, Brenda Fleming, Florence, Chandra Dillard, Greenville, Tony Watson, Greenwood, Sarah Johnson, Hartsville, Michael Toms, Marion, Shelia Shanklin, Orangeburg, Bob James, Rock Hill, Rick Hammett, Spartanburg and Wally Cole, Walterboro. At this Annual Conference we celebrate and give thanks for the service given by Jeff Fogle, Tony Watson, Shelia Shakin, Rick Hammett, and Sarah Johnson as they have fulfilled their time of service or are rotating off to pursue other avenues of service. We will welcome new DLLs in these areas after June 2024. Jeff Fogle has served as the Associate Conference Lay Leader, Cassie Watson as the Secretary of Lay Leadership, and Lisa Fusco as the Chairperson of Lay Leadership Advisory Board. We are grateful for their service.

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*A personal note: I want to thank the laity and clergy of the South Carolina Annual Conference for their support and encouragement over these last 12 years during my time serving as your Conference Lay Leader. It has been one of the honors of my life to represent the South Carolina UMC in so many ways and venues across our Annual Conference and the General Conference. Thank you for welcoming me into your churches and groups. May God continue to the focus of all we say and do.*

– Barbara Ware

## **LAY SERVANT MINISTRIES**

### **Purpose:**

Lay Servant Ministries is a program of lay leadership development. It is an equipping and empowering system which provides laity the opportunity to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ who then go and make other disciples. It is a significant component of any intentional discipleship system, and corresponds to the Four Priorities of the conference.

### **Key moments from the previous year:**

Lay Servant Ministries has partnered with the new Dementia Leadership group in our conference by providing the lay servant course, "Ministry with the Forgotten," as an introduction to the caring ministry with persons who have dementia and their family caregivers.

The Academy (Train the Trainer) held each year was held at Washington Street UMC for the first time in August. A new format was introduced with a plenary session led by Rev. Ken Nelson, and then an overview of several classes after lunch. The "Teaching Adults" portion of the Academy was held in district clusters at later dates.

Conference Co-Director, David Salter, attended both the CLM Networking/-Leadership Conference and the Association of Conference Directors of Lay Servant Ministries in Nashville this past January where lots of new information was received and hopefully implemented in the SC Lay Servant Ministries. Several District Directors also attended by Zoom.

Annie Crocker, South Carolina Conference's very first CLM (Certified Lay Minister) was asked by Discipleship Ministries to speak to the entire group in Nashville about her experiences in becoming a CLM and how it has impacted her life. She was very well received.

Many lay servants have stepped up to become Safe Sanctuary Trainers in their respective districts.

New courses, including a course on Sacraments, are ready for teaching in the SC Conference. The sacraments course was taught in Greenwood District this past April.

The number of CLMs in SC is increasing, and many CLMs have assignments to churches. There are now some 12 to 15 CLM specializations.

### **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.
- Begin offering more of the new Advanced Lay Servant courses into the district schools.
- Support the training of more Certified Lay Ministers, especially helping CLMs understand the advantage of specialization.
- Increase the visibility of Lay Servant Ministries and the advantages of participating in lay servant courses.
- Increase communication into local churches about lay servant ministries.

### **Action(s) required from the 2024 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 servant ministry, many lay servants will never speak from the pulpit. This is NOT a

requirement of becoming a certified lay servant. There is a place in the ministry of caring, love, and service for all lay servants. Lay Servants are encouraged to engage with clergy with the goal of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

**Narrative:**

Lay Servant Ministry is for everyone. Lay servant ministry helps all of us become better disciples of Jesus Christ. The Basic course in lay servant ministry would be a great starting point for anyone entering into membership in the local churches, as it is an overview of Wesleyan theology and practice.

Lay Servant Ministry has been the starting point of many of our clergy who have heard the call to ministry. There have been many clergy, new, and seasoned, who have related 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 have found their calling into compassionate lay ministry through Lay Servant Ministries.

Respectfully submitted:

David Salter, Co-Director, Conference Lay Servant Ministries  
davidsalter68@gmail.com, 8036461704

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, Columbia District Co-Director; Chuck Sovick, Columbia District Co-Director; Mark McGee, Florence District Director; Kenneth Moore, Greenville District Director; Susan Roberts, Greenwood District Director; Sha'Rome Henry, Hartsville District Director; David Lovell, Marion District Co-Director; Gerrie F. Watson, Marion District Co-Director; Rosa Kennerly-Dance, Orangeburg District Director; Lynne Tyner, Rock Hill District Director; Annie Crocker, Spartanburg District Director; Thelma Hudson, Walterboro District Director, and Extended LSM Team Members, Rev. Cathy Joens, Rev. Kenneth Nelson, Rev. Jeffrey Salley, Betty J. Void, and Tom Whitacre.

## **SOUTH CAROLINA MINISTRIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Purpose:**

To equip, enable, and empower young people (6-12 grade) and adults who lead ministries with young people in local churches in the SC Annual Conference.

**Key moments from the previous year:**

Youth Ministry Events:

- **Immerse:** Immerse 2023 saw nearly 200 young people and leaders from across the conference participate at Asbury Hills for a discipleship weekend. Participants were challenged to consider the theme “Transformed” and reflect on what it means to live a transformed life for Christ.
- **Revolution:** Rallying around the theme “We Are ONE”, youth and leaders (over 1000) gathered at the Township Auditorium for worship led by Reggie Dabbs and Sons The Band. Youth were challenged to embrace the ideas from scripture of One Body, One Church, One Lord. Numerous youth responded to an invitation to Christian Discipleship and to a call to explore vocational ministry.

## Equipping Youth Workers

- **SCMYP Coaching Cohort:** One of the most effective means to equip youth leaders throughout the conference is through the SCMYP Coaching cohorts. The cohorts work through 6 sessions of youth ministry basics as participants receive both group and individual coaching from Chris Lynch and Rev. Maggie Cantey that is contextualized to fit their unique situation. Regardless of church size, location, or the employment status of the youth worker (part time, volunteer, full time) the cohorts have proven effective in equipping leaders.
- **Collaborative Youth Ministry Think Tank:** A new training opportunity this year offered youth workers in a specific area the opportunity to collaborate to consider possibilities to work together and pool resources to work together in ministry with young people within their churches and communities. The think tank was in direct response to identified needs of youth workers across the conference.

### **Objectives for the coming year:**

SCMYP plans to continue to offer opportunities for young people to experience events like Immerse and Revolution in the coming year. In addition SCMYP is looking to partner with the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry to create an event for youth that are looking to explore a call to vocational ministry in the coming year.

SCMYP plans to offer another round of the SCMYP Coaching Cohorts in the coming conference year as well as continuing to support youth workers with training. Another avenue of support may arise as we continue to explore the future of collaborative youth ministry partnerships within our conference.

### **Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:**

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

Ministries with Young People in the SC Conference are alive and well. Time and again young people in our conference have borne witness to the power of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. The adults in ministry with young people in SC serve graciously and are passionate about equipping this generation of Christ followers to live out their faith in bold ways within the church and beyond. In a world and denomination full of uncertainty, one thing that is certain, the church is in good hands... not just in the future, but right now if we are willing to allow the voice of young people to be heard and play a role in leading us forward.

### **Narrative:**

Respectfully submitted:

Chris Lynch, Congregational Specialist/ SCMYP Director  
clynch@umcsc.org, 864.202.3548  
Rev. Maggie Cantey

## **ADVOCACY MINISTRY AREA OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES**

### **Purpose:**

The Advocacy Work Area equips local congregations to look beyond themselves and to societal needs. We help empower congregations to advocate for those who are oppressed by self-imposed factors or community and world factors. We engage the community to change unjust policies and systems and promote cross cultural/cross racial awareness, appreciation, and cooperation.

### **Key moments from the previous year:**

In the summer 2023, the Native American Committee provided a Native American cultural experience for 3 congregations in the Columbia area for their Vacation Bible School. The 4-week experience for both adults and children included Native American history and culture, a Native American craft, traditional drumming and storytelling. The Committee also provides \$500 grant opportunities for all state recognized tribes to support cultural activities, events and restoration of cultural history or traditions.

During the month of October, 2023, which is recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Committee on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW), produced and distributed fliers to every district in the SC Annual Conference. District Superintendents were asked to share the flyers with their pastors. Pastors were asked to uplift/share the information during worship service with their congregations either the third or fourth Sunday in October.

Committee on Ethnic Local Church Concerns (ELCC) provided scholarships to 5 Clergy and 5 Laity from small ethnic local churches for travel on the mission trip to Africa University, in Mutare, Zimbabwe, which was hosted by Bishop Holston and Mrs. Holston. ELCC also provided scholarships for ethnic clergy to attend the Bishop School.

The Church and Society Committee provided leadership and financial support to the SC Christian Action Council, which promotes and facilitate dialogue among diverse Christian traditions on matters of belief and practice. Church and Society also prepare a resolution on Gun Violence for presentation to the 2023 Annual Conference. The resolution was adopted by the Annual Conference.

### **Objectives for the coming year:**

The Advocacy Work Area seeks to empower local congregations to change injustices in society. This is a grand vision, requiring a lot of partners. Advocacy seeks to equip and engage local congregations to play their role in creating a just society. So it starts with communication.

In the coming Conference year, Advocacy will seek to communicate with local congregations through the Districts about the Conference's 4 Priorities: Developing Leaders, Engaging Our Communities, Connecting with & Growing Disciples, and Measuring & Evaluating Current Realities & Missional Possibilities.

Additionally, Advocacy will work with district superintendents to communicate the minutes and priorities of Advocacy to the local churches in their districts.

Advocacy will also develop and advance strategies to promote cross cultural/cross racial awareness, appreciation, and cooperation. One way Advocacy will support this priority is by supporting Native American gatherings at Catawba. Also Advocacy will organize a trip for youth throughout the Conference to the International African American Museum in Charleston, leading up to a trip to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC.

**Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:**

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

We are living in a broken and hurting society. Many challenges of injustice, poverty, oppression is all around us. The SC Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church is uniquely equipped to help address many of society's challenges, and the local congregations are vital to this transformation. The Mission of the United Methodist Church, which is to "Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World" provides the mandate for this work. Advocacy is one of the key resources within the SC Annual Conference to equip local congregations to be instruments of transformation. Through the work of its committees: Church and Society, ELCC, Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Commission on Religion and Race, and COSCROW, Advocacy seeks to help, resource and empower local congregations to be change agents.

**Narrative:**

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Bernie Mazyck, Co-convenor  
bwmazyck@umcsc.org, 843-818-8012

Mr. Tracy Pender, Advocacy Co-convenor and  
Chair of the Native American Committee,

Rev. Amiri Hooker, Chair of Church and Society

Rev. Steven King, Convenor of the Committee on Religion and Race

Ms. Sandra Hamlin, Convenor of COSROW

Mr. Alvin Glenn, President of the United Methodist Men

Ms. Sarah Sweers, President of the United Women in Faith

Rev. Carleathea Benson, Convenor of ELCC

Ms. Sarah Bozier, Convenor of CUIC

**SOUTH CAROLINA  
ETHNIC LOCAL CHURCH CONCERNS (SC ELCC) COMMITTEE  
2023 Report to the Advocacy Ministry Area**

SC ELCC has continued to work collaboratively with the South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development (SCACED), The Summit on the Black Church, South Carolina Black Methodists for Church Renewal (SC BMCR), The Carolinas Black Clergy Retreat, and various Discipleship Events. Our budget for 2023 was \$35,000. The implementation of Best Practices is still in place.

There was a total of thirty-three SC ELCC Scholarship Application requests in 2023 for various events, of which thirty-one were approved. SC ELCC Grant Funding Cycles One and Two, combined, received One Grant Application from an underrepresented Racial-Ethnic Church in the SC Annual Conference; and, it was funded.

SC ELCC assisted the Summit on the Black Church and the Carolinas Black Clergy Retreat, along with several youth groups, that were monetarily assisted, through an SC ELCC Scholarship, to attend Revolution, an annual youth event held in South Carolina. Funding for individual scholarships for persons in attendance and purchasing an Ad for SEJ BMCR's 53rd Annual Meeting booklet to support its ministry.

There are many Underrepresented Racial-Ethnic Churches in the South Carolina Conference, and Parsonages, that are still in need of repairs. SC ELCC voted to continue to support Grants for necessary repairs other than brick and mortar. In addition, SC ELCC does not fund salaries or transportation.

SC ELCC continues to encourage all our Underrepresented Smaller Membership Congregations in the SC Annual Conference to write for scholarships and grants to help TEACH (train, educate, affirm, communicate, and heal) their leadership and prospective leadership. Start early, and seek assistance from SC ELCC members, and through Mrs. Doris Seals, Conference Staff, to ensure your application is in order, and can be successfully funded.

My sincere thank you to Mrs. Doris Seals, Conference Staff Assistant, and Rev. Bernie Mazyck, Advocacy Chair, for their support.

Prepared by

Pastor Carleathea Benson, Facilitator