



The Offices of the

Secretary of the Conference and Clergy Services

South Carolina Conference | **The United Methodist Church**

Rev. A. Melton Arant, Jr.

*Secretary of the Conference
Coordinator of Clergy Services*

Friends:

Grace and peace to you! Allow me to be among the first to welcome you the 2026 South Carolina Annual Conference. Our quadrennial theme is “See the Possibilities, Live the Promises!” – with a focus this year on “What do you see? Can you see anything?”

Midway through healing the blind man at Bethsaida, Jesus asks him, “Can you see anything (Mark 8:22-26)?” This is a unique miracle in the Gospels, as it happens in stages. That midway point or second touch in the miracle—where vision is blurry and people look like trees—is a vulnerable but necessary part of the journey toward seeing “everything clearly.” It is a beautiful reminder that wholeness is not always instantaneous. It often requires commitment, patience, and faithfulness to become what God has called us to be.

My hope is that this annual conference will give us the opportunities to stay focused on our mission to love boldly, serve joyfully and lead courageously. That we live into our purpose and calling in the midst of the mechanics of annual conference.

As you prepare for the business of the conference, keep in mind that registration will primarily be completed online, with registered pastors and lay members receiving their badges by mail. Leading up to the conference, materials and reports will be available at umcsc.org/ac2026. Registered lay and clergy members will be able to pick up printed copies at the conference by showing their badges at one of the packet pickup tables.

The Ordination, Commissioning, and Retirement Service will be on Sunday evening, with Bishop Fairley presiding, and Bishop Paul L. Leeland preaching. The Rev. Dr. Sheila Elliott Hodge will serve as the preacher for our Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving. We will continue the practice of introducing some of our new clergy members as they lead the morning communion services. This year, one of our daily prayer and praise services will be an intergenerational worship moment.

May this conference be that “second touch” for us as we move toward being made perfect in love with God’s help.

Rev. A. Melton Arant, Jr.

*Secretary of the Annual Conference
and Coordinator of Clergy Services*

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The South Carolina Conference was organized in 1972, continuing the South Carolina Conference (1785), and the South Carolina Conference (1866)