

**CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES REPORT TO
THE 2025 SOUTH CAROLINA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

In the midst of life’s challenges, transitions, and uncertainties, we often find ourselves yearning for something new – something that offers hope, renewal, and direction. The world around us changes so rapidly, and sometimes we feel overwhelmed by the pace of change or burdened by old patterns that no longer serve us. In moments like these, the words from Isaiah 43:19 are a powerful reminder of God’s promise to do a new thing in our lives:

**“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:19)**

These words were not meant only for the Israelites in their exile; they are just as relevant to us today. God is actively working in our lives, in our ministries, and in our world – bringing transformation, renewal, and hope. The question we must ask ourselves is: Are we ready to perceive it? Are we ready to embrace it?

As we reflect on God’s promise to do a new thing, we recognize its significance in our work within the Church, particularly through Connectional Ministries. Our ministries are not static – they, too, must embrace the new thing that God is doing. Whether it’s through innovative ways of reaching out to our communities, utilizing new technologies to enhance worship, or finding creative approaches to nurturing discipleship and mission, God is calling us to step into His new thing with boldness and vision.

As leaders in the Church, it’s our responsibility to discern where God is leading us and to guide others in that direction. We must remain open to the Spirit, be flexible, and be willing to adapt as we seek to meet the needs of a rapidly changing world.

This year, we were blessed to begin the new quadrennial with our new Bishop, whose presence has promoted strong support for the connection between the local church and the conference. We are also deeply grateful for the Connectional Ministries Council and staff, who we consider vital members of our team.

As we move forward, our collective focus continues to be directed toward the Conference’s Our 4 Priorities:

Developing Leaders – This priority is focused on intentionally nurturing and strengthening the skills, qualities, and abilities of individuals – preparing them for leadership roles within their communities. Through mentorship, training, and the cultivation of key leadership traits, we aim to build a strong group of empowered leaders who can guide and inspire others toward shared goals.

Engaging Our Communities – At the heart of our mission is the active involvement and collaboration with the members of our communities. By building relationships, fostering trust, and promoting open dialogue and participation, we create inclusive spaces where all voices are heard and valued. Through community-driven initiatives, we work to address shared challenges, amplify the voices of marginalized groups, and promote collective action for positive change.

Connecting With & Growing Disciples – This priority centers on the spiritual development of individuals within our faith communities. Through intentional guidance, support, and resources, we aim to deepen individuals’ understanding of their faith and help them cultivate a personal relationship with their beliefs. We empower them to integrate their faith into everyday life and grow into committed disciples who are equipped to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world.

Measuring Current Realities & Evaluating Missional Opportunities – Effective mission work begins with a clear understanding of the realities we face and the opportunities for impactful action. By engaging in thorough assessments, data analysis, and collaboration with stakeholders, we gain valuable insights into the needs, strengths, and aspirations of our communities. Identifying strategic opportunities for mission- focused engagement allows us to align our efforts with the broader mission of our organization, contributing to positive transformation and fulfilling our shared purpose.

Even as we embrace the new things that God is doing among us, Our 4 Priorities continue to guide our mission and ministry. These priorities remain central to our work and provide a strong foundation as we move forward in faith. While we embrace new opportunities and challenges, these priorities ensure that we stay focused on the essential work of building leaders, engaging communities, growing disciples, and evaluating our mission. In doing so, we honor both the excitement of new beginnings and the wisdom of our established commitments.

Keeping the Vision Front and Center

Connectional Ministries faced some challenges this year, but God has been right there with us – helping us stay faithful and fruitful. We strive to keep the vision of the South Carolina Annual Conference front and center “to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” We do this by equipping local churches through training, staff support, and opportunities to serve.

Another key aspect of our work is connecting local churches to ministry, worship, fellowship, and service opportunities beyond themselves. One might say Connectional Ministries is a hub for ideas, resources, training, and support to help local churches thrive through connection.

Here are some of the ways we have done that since the 2024 Annual Conference:

A Year of Transition and Connection

This year brought much transition. We welcomed a new bishop, Bishop Leonard Fairley, who hit the ground running with tri-district events that lifted up our “Connection” as United Methodists and as the Body of Christ. These gatherings were well attended and brought a renewed sense of hope and positivity about our future as a conference and denomination.

Connectional Ministries also welcomed new leadership to the Conference Council on Connectional Ministries (CCCM). We offer deep gratitude to those who served for two quadrennial – and some who served for three. Your faithful service has been invaluable. We now move forward with a new team who, by God’s grace, will build upon that strong foundation and breathe new life into our shared ministry.

Through the leadership of the Executive Committee and the four Ministry Areas, we continue to carry out the important work of Connectional Ministries.

Discipleship Ministry Area

- **Connecting Children in Worship and Prayer** – A five-year grant from the Lilly Endowment helps churches engage in intergenerational ministry by creatively and meaningfully including children in worship. We will recruit 60 churches (12 per year) for participation in this cohort-based initiative. More than 30 churches have applied for the first two years. A children’s leadership team has been created that will help support the implementation and ongoing work of the grant.
- **Intentional Discipleship Systems (IDS)** – This initiative helps local churches design and implement contextualized discipleship systems. Participating churches attend a workshop and receive post-workshop support as needed.
- **Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministries** – The annual retreat continues to be funded through the Discipleship Ministry Area.

Outreach Ministry Area

- **Disaster Response** – South Carolina experienced severe impacts from Tropical Storm Debby in August and the more devastating Hurricane Helene in September. The latter caused the loss of 219 lives across six states, including 49 in South Carolina. The storm left a 500-mile trail of destruction.

Local churches responded immediately – providing shelter, food, water, showers, and safe spaces. We partnered with teams from Missouri, Alabama-West Florida, Mississippi, Minnesota, and Arkansas, with support from across the United Methodist Connection.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) provided a Solidarity Grant for Tropical Storm Debby and a second grant for Hurricane Helene, and continues to walk with us as we now pivot to the recovery phase. This response is a powerful testament to our connectional love and service.

Advocacy Ministry Area

We are thankful for those who led in the last quadrennium and excited to welcome many new faces to Advocacy work within Connectional Ministries.

- Church and Society focused on elder health (especially dementia and mental health), predatory lending, and civil/human rights issues impacting women and infants.
- We're excited to build a new relationship with Amber Gaines, Engagement and Development Manager at the General Board of Church and Society, to deepen advocacy efforts in South Carolina.
- We continue to provide scholarships and grants for ethnic and minority churches, their clergy, laity, and youth. We are currently working to revamp the application process to make it more accessible.
- We remain proud supporters of the South Carolina Christian Action Council, which tirelessly advocates for justice in our state.

If you are interested in advocacy, we'd love for you to join our team!

Lay Leadership Ministry Area

This ministry area continues to encourage, equip, and connect laity across the state. Through collaboration and training opportunities, we strengthen lay leadership to support vital congregations. More can be learned of the work of Lay Leadership in their report to Annual Conference.

Stewarding Our Resources

Over the past four years, we have intentionally worked to reduce expenses in response to changing realities, including church separations, while maintaining quality ministry. At our March 2025 meeting, we approved a budget that reflects this ongoing commitment.

Thanks to disciplined cost-saving measures, funding offered as incentives to retain employees and operations during the pandemic as well as reduced spending during that time, we have built reserves that allow us to continue funding mission, ministry and the work of Connectional Ministries during this transitional time. These funds support local churches as they live out Our 4 Priorities.

Looking Ahead with Hope

Under Bishop Fairley's leadership, we move forward with a shared vision: "A New Hope: God's Promised Future for South Carolina." This vision guides the work of our four Jeremiah Teams: Missional Priorities, The Black Church and Ethnic Ministries Strategy, District Alignment, and Conference Staff Alignment.

And so, here we are. We face great challenges, but let us pause to give thanks for how far God has brought us. We have come this far by faith, by grit, by determination, and by the unfailing love of Jesus Christ. And know this – God is not done with us yet.

Respectfully Submitted:
Millie Nelson Smith, Director
Pamela Goodwine-Glover, Convener
Mason Cantey, Co-Convener

Megan Gray, Convener, Advocacy Ministry Area
 Kim Bryant, Convener, Discipleship Ministry Area
 Betty Void and Michael Jennings, Conveners, Lay Leadership Ministry Area
 Martin Quick, Convener, Outreach Ministry Area
 Doris Bright, Secretary
 Steve Patterson, Anderson District Superintendent (Cabinet Representative)

S.C. ANNUAL CONFERENCE DESIGNATED SPECIAL DAYS 2026

Human Relations Day	January 18, 2026
Golden Cross Sunday	February 1, 2026
United Methodist Camps and Retreats Sunday	March 1, 2026
UMCOR Sunday	March 15, 2026
Native American Awareness Sunday	April 19, 2026
Advocate Awareness Sunday	May 17, 2026
Epworth Children's Home Mother's Day	May 10, 2026
United Methodist Men's Day	June 7, 2026
Peace With Justice Sunday	June 21, 2026
Aldersgate Special Needs Sunday	August 9, 2026
Call To Ministry Sunday	August 16, 2026
Epworth Children's Home Work Day	September 13, 2026
Youth Service Fund Sunday	September 21, 2026
World Communion Sunday	October 4, 2026
Conference Advance Special Ministries Sunday	November 1, 2026
United Methodist Student Day	November 22, 2026

ADVANCED SPECIAL MINISTRIES FOR 2026

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.

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 St, 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 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.

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

1 residents, but also life skills, Bible study and spiritual development, career development, individual and group
2 counseling and financial literacy as they prepare to return to their homes or create new ones.

3 **JUBILEE ACADEMY**

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

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

14 **PATH**

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

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

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

23 **THE COASTAL SAMARITAN COUNSELING CENTER**

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

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

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

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

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

44 In the past years we served an average of 160 breakfasts a day and 190 lunches a day to the children in

1 Abbeville County and in the City of Anderson. In Abbeville 62% of the public school children get free or reduced
2 priced meals at school; in Anderson it's over 94%.

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

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

6 **UNITED METHODIST VOLUNEERS IN MISSION- SOUTH CAROLINA UMVIM-SC**

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

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

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

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

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

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

27 **UNITED MINISTRIES**

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

31 **WALLACE FAMILY LIFE CENTER**

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

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

42 **ADVOCACY**

44 We are grateful for the work that was done in the last quadrennium and for the many new faces that have joined
45 us in our Advocacy work on Connectional Ministries. Our Church and Society committee has been focused this year on

1 elder health, specifically dementia and mental health, predatory lending and civil and human rights as they apply to
2 women and infants. Part of this work is the great things being done by UWF through their Legislative Advocacy Day,
3 March 18th at Epworth. We are excited about making a new connection with Amber Gaines, the Engagement and
4 Development Manager at the General Board of Church and Society as she helps us to develop our advocacy ministry in
5 South Carolina. We are also hard at work providing scholarships and grants for our ethnic and minority churches, their
6 clergy, laity and youth. Our goal for this next year is to revamp the applications and process for applying for scholarships
7 and grants, so that they are easily accessible to more people. And as always we have been a strong supporter of the
8 South Carolina Christian Action Council that works diligently for justice in our state.

9 We look forward to the coming years as we evaluate the work that we do and could be doing throughout the
10 state. If this is work that interests you, we would love for you to join our team!

11 Rev. Megan Gray, Convener

12 **NATIVE AMERICAN COMMITTEE**

13 *The Discipline*, paragraph 816, advises that the Native American Committee has the responsibility to report on
14 how the Native American Ministries Sunday offering have benefited Native Americans in their annual conference.
15 Thus, I wanted to provide a summary of this past year, 2024 in what our committee has done from both within the
16 conference and our outreach to the Native peoples of South Carolina.

17 Fifty percent of the Native American Ministries Sunday offering remains in this conference. This past year,
18 our committee received \$4,162. We also received \$3,000 from the Conference to support our mission.

19 In February 2024, we continued our tradition of the first Saturday in February for Native American
20 Representative training. It was held at Columbia UMC (previously Main Street UMC). 40 people were trained.
21 The committee provided giveaways for participants with six recommended American Indian books at both
22 sessions. The training featured an educational component in the morning and a worship service with a Native
23 drum, Keepers of the Word, in the afternoon. Total cost was \$1,784 and we collected \$593 in registration fees.
24 We encourage local church Native American Representatives to become involved at the district level and provide
25 information about our committee and how their church incorporates Native American awareness, which is one
26 of the missions of our committee.

27 We continue to publish our NAC newsletter twice a year. The newsletter is mostly electronic. Total cost was
28 \$80. We also have an email group that we communicate directly with representatives and other interested
29 people. Our committee submits articles monthly to *The Advocate*. We continue our initiative where we provide
30 articles about Native American traditions, culture, history and other educational information.

31 Our committee meets quarterly. Total committee travel costs were \$1,335. Columbia UMC continues to
32 provide our storage space for our supplies and equipment at a cost \$1,000 annually.

33 Our committee members were invited to provide the message for Native American Ministries Sunday. It is one
34 of the six special Sundays for General Conference in accordance with *The Discipline*. We are not an outside agency
35 providing a message, but part of the conference. The official Sunday is the second Sunday after Easter which was
36 April 14, 2024. However, with a limited number of speakers, we provide this service year around at no cost to any
37 church. Honorariums are appreciated to offset travel costs. The total travel cost for 2024 was \$471. After a first
38 Sunday message, we can arrange a Native Drum with a worship service, but there is a cost for the drum. We will
39 provide Native American Ministries Sunday offering envelopes that state how the offering funds are used. To
40 arrange a Native American Ministries Sunday, please contact the chair, Zan Tracy Pender, at
41 tracypender@hotmail.com or 803 905-5672. With my work schedule, email is the best way to contact me.

42 We continue to have outreach with all of the tribes of South Carolina. We offer \$500 grant opportunity to
43 support cultural activities, events and restoration of cultural history or traditions. Tribes must submit receipts
44 and a report afterwards to ensure the monies are spent appropriately. In 2024, we provided a \$500 grant to the
45 Wassamasaw tribe for their PowWow.

Our elder basket program is part of this outreach. Usually at Christmas, we provide laundry baskets with non-perishable items to tribal seniors. Almost all of the SC tribes participate. Our primary support for this project is elder basket donations (laundry baskets with non-perishable items) from churches. A list of items is included in each newsletter. This year, elder basket program expanded to delivery of produce resulting in over 2,000 pounds of produce being distributed. In 2024, 422 elder baskets were delivered. At a cost of \$45 per basket, the cost would have been \$18,990. Thanks to our conference's church elder basket and monetary donations, the cost was \$1,435.41. We continue to accept elder basket and monetary donations. The monetary donations are helpful to cover the costs of gas for the delivery of baskets and produce.

We continue to work on our major project of a 3-day bus tour of the state tribes for Native American Representatives and other interested personnel. As a result of restricted donation from Columbia Place UMC, we have \$14,000 for this project. Prayerfully, we will have a tour on spring 2026.

We added five new committee members in 2024. We staffed a table at Annual Conference with total conference expenses at \$731.32. We purchased a NAC table cloth, new display boards and a new processional banner at a cost of \$1,887.84. Our previous display boards and banner were old and falling apart.

This is a summary of what our committee has done this past year. We continue to be good stewards of our monies while providing services within the conference and outreach to the South Carolina tribes. We are in compliance with The Discipline. We have established trusting relationships with the South Carolina tribes. We provide speakers for Native American Ministries Sunday and the offering is encouraged, but not mandatory.

If you have any questions and concerns, please let me or our committee know. We are always happy to work with you.

May the Great Spirit watch over you as long as the grass grows and the water flows. God Bless.

Respectively submitted by
Zan Tracy Pender, Chair, UMC SC Native American Committee

LAY LEADERSHIP AREA OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES – REPORT 1

Purpose:

Lay Leadership has four areas of ministry in the SC UMC Conference Connectional Ministries program. It serves to unite the laity across the Conference and encourages them to be engaged in their local church and active in the district. The importance of every church, regardless of its size, cannot be overstated.

Key moments from the previous year:

Lay Servant Ministries continues to be a spiritual and leadership development program. This program is equipping and empowering and provides laity the opportunity to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and then go and make other disciples. Lay Servant Ministries follows and contributes to the fulfilment of the Four Priorities of the South Carolina Annual Conference. Over the past year, and continuing into this conference year, Lay Servant Ministries is offering new advanced courses such as Fresh Expressions (taking the church outside the walls of the building), Ministry with the Forgotten (dementia awareness and ministry), Climate Justice (understanding Creation care from both the lens of scripture and science), and others, including those which will soon be available to us from Discipleship Ministries. Lay Servant Ministries is open to all persons. Lay Servant Ministries offers certification at several levels for United Methodist laity. These certification levels include Certified Lay Servant, Certified Lay Speaker, and Certified Lay Minister.

United Women in Faith. The South Carolina Conference of the United Women in Faith are a sisterhood acting in faith to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation. We focus on women, children and youth and are called to act for justice for our communities. To meet that goal, we have been busy learning and growing together.

We had our Annual Meeting in Rock Hill in October. Bishop Fairley attended, and our speaker was a representative from the Catawba Indian Reservation. Many of our ladies visited the reservation and learned about the Indian Settlement and the hardships the native Americans faced.

MenNMinistry. The SC Men-N-Ministry has included the Scouting Ministries in our programming for 2025. Scouting is a vital part of the future of Men's Ministries, and we will continue to collaborate with them and build meaningful relationships. Close to 200 men and Scouts attended the February Spiritual Growth Event at Journey UMC in Columbia. The theme centered around "Rise Up, Rise Up" led by three Bishops (Bishop James Swanson from the GCUMM; Bishop L. Jonathan Holston from the Alabama- West Florida Conference; and our current Resident Bishop Leonard Fairley). Rev. Sterling Eaton and Steven Scheid from the GCUMM were also present. Several new District Presidents joined our ministry in 2025, and our goal is to have district leadership in all Districts by the end of the year. We remain committed to building and growing Men's Ministries, focusing on younger men and creating sustainable momentum for future generations.

Youth around the Conference 2024-25 was an amazing year for South Carolina Ministries with Young People. On the event side of SCMYP, youth from across the conference participated in two fantastic events. Immerse (our fall discipleship retreat) was held in November at Asbury Hills, and we held the largest "non-camp" event ever held there. Our theme this year was Masterpiece and everything we did revolved around our unique talents, gifts, and creativity all given to us by God. As it says in Ephesians 2:10, "We are God's masterpiece. God has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things God planned for us." Throughout the weekend, the participants from 18 different churches were split up and assigned to family groups. This is a distinctive part of the Immerse experience. The ability to meet and connect with youth through the connection is a wonderful opportunity. This is made possible because of the willingness of adult leaders from each church to lead a group of teenagers who start as strangers, but become friends. The participants also had the opportunity in breakouts to learn about relationships, non-traditional prayer practices, worship leadership, their spiritual type, the work of justice and mercy in the United Methodist church, how to participate in missions and how to become leaders in their local congregations. Bishop Fairley also led a breakout for those who were discerning a call to local church ministry.

Revolution was held in January at the Township Auditorium and saw nearly 900 youth and adults in attendance. The theme for the weekend was "Belong" and attendees were reminded that they belong to God, that God calls us to belonging within the context of community and because we belong to God we are called to include others in our faith journeys. Many youth answered a call to Christian discipleship. A highlight of the weekend was around 75 young people expressing a call to ministry in response to the invitation of Rev. Dr. Stephanie Hand and Bishop Fairley on Sunday morning. Bishop Fairley challenged those in attendance not to "waste this opportunity" to foster this sense of call in the lives of these young people. A new initiative – Revolution 365 was launched, aimed at connecting youth groups within districts across the Annual conference to connect and collaborate throughout the year as a way of extending the reach of Revolution. Group leaders were given contact information for other leaders in their area and encouraged to connect and collaborate with another group or more and share those events on social media using #rev365. SCMYP will be highlighting these gatherings throughout the year.

In terms of training and leadership development, SCMYP hosted a Collaborative Youth Ministry workshop in the fall to share a model of collaborative youth ministry that encourages churches to share resources to disciple young people. This model has proven effective in several locations in the annual conference and there are now additional places where this is being considered. Another SCMYP Youth Leader Coaching Cohort was held, and a handful of youth leaders participated and coached around principles to create effective youth ministries in the local church. Last, but certainly not least, and for the first time in some years, there will be a delegation of young people participating in Annual Conference 2025 as youth delegates to help shape the future of UMCSC. We look forward to seeing the impact that they will have.

Our objectives for the upcoming year are:

- We will continue to engage and equip laity across the Annual Conference with information and resources 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 to work actively to “be the church”; wherever we are.
- Identify opportunities to engage churches and local communities in mission, ministry, and the response to racism and homelessness.

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

We should continue to embrace where we are as the United Methodist Church and Conference. The church remains 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:

There is no doubt that we are living in extraordinary times in our church and our world. As we navigate the future, let us be a shining example of God’s love and light. We are to love each other as Jesus has loved us. May we be seen by the world as people who love and respect one another despite our differences in opinion on many issues. As we live out our faith in Christ, may we positively impact the lives of others and be living examples of His love.

Respectfully submitted:
Conference Co-Lay Leader: Betty Void
Conference Co-Lay Leader: Michael Jennings

We appreciate our District Lay Leaders’ (DLL) support 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 Sandy Trasher, Anderson, Gillis McAllister, Charleston, Michael Jennings, Columbia, Brenda Fleming, Florence, Chandra Dillard, Greenville, Sandy Shafer, Greenwood, Derrick Stanley Hartsville, Michael Toms, Marion, Stephon Void, Orangeburg, Bob James, Rock Hill, Rick Hammett, Spartanburg and Wally Cole, Walterboro. Lisa Fusco as the Chairperson of Lay Leadership Advisory Board. We are grateful for their service.

LAY SERVANT MINISTRY

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 fully supports the Four Priorities of the conference.

The Lay Servant Academy was held for the second year at Washington Street United Methodist Church in August. The morning plenary session concentrated on teaching techniques for instructors, and was facilitated by Rev. Cathy Joens of Epworth Children’s Home. After lunch, there were breakout sessions which allowed the participants to choose an overview of the content in particular courses.

Many of the 12 districts are beginning to offer several lay servant school opportunities throughout the year. These schools are mostly in person, but some are either hybrid or totally by zoom.

Conference Co-Director, David Salter attended the CLM Networking Conference and the ACDLSM Conference in Nashville in January of 2025. One highlight of this conference was the overview of several new Advanced Lay Servant Courses which will be available to us soon. In addition, various changes to the Certified Lay Ministry preparation were introduced. Several District Directors attended through Zoom, and the Conference LSM Secretary, Pamela Goodwine-Glover joined in person for the ACDLSM Conference.

LSM welcomed several new District Directors and Associate District Directors to the Conference Committee.

Continue the great work Lay Servant Ministries is already doing.

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

1 Incorporate a greater number of the new advanced lay servant courses into the schools throughout the
2 conference.

3 Increase the visibility of Lay Servant Ministries in the conference and local churches.

4 Increase communication into the local churches about lay servant ministries.

5 Find ways to adjust to the challenges we are facing with a reduced number of churches, and therefore a reduced
6 number of laity in the conference.

7 Lay Servant Ministries is much more than a system of preparing one to “speak” from the pulpit. There is no
8 requirement to ever speak from the pulpit in order to be a Certified Lay Servant. Lay Servant Ministries equips one
9 to be a better disciple of Jesus Christ.

10 Lay Servant Ministry is for everyone. The Basic lay servant course would make a great study for anyone entering
11 into membership in the local churches as it is an overview of Wesleyan theology and practice.

12 Lay Servant Ministry has been the starting point of many of our clergy who have heard the call to ministry.

13 New and interesting courses such as Climate Justice, Ministry with the Forgotten: Dementia Though a Spiritual
14 Lens, Fresh Expressions, Soul Reset, Exploring a Culture of Care for a Caring Congregation, etc. offer fresh, exciting
15 new perspectives in discipleship.

16 Find a Lay Servant School near you and try it out, you will never be the same.

17 David Salter, Co-Director
18 Conference Lay Servant Ministries

19 **UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH**

20 UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH: We shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and experience
21 freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop creative, supportive fellowships, and expand concepts of
22 mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

23 Some key events from 2024: Our first event was our Social Action Event – Legislative Advocacy Days. There were
24 workshops with emphasis on Climate Justice, Predatory Lending, and the School to Prison Pipeline.

25 We hosted a book study and discussed the book “So You Want to Talk About Race” by Ijeoma Oluo.

26 We awarded three Presidential Scholarships to assist our young ladies with their higher education expenses.

27 The SCCUWF hosted a spiritual growth event focusing on Matthew 13: 3-9, led by Dee Jones-Henderson, a lay
28 leader servant from United Way of Oconee. The theme was “God is the Sower in Faith and Hope”.

29 Many of us attended the Southeastern Jurisdiction event in Chattanooga, Tn. We heard from our CEO, Sally
30 Vonner, and the keynote speaker was Janet Wolfe. The theme was “Get Together”. Together we can do more!

31 Mission u was held on July 18th at Spartanburg Methodist College. Our theme was “The kin-dom is Upon You:
32 Drawing Closer to God and One Another”. On June 22, we participated in an event hosted by our Charter for
33 Racial and Environmental Justice committee. We learned about the struggles facing the heir’s property owners
34 and the people in the coastal regions of SC.

35 The annual meeting of the SCCUWF was held in Rock Hill at Woodland UMC. The theme was “Praise the Lord,
36 Justice for All” based on Psalm 146. Our speaker was Chief Patricia Leach from the Catawba Nation located in Rock
37 Hill. She is the first woman to become a leader for the Catawba Nation.

38 The UWF want to continue to work for racial and environmental justice, inspiring connections and putting
39 love, faith, and hope into action.

40 We were able to get a National Justice Grant for our youth to visit Penn Center on Helena Island in February
41 during Black History Month. Over 80 ladies and youth attended.

1 The Conference UWF is sponsoring a Legislative Advocacy Day, on March 18th, in person, at Epworth
2 Children's Home. Our speakers will educate us about the School to Prison Pipeline and we can help prevent this
3 pipeline from continuing.

4 Our Spiritual Growth event on April 12, will have workshops on Advocacy, Staying Connected Virtually and
5 Random Act of Kindness.

6 In June, the Charter for Racial and Environmental Justice Committee will host an event to follow the visit to
7 Penn Center. We want to learn about protecting Helena Island and other coastal areas from developers.

8 Mission u on July 17th-19th will meet at Spartanburg Methodist College, with the theme of "Practicing Hope".

9 We are planning a Limitless event for our young ladies to gather and fellowship. We are also recruiting
10 young ladies to help lead the Limitless team from each area of the conference.

11 We need financial support for our Limitless team in order to host events for the young ladies. There is not a
12 budget for our youth and we want to grow our commitment to them and help get them excited about our
13 Limitless events.

14 We also seek prayers for our United Women in Faith as we work towards building up our membership.
15 Separations caused our membership to decrease and we are working hard to attract ladies and help them get
16 excited about UWF in this new year.

17 If you take away nothing else from this report, please know that we will continue making a difference in 2025 by
18 planning programs and events that help us fulfill our purpose. We want to work towards racial justice and
19 environmental justice. We want to use our platform to inspire, influence and help protect our rights and the rights
20 of the vulnerable women and children.

21 We will continue to work together!

22 TOGETHER we can do more. TOGETHER we can be more. TOGETHER the power of love in action can change
23 the world!

24 Bold action, like faith, takes courage. Our bravery is inspired by God's love and our powerful commitment to
25 improve the lives of women, children, and youth. United Women in Faith works for justice through compassionate
26 service and advocacy to change unfair policies and systems that harm women, children, and youth—from racial and
27 gender injustice to economic inequality, climate issues and more.

28 Debra H. Schooler
29 President, Conference UWF

30 **MenNMinistry**

31 The South Carolina Conference of the UMM held its Annual Conference on February 22 at Journey Church in
32 Columbia. We had Bishop James Swanson General Secretary of the UMM, Bishop Jonathan Holston, and Bishop
33 Leonard Fairly, SC resident Bishop as our Speakers. Our theme was Rise Up Rise Up, Steps of a good man, Psalm
34 37: 23-25.

35 There were 180 to 200 in attendance. Steven Scheid, Men's and Scouting Coordinator for the GCUMM and
36 Sterling Eaton, Director of Men's Ministry for the GCUMM led the afternoon session. It was a Spirit Filled Day.

37 This was after the Annual SC MenNMinistry Golf tournament Friday morning and the Cigars and Scriptures
38 event Friday evening at Journey Church. Looking forward to a bigger and better year in 2025.

39 Kenny Bingham, SC Conference President UMM

SALKEHATCHIE

Connecting with families in need of home repairs so they can be safe, warm and dry.
Provide mission opportunities for high school youth and adults to serve with families in need across S.C.
Developing caring relationships with families, local churches, communities and the youth and adult volunteers needing to serve like Jesus.

Successes

- Connecting with more families with more volunteers through 32 Salkehatchie camps in S.C.
- 890 volunteers helped 102 families with home repairs
- Held a beneficial leadership retreat at Clark's Inn in Santee January 17-18, 2025
- Had a Salkehatchie gathering during Revolution weekend for youth and adults to fellowship, share stories, praise and worship, learn, and prepare for upcoming camps
- Held new spring and fall camps in Bennettsville and Johnsonville
- Now hosting leadership Zoom calls to discuss topics like fundraising, best experiences, and changes for better camps

Challenges

- Adjusting and adapting to ministering to families with less volunteers
- Learning to plan and prepare more thoroughly in order to serve families completely and more efficiently
- To budget more carefully and fund raise more diligently so we can serve more completely with less
- Additional camps in spring and fall and possibly May and December

Objectives

- Encouraging Salkehatchie participation in every way through Salkehatchie Mission Moments, Revolution, Bishop's School of Ministry and Men in Ministry Retreat
- Develop the three weeks of spring Salkehatchie during spring break in April- Simpsonville, Anderson, and Bennettsville
- Growing May and December Salkehatchie for college students and others wanting to help families

Three Spring Salkehatchie camps, possible May and December Salkehatchie and 31 Salkehatchie Summer Service, LLC camps are repairing homes and caring for families in many communities, near you, in South Carolina in 2025.

In 2024, we served many families across South Carolina. However, one of the families that we served needed major repairs on their home so that the homeowner could feel safe and secure while being confined to her wheelchair. We were able to fully remodel two bathrooms and replace all of the flooring throughout the home. Although the work accomplished by the youth and adults was amazing, the transformation of hearts in the sons of the homeowner was the most astounding part of the week. Three of their sons, ages 15-25, were very active in the work that was being done and two of the boys joined us on Friday night for dinner and communion. To see these young men notice the work of Christ and have the desire to be a part of it was truly a blessing to everyone, and to see our young Salkehatchie campers ministering to this family was a breath-taking example of what Salkehatchie has been called to do for over forty-five years in South Carolina. Thank you for your continued support of this ministry!

Ward Smith, Chairperson

SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST CAMPS AND RETREAT MINISTRIES

From the lakes at Camp Providence to the mountains of Asbury Hills to the ocean at Sea Islands, God is at work! A solid Christian camping experience is becoming more than just an option, it is an experience that strengthens one's spiritual and life's journey; it enables, reinforces, and facilitates one's ability to learn for life. Peg Smith, a former national executive director for the American Camping Association once said that camp is "a process of risks and mistakes that are meaningful and reflective — not a series of grades, scores, and tests. It is not about

1 the right or wrong answer but the critical-thinking process that reveals patterns and alternatives. Camp is about
2 taking experiences and adding language that not only expands understanding of self but of others.” We are all
3 compelled by a thirst to know God and understand, especially young people. Those who attend Asbury Hills,
4 Camp Providence, or Sea Islands have an opportunity to explore, expand, and master a new skill or knowledge,
5 and get closer to God.

6 Some would say they are experiencing the power of persistence. Madeline Levine, best-selling author and
7 psychologist, writes in her book *Teach Your Children Well*, about the seven essential coping skills
8 (resourcefulness, enthusiasm, creativity, a good work ethic, self-control, self-esteem, and self-efficacy).

9 When asked which of them do you think a child gains the most from a positive summer camp experience, she
10 said; “Actually, I think camps help children master all the critical coping skills. This is another way of saying it
11 fosters resilience, which allows us to deal with life’s inevitable changes and losses. We all develop coping skills
12 by being in situations that push us out of our comfort zones. That’s what camp does for kids: Everyday, it
13 presents them with a whole new set of challenges, some of which are easily accomplished, others which take
14 persistence, grit, and learning new skills” Thank you for journeying with us! For those who just arrived the trail
15 ahead still awaits.

16 OUR MISSION

17 South Carolina United Methodist Camps & Retreat Ministries joins with the church to “make disciples of Jesus
18 Christ for the transformation of the world” by seeking, welcoming, and gathering persons into the community of
19 the body of Christ through outdoor camping experiences in a place set apart with nurturing people in Christian
20 living by providing HOPE: Hospitality -- reach out to all persons, Opportunity --offer them Christ Purpose--
21 Nurture persons in Christian living Engagement --send persons out to live their faith South Carolina Camps &
22 Retreat Ministries All of this happens at a place set apart, where creation formation leads to faith formation--
23 building relationships with trust and confidence. We seek to serve all people for Christian birth, growth, and
24 renewal throughout our ministry. We work to meet guests, campers, volunteers and staff where they are in
25 their walk with Christ and provide the highest standard of Christian hospitality. Our gates, across the state, are
26 open to all people. This year, South Carolina United Methodist Camps and Retreat Ministries experienced
27 remarkable growth and transformation. All three facilities hosted numerous retreats and gatherings, allowing
28 campers and guests to connect with God in fresh ways.

29 As our full-time staff settled into their roles, we were able to try new things. A highlight was the launch of the
30 “Seaside” summer program at Sea Islands, where Junior High campers experienced what it means to take
31 yourself, your community, and God to create a “cord of three strands that is not easily broken.” Campers could
32 play at the beach, get a behind-the-scenes tour at the Charleston Aquarium, go on a shelling tour, see the Angel
33 Oak tree, and much more. This program was so successful that we expanded it in 2025 to offer a week for Senior
34 High Campers. In 2024 Hurricane Helene brought challenges which caused significant damage to Camp
35 Providence & Asbury Hills, though thankfully no injuries occurred. As we move into 2025, excitement builds for
36 what God will accomplish through Camps and Retreat Ministries. We invite you to join us and experience the
37 Power of Camp this coming year. When the task of clean up seemed almost impossible, I was blown away by the
38 outpouring of people who showed up to help. Without the incredible work done by volunteers, we would not
39 have been able to clean up the property and open the gates back up in time for our annual Fall Festival at
40 Asbury Hills.

41 Camps & Retreat Ministries served 4,554 guests between summer camp and retreats for a total of 11,790 user
42 days. 2024 was an exciting year as Asbury Hills retreat ministry was joined by 16 first time groups that included
43 the Michelin North America Sales Team, Boiling Springs High School Student Leadership and multiple local Girl
44 Scout troops. Sea Islands saw a handful of first-time groups, as well as its first summer camp program: Seaside.
45 Camp Providence welcomed back local scout troops as well as multiple church day groups to enjoy some
46 summer lake fun. We look forward to 2025, as we open our doors for both our new and returning groups.

1 Summer 2024 demonstrated the power of community. Our theme, Two or More, how our relationship with
2 Jesus strengthened our relationship with the people in our lives. The truth of this was seen everywhere—
3 campers banding together to defy the rain and cook a campfire dinner, worshiping with linked arms even after
4 the band stopped playing, encouraging one another to climb the Alpine Tower or pray out loud. This summer,
5 our community grew to include campers at Sea Islands through a brand-new program called Seaside. Though
6 Seaside campers saw God in dolphins and beach sunsets rather than mountain views and forested hikes, the
7 relationships built between one another and the Lord at both sites beautifully depicted a cord of three strands
8 that is not easily broken (Ecc. 4:12).

9 Thank you for your continued prayers and support of South Carolina United Methodist Camps and Retreat
10 Ministries.

11 Respectfully Submitted,
12 Arthur W. Spriggs, Executive Director
13 Reverend Pattie Gordon, Executive Director Board Chair

14 CONFERENCE HOMES

15 ALDERSGATE SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY

16 The purpose of Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry is to provide the highest quality of life, and greatest level of
17 independence, in Christian homes, for adults with special needs.

18 We were blessed this past year with the opportunity to open two more homes for people with special needs.
19 One of the homes we opened in October was named in honor of Rev. Stephen Taylor and his contributions to
20 Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry over the years. We had a lovely dedication ceremony with Rev. Stephen
21 Taylor and his family in attendance along with the amazing men that are now living at Stephen's House. We
22 opened another home in Florence as well which is called Sunshine House and this home is on the campus the
23 Methodist Manor. Sunshine House was built with the funds from a generous anonymous donor that wanted to
24 give back to the community. We have gone from serving 16 residents to now serving 28 residents, which is a
25 blessing for our ministry and the residents and their families. We were able to participate in several outreach
26 events with various churches which was a great way to spread the word about ASNM and the need for more
27 housing options for people with special needs in our state. We partnered with churches such as Shandon United
28 Methodist Church, Mt. Horeb, Salem United Methodist Church, Union United Methodist Church, Grace United
29 Methodist Church, Washington Street United Methodist Church, and Highland Park United Methodist Church.
30 Several other churches in the Conference were kind and offered donations and gift cards to our residents for
31 special occasions which was greatly appreciated by all!

32 This coming year we hope to grow our ministry by opening more homes or possibly building some apartments
33 for people with special needs and expanding the areas we serve into the Upstate. We are hoping to apply for
34 funding through Housing Trust Funds with the state which will help pay for the purchase of homes or the
35 building of some homes. Additionally we are talking to Genesis Homes about partnering to build some
36 apartments in the Upstate area for folks with special needs. Genesis Homes would be a great partner as they are
37 a Christian organization as well. The ministry is growing its administrative staff as well which was necessary due
38 to the growth in the number of houses which increased the number of employees and such. We want to remain
39 as lean as possible with administrative personnel as we want our funds to go to our residents and to continued
40 additions of homes to serve more people with special needs. We are hiring an activities coordinator to help plan
41 activities for all of our residents including volunteer opportunities for the residents in areas of their interest such
42 as Palmetto Lifeline or Sharing God's Love. We are praying God will open the door to us sharing our ministry
43 with other churches outside of the SCUMC Conference as there is such a vast need for Christian housing options
44 for our people. We look forward to having a fundraising event this year which will more than likely be our first
45 annual golf tournament.

Please know that this ministry is making a tremendous difference in the lives of the people we serve and their families. Just in this past year, we were able to bring two young men into our ministry to live in our homes that were basically homeless or on the verge of being homeless. We are providing support for 28 folks in a Christian environment that they call their home where the residents are involved in their community by attending church, volunteering, and participating in recreational activities. We pray that God will continue to bless our ministry so that we can provide a safe, loving, Christian environment for more people to call home. We are grateful for the SCUMC Conference's support and we look forward to working more with Bishop Fairley. Please come visit our homes as our residents love visitors and we would love to share our ministry with you!

I would love for you all to see this video as it does a great job telling the story of why we do what we do at Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry. Here is the link: <https://youtu.be/MvDXh6TAvZs>.

Thank you!

Kim Thomas, Executive Director
director@aldersgatesnm.org

EPWORTH CHILDREN'S HOME

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

- I. Epworth continued to expand our footprint across all regions of the state. Throughout all programs, Epworth served over 1650 children and families in 2024.
 - i. Epworth foster care staff served 361 children and youth across South Carolina. In addition to serving 361 children in foster care, 31 children were adopted into forever families. Since the inception of foster care in 2017, staff have licensed 357 foster families. Furthermore, our foster care village on the Millwood campus served 16 children last year. The village is comprised of licensed foster parents who reside in our empty cottages on campus so that we may continue to serve children on our Millwood campus in addition to the residential programs.
 - ii. We launched our Kinship Navigation program in August of 2024. During its first few months, Epworth served 222 kin caregivers and their children in the Midlands and Pee Dee regions of the state. We expect to serve over 500 relatives and their children during 2025. Kinship Navigation is a program that assists relatives who are caring for children and youth that cannot reside with their birth parents. Relatives of these children may need financial and/or emotional support for the children in their care. With our United Methodist support, Epworth is able to provide tangible items through our resource closets and financial support when needed.
 - iii. Epworth's Early Intervention Center serves children with special needs through a preschool on campus and home-based services. These programs served 196 children and families last year.

Objectives

- I. Epworth will continue the expansion of the Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing by introducing a third Center for Counseling in the Lowcountry region of the state. The Lowcountry Center for Counseling, located in North Charleston is expected to launch later this year. The outpatient counseling centers provide much needed psychotherapy services to local communities. All insurance carriers are accepted, including Medicaid.
- II. Epworth will be launching a Family Resource Center at the Trenholm Road Campus. This Resource Center will provide families with services such as SNAP (financial assistance), tangible resources and other therapeutic services. Plans are underway and staff are working with COMET on adding an additional bus stop close to the Trenholm Road Campus so families may access this service.

Epworth has a long tradition of assessing the needs of underserved children and their families and of offering new services and programs that meet the changing needs of South Carolina's families. The centers of excellence under the umbrella of the Institute for Child and Family Wellbeing reflect Epworth's recognition of the demands that the 21st century places on abused children and the families from which they come. Whether Epworth is serving children and families through the traditional group home, foster family programs, kinship care initiatives, counseling programs, family care programs or services for older, disengaged youth, the mission of healing hurts and nurturing hope through Christian communities continues. Epworth is a community where unconditional love and grace are modeled to all persons regardless of gender, race, national origin, or religious preference.

Continued from key moments above.

- iv. Although South Carolina continues to minimize the use of residential care, Epworth continues to serve youth with quality residential services. The Independent Living Center served 20 youth ages 18-23 years of age during 2024. This center prepares youth who are aging out of care with the necessary tools to be successful in life. Epworth's Family Care Center served 33 mothers and children. This program provides a safe space for mothers and their children while going through substance use treatment. Mothers are taught life skills so that the family unit is preserved upon discharge from the program. The traditional residential program served 58 youth.
 - v. Epworth's prevention programs continued to help many children and families during 2024. Through the Counseling centers and community-based prevention programming, Epworth was able to serve 616 children, youth and families.
 - vi. Epworth received an increased number of church partnerships during 2024. The United Methodist Congregation doubled the amount of church partnerships during 2024 to 130, up from 57 in 2023. Churches provide support through office space, resource closets, food security, financial support with rent and utilities, and dedicated space for training and support groups.
- II. Epworth maintained the coveted 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for sound financial management, and its commitment to accountability, and transparency for the 13th year in a row.

Beth Williams, President, CEO

METHODIST MANOR

Methodist Manor mission is to provide an extraordinary Continuing Care Community offering varied selection of living option and personalized services. We want to provide a lifestyle that enhances the quality of life for each person. We continually strive to create an environment that encourages enriching and fulfilling lives.

Have added a playground for residents grandchildren and guest.

Expansion to our Clubhouse in the form of a additional storage building. This storage area is adjacent to our Club House, allowing us to have a separate storage area for catering equipment, such as tables, chairs, catering dishes, and golf carts for the Club House and Marketing (golf carts used by the the Marketing on tours of the Patio Homes).

We have replaced 7 major appliances in our Independent commercial kitchen, totaling over \$75,000.00.

We have purchased a new SUV, enabling us to perform individual resident's trips to grocery stores, Dr. appointments, banking, etc., instead of utilizing the buses for just one resident.

Have been able to reopen our Bistro, had not been able to find enough staff to overate the Bistro after Covid years, we are now back to full staffing in all areas.

Have partnered with Hope Health to provide the residents with a Nurse Practitioner along with additional staff to run our on-site clinic.

Currently providing Resident Assistance to 3 residents in need of financial assistance. The amount of being provided is roughly a little over \$20,000.00 a month.

Hired a new Chaplain over the last year, currently working on growing the Church Program and services within our Community. Have also hired a new music Director, who is a pianist/organist and is working with The Manor Choir.

Will be adding a new Nurse Call system for our Health Care Unit, that will be compatible with the Nurse Call System in our Assisted Living Unit and Dementia/Alzheimer's Unit, allowing the Nurse Call system to be unified throughout the Medical Units.

Repaving and restriping several of The Manor's Parking lots.

Continue to provide financial assistance to currently residents receiving benevolence from our Resident Assistance Program and Fund. Will monitor and add additional qualified residents as needed from Resident Assistance Program.

We graciously ask that the Annual Conference will continue to provide a grant to fund The Methodist Manors Residents Assistance Program. The funds are used to assist residents who may have exhausted their funds. Often times these residents have lived at The Manor many years and have outlived their life savings, usually going through the continuum levels of care. We have previously been granted from the Annual Conference between \$85,000 to \$89,000.00 a year for this Residents Assistance Program.

The funding that is granted to The Residents Assistance Program, enables residents to finish out their lives at The Manor and not move from the place they chose to make their home in their Retirement years, whether they need Independent Living, Assisted Living, Alzheimer's/Dementia Care or Skilled Nursing Care. Residents should not have to move from the environment they have come to cherish and call home to another Facility at the end of their life, due to exhausting their life savings.

Teresa L. Reich
President and CEO

WESLEY COMMONS

Embracing the Future with Faith and Innovation

Wesley Commons is dedicated to enriching lives by providing innovative living opportunities, grounded in Christian principles. We are a master-planned, full-service Life Plan Community committed to exceptional care and vibrant living.

Navigating Challenges, Emerging Stronger

The past year presented us with unprecedented challenges. Like the broader economy, Wesley Commons faced the headwinds of inflation, national contraction of the labor market and rapidly growing demand for our services. These trials tested our resilience, but our dedicated team of caregivers rose to the occasion, providing a steadfast "shelter from the storm" for our Wesley Commons family. We deeply felt the impact of these challenges, yet our mission of care remained unwavering. We navigated significantly through these external pressures with fortitude, and now, we see the dawn of a brighter future. We are emerging stronger, more resilient, and more committed than ever to our mission.

Expansion and Innovation!

Prepare for a transformative chapter in the Wesley Commons story! We are thrilled to announce plans for significant community enhancements, designed to elevate our offerings and meet the growing demand for our exceptional lifestyle. Yes, you heard it right! We're expanding!

Addressing our growing waitlists with a brand-new neighborhood and innovative hospitality experiences!

We are reimagining our campus amenities to cater to the diverse needs of our evolving community. This includes forward-looking investments in our hospitality services, as well as potential new offerings that reflect the shifting demographics of our residents. Get ready for an unparalleled living experience!

Gratitude and Partnership

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the South Carolina United Methodist Conference for their unwavering support. Your partnership is crucial in enabling us to provide vital assistance to those in financial need, especially during these challenging times. Your generosity allows us to continue our ministry and serve those who have contributed so much to our nation. We are deeply thankful for your continued financial support.

A Blessed Community, Driven by Grace

Wesley Commons is a blessed community, thriving through both trials and triumphs. Our ability to fulfill our mission is a testament to God's grace and the unwavering dedication of our employees, residents, and the broader community. We have truly lived out our mission to enrich lives through innovative living opportunities rooted in Christian principles.

A Destination Community

Nestled on 165 acres of picturesque woodland in Greenwood, South Carolina, Wesley Commons offers the best of both worlds: the charm of small-town living with easy access to metropolitan amenities. Our residents enjoy an active lifestyle in beautiful neighborhoods, enhanced by exceptional services, gracious hospitality, and spectacular amenities of value, all delivered by a caring and attentive staff.

Beyond our vibrant active adult neighborhoods, we provide comprehensive care, including wellness programs, assisted living, skilled nursing, specialized care for Alzheimer's and dementia-related illnesses, and critical therapy and post-acute programs. Our reputation as a destination community attracts residents from across the United States.

David Buckshorn, CEO

THE BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND CAMPUS MINISTRY

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY

Claflin University provides a student-centered, liberal arts education grounded in research, experiential learning, technology, community service, and life-long personal and professional fulfillment. Claflin is a diverse and inclusive community that works to cultivate practical wisdom, judgment, knowledge, skills and character needed for globally engaged citizenship and effective leadership.

February 2025 – Claflin University selected Dr. Michelle Mayo as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Mayo joins Claflin University after serving as Associate Provost for Student Success and Dean of Undergraduate Studies at California State University – Monterey Bay (CSUMB), a Hispanic-Serving Institution known for its commitment to social mobility and academic excellence. During her tenure at CSUMB, she led the first campus-wide Student Success Retreat, secured a \$200,000 grant through the National Institute for Student Success, and played a pivotal role in expanding university-wide retention and student success initiatives.

January 2025 - Claflin University President Dwaun J. Warmack was named the Times and Democrat Person of the Year. The T&D praised President Warmack for spearheading “transformative change at Claflin University with everything from the erection of new buildings to the development of new and innovative majors of study.”

December 2024 - Claflin's H.V. Manning Library was refurbished, rebranded and transformed into a high-tech teaching and learning center. The project provides a strategic blueprint for modernizing and expanding the capacity of the central resource for academic information and research materials on college campuses.

September 2024 - Claflin University hosted its inaugural HBCU Tech Summit, promoting expanded access and investments and creating opportunities for Historically Black Colleges/Universities. President Warmack joined Congressman Ro Khanna (D-Calif, 17th District, and Dr. Jennifer Clyburn Reed, Federal Co-chair - Southeast

Crescent Regional Commission, as host of the historic event. The summit included presentations by executives from Microsoft, Google Cloud, Google, Dell Technologies, OpenAI, TalentSprint, and Apple.

August 2024 - Claflin joined Workforce Edge Network to offer employer-partner employees access to degree programs that are relevant, innovative and affordable and to learn from Claflin's world-class faculty.

April 2024 - Claflin University President Dwaun J. Warmack and Ohio Wesleyan University President Matt Vandenberg signed a "sister" school Memorandum of Agreement to establish one of the most comprehensive collaborations between a Historically Black College /University (HBCU) and a Predominantly White Institution (PWI).

March 2024 - Claflin opened a new 80,000-square-foot center for student life. The game-changing center serves both students and the wider community and includes an 800-seat ballroom (the largest in the county), a 176-seat movie theater (the only one in the county), and a rooftop patio that accommodates 350 (the largest in Orangeburg).

Objectives

- 1) **RE-IMAGINING the UNIVERSITY'S GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS** – given the speed of change in higher education, general education requirements of the past can be inadequate to meet the needs of future students. Under the leadership of Claflin's new provost, Dr. Michelle Mayo, this year, the Division of Academic affairs will consider a number of innovative curricular changes that will better prepare our students for future success.
- 2) **CENTER FOR ELEVATION AND TRANSFORMATION** – We expect to break ground on a new \$25M facility, our Innovation Center for Computer Science and Biotechnology, confirming Claflin's growing reputation as a premier liberal arts college/university and its widely heralded STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) agenda. The state-of-the-art teaching, learning, and research facility will increase the university's capacity for research in emerging bioscience areas, environmental science, and cybersecurity.
- 3) **CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE** – First established in 2020, work to fully realize the promise of the Center for Social Justice this year focuses on 1) diversity and inclusion training, 2) police education training, 3) Pathways from Prison, 4) healthcare disparities, and interdisciplinary collaboration.
- 4) **NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS** – With more than half of our students being first-generation students and nearly 75% eligible for Pell Grant support, building support for need-based scholarships continues to be a pressing priority for the University.

Support from the South Carolina United Methodist Church conference is crucial to Claflin's ability to sustain and build on its proud legacy of nurturing and cultivating future leaders for the ministry of the United Methodist Church. Furthermore, the University remains steadfast in its commitment to honor, promote, and support its affiliation with the United Methodist Church locally, nationally, and globally.

The blessings of this past year have been profound. From the comprehensive and innovative sister-school relationship we established this year with Ohio Wesleyan University to the inaugural HBCU Tech Summit to the new Center for Innovation that we will build this year – preparing the next generation of young leaders remains a humbling and awesome responsibility. Our mission is both vital and urgent. The changes within our campus and across the nation are traveling at breakneck speed. As a long-time sustaining partner with us in this work, the United Methodist Church sees, with greater clarity than most, that an institution of higher learning that is also a community with a higher calling is one that is uniquely equipped for the challenges ahead.

We are honored and humbled by the opportunity we have to walk this path, ever mindful that we are in the hands of Divine Love and Mercy, the beneficiary of care that surpasses all our understanding.

Respectfully submitted:
Dwaun J. Warmack, President
dwarmack@claflin.edu (803) 535-5412

COLUMBIA COLLEGE

Columbia College is a diverse, inclusive, and innovative learning community committed to student success and social mobility. Founded by the United Methodist Church in 1854 with historic roots in the liberal arts, the College empowers students through academic excellence, leadership development, and service, preparing them for meaningful personal and professional achievement.

- Academic Excellence: Columbia College earned recognition in U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges for 2025, highlighting its strong academic programs and commitment to quality education.
- Innovative Partnerships: The college forged impactful collaborations, including a partnership with the South Carolina Technical College System to enhance student pathways and a co-hosted South Carolina Teaching Fellows Program with Newberry College, supporting the development of future educators.
- Athletic Expansion: New athletic offerings in lacrosse and cheerleading enriched student athletic opportunities, while Jake Deer's appointment as the first men's basketball coach set the stage for a promising program.
- Global and Community Impact: Joining the Global Partners for Peace initiative showcased Columbia College's focus on global engagement and peacemaking, while the Institute for Building Resilience worked to strengthen community adaptability in challenging times.
- Opportunities and Growth: While expanding its offerings and impact, the college faces the challenge of maintaining momentum in competitive higher education while balancing the needs of students and communities.

Columbia College is focused on advancing its mission with key objectives aligned with its "On the Rise" five-year Strategic Plan with the following institutional priorities:

1. Improving the Student Experience: Enhancing student support services and expanding extracurricular opportunities will foster a vibrant campus culture. Programs emphasizing engagement, well-being, and leadership development will prepare students for success beyond graduation.
2. Modernizing Facilities and Elevating Campus Life: Strategic investments will continue to transform the campus environment. By modernizing spaces to reflect the needs of today's learners, Columbia College ensures its facilities inspire creativity, collaboration, and community building.
3. Advancing Academic Innovation: Faculty will focus on creating cutting-edge curriculum and developing new academic programs to meet the demands of a changing workforce. Professional development initiatives will further promote faculty excellence and innovative teaching.
4. Expanding Student Enrollment and Access: Targeted outreach initiatives will broaden Columbia College's reach, attracting a diverse student body while emphasizing affordability and access. Enhancements to recruitment strategies will showcase the institution's strengths and unique opportunities.
5. Strengthening Operations and Improving Financial Sustainability: Operational excellence and financial health will remain top priorities, ensuring resources are effectively allocated to support growth and innovation. This includes optimizing infrastructure, streamlining processes, and exploring new revenue opportunities.

Columbia College's "On the Rise" priorities reflect a renewed commitment to fostering student success, driving academic innovation, and securing the college's place as a leader in higher education. These goals position the institution for a dynamic half-decade of transformational growth and achievement.

Columbia College is on the rise, driven by a steadfast commitment to student success, academic innovation, and long-term sustainability. Guided by strategic priorities, we are modernizing facilities, expanding academic programs, and strengthening our financial foundation. The newly renovated College Place enriches our learning

1 and spiritual environment, while our focus on enrollment growth and faculty excellence ensures a thriving
2 future.

3 Looking ahead, we will assess our strategic priorities and form a bold, long-term vision for the college. This
4 includes identifying key academic strengths, prioritizing areas for investment, and refining our brand identity to
5 elevate Columbia College's reputation. By emphasizing programmatic excellence and distinctive strengths, we
6 will position the college as a leader in higher education.

7 Our mission remains clear: to provide students with transformative learning experiences that prepare them to
8 lead and serve with purpose. The future of Columbia College is bright—and together, we are building it.

9 John H. Dozer, President

10 **SPARTANBURG METHODIST COLLEGE**

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

15 SMC continues to develop and diversify our education offerings. SMC Online now offers a fully online Associate's
16 and Bachelor's Degree. Our faculty have approved and we now offer Bachelor's of Arts Degrees in Professional
17 Writing and Digital Communications, Sport Management, and Humanities.

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

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

21 Religious Life developed an agreement for Faith Development Organizations (religious groups from outside the
22 campus community) that ensures safety for students, collegiality among organizations, and opportunities for
23 spiritual development for students.

24 SMC's athletic program made the step to 4 – year competition with a move to the NAIA.

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

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

30 SMC has a Science building that is in dire need of updating. We are developing a plan for its renovation.

31 The Professional Development (PDEV) program will be moving into Academic Affairs, a move that will allow for
32 staffing and alignment of goals between academics and professional development.

33 The campus community is collaborating on the next steps of our strategic plan, which will address programming
34 and facilities issues for the foreseeable future.

35 **Actions – Approval of Board of Trustees**

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

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

SMC continues to be grateful for the ministry, prayers, and financial support of the South Carolina Conference of the UMC. We look forward to many more years of fruitful service to young people.

Spartanburg Methodist College (SMC) is a caring community. One of my students in a Freshman Year Experience class is a single mother. She struggles balancing the needs of her family with her job and her education. She mentioned in a response for an assignment that she was having difficulty with her dental health which was causing her great pain, as well as missing class. I was able to connect her with our wellness services who found her a low-cost dental program that was able to diagnose and treat her dental issues. This help was just in time, as her dentist said the issues would have spread to the rest of her body soon. This young person is now able to be present for class pain free, as well as be more focused on her family and work.

Rev. Timothy C. Drum, II
Chaplain and Director of Church Relations

WOFFORD COLLEGE

Wofford's mission is to provide superior liberal arts education that prepares its students for extraordinary and positive contributions to a global society. The focus of Wofford's mission is upon fostering commitment to excellence in character, performance, leadership, service to others and lifelong learning.

In 2024, leading up to the presidential election, Wofford brought speakers with a variety of perspectives to the campus and community, including former RNC chairman Michael Steele and former Democratic Senator Claire McCaskill. The college held non-partisan voter registration events and discussions about community engagement. As a result, the college was honored nationally by the All In Voter Challenge.

The college celebrated its connection to Duke University with a history lesson from Bishop Will Willimon, 1965 Wofford College graduate, dean of the Duke Chapel and Wofford trustee.

Wofford graduates continue to excel. Some examples include:

- Craig Melvin, Wofford Class of 2001, who was named co-anchor of NBC's TODAY Show.
- Lauren Mattox Curry, Wofford Class of 1997, who became the first woman in Georgia history to be appointed the governor's chief of staff.
- Chandler Compton, Wofford Class of 2020, who was named Wofford's first Fulbright Research Fellow (to India) and first Schwarzman Scholar.

The college community remains grateful that everyone remained safe and that there was minimal structural damage during Hurricane Helene. The campus looks different with the loss of about 200 trees, but students, faculty and staff rallied to clean up and support each other and those who suffered far worse in the Upstate South Carolina and Western North Carolina areas.

In the fall, we welcomed the class of 2028 with 427 new students and 23 transfer students. Enrollment remains strong with a student body of 1,821 undergraduates.

Wofford will continue to look for innovative ways to create meaningful experiential learning opportunities for our students.

The Wofford College Wesley Fellowship, under the leadership of the Revs. Megan and Brad Gray (Wofford Class of 2001), meets on campus weekly and offers a Sunday school class at Bethel United Methodist Church. The group has seen growth and has expanded its reach to include students from other campuses in Spartanburg.

Wofford College is appreciative of its ongoing relationship with Central United Methodist Church. Our Lifelong Learning program is currently housed there and involved 632 learners, including 532 members, during 2024.

The college's Emerging Leaders Initiative, a vocational discernment program for those considering some aspect of lay or clergy ministry, continued this year. A new Chaplain's Fellows program was developed and includes 10 students who lead religious life activities on campus. These programs are led by the Rev. Dr. Ron Robinson, a

1978 Wofford graduate and the Perkins-Prothro Chaplain and Professor of Religion. Students receive scholarship assistance as participants in each of these programs.

Robinson and Director of Career Services Curt McPhail (Wofford Class of 1996 received a multi-year grant from NetVUE and the Lilly Foundation to establish a Vocation Across the Academy program. More than two dozen faculty and staff are part of a cohort that is reading books about the theological exploration of vocation. Each will present an action plan for integrating vocational exploration and discernment into their work with students.

Please continue to support our state's United Methodist colleges and universities. Our students learn, grow and graduate prepared to make their families, communities and professions better. The Methodist tradition of supporting education has never been more important.

During the past academic year, Wofford distributed more than \$88 million in merit and need-based scholarships, federal and state aid, as well as outside scholarships and loans. A third of Wofford's budget goes toward scholarships and financial assistance, and more than 98% of Wofford students receive some form of financial aid. Specifically, the college's 79 United Methodist students (more than 4% of the student body) shared more than \$3.2 million in financial assistance this year (100% of the South Carolina Annual Conference's contribution goes toward financial assistance for these deserving students).

When the first students began classes at Wofford College in 1854, Main Building — fondly called “Old Main” — was the college. Now, 170 years later, every Wofford student since the college was founded through a bequest from Methodist minister Benjamin Wofford has taken classes in Main.

While Old Main still stands today in the center of college's historic and academic district, the true heart of Wofford College lies in the students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends who call this place home.

As I reflect on 2024 and another productive academic year, the people who mentored, advised, learned, explored and shaped the Wofford College experience stand out. They conducted research, interned, studied abroad, wrote grants, taught and took classes. They contributed to student success by helping students register for classes, coaching student-athletes, directing a concert, scheduling a speaker or cleaning a residence hall. They made physical and financial contributions. They engaged in the community. They led. They experienced challenge and growth ... together.

Prema and I are honored to be a part of this remarkable community, and we thank the United Methodist Church for furthering our community's important mission in the world.

Nayef H. Samhat, President

Submitted by

Jo Ann Mitchell Brasington,

Vice President for Marketing and Communications

CONFERENCE WESLEY FOUNDATIONS

CAROLINA COASTAL UNIVERSITY WESLEY FOUNDATION

The Coastal Carolina University (CCU) Wesley Foundation has experienced a year of remarkable growth, enriched community engagement, and deepened spiritual development among our students. We are excited to share the milestones and blessings of this past year.

Growth and Community Engagement

This year, CCU Wesley has continued to serve as a welcoming space for young adults aged 18-26 to explore and deepen their faith. Our weekly gatherings, Bible studies, and outreach events have fostered a strong sense of community and spiritual growth among participants.

A significant highlight this year was our participation in the Annual Wesley Collegiate Retreat at Asbury Hills. Having grown from two years ago when we attended the retreat with four students, this spring we were in awe of the movement of the Holy Spirit as twenty individuals ‘headed up the mountain’ from CCU! This retreat

offered students a meaningful opportunity to step away from their daily routines and engage in worship, fellowship, and reflection with peers from various Wesley foundations across our state. The experience was transformative, strengthening our students' faith and reinforcing our commitment to spiritual development.

Fundraising and New Initiatives

We are thrilled to announce the successful launch of our First CCU Wesley Golf Tournament. This event brought together students, alumni, local churches, and community members in support of our mission. The funds raised have been instrumental in sustaining and expanding our programs. Encouraged by this success, we plan to make the golf tournament an annual fundraising event, further engaging the community and supporting our ministry.

Leadership and Board Expansion

To support our growing ministry, we have welcomed new board members who bring valuable leadership, vision, and passion for Wesley's mission. Their insights and commitment have been instrumental in shaping the future of CCU Wesley and ensuring we have the support needed to continue impacting students for Christ.

Dedication of the New Prayer Room

This year we are blessed to have dedicated a new prayer room on campus, located upstairs in the Lib Jackson Student Union across from the Commuter Lounge. This sacred space provides students with a quiet place for prayer and reflection, enhancing their spiritual journey.

Looking Ahead

Reflecting on this past year, we are filled with gratitude for the ways God has moved through CCU Wesley. In the coming year, we plan to:

- Expand our student outreach by increasing campus presence and partnerships.
- Grow the annual golf tournament to further support our ministry and student programming.
- Strengthen discipleship opportunities through small groups, retreats, and mission projects.
- Enhance our facilities to provide more spaces like the prayer room for student use.

We are grateful for the prayers and support from our annual conference, churches, alumni, and community members who make this ministry possible. As we move forward, we ask for your continued prayers, encouragement, and involvement in helping us make disciples of Jesus Christ at Coastal Carolina University to transform the world with the love of Christ Jesus.

In Christ,

Rev. Emily L. Kirby, Director CCU Wesley Foundation

CHARLESTON WESLEY FOUNDATION

We exist to help college students navigate this pivotal season of life by: connecting them with Christ, connecting them with each other, and helping them through college.

Key Moments:

1. We have baptized two students this past school year, and we have at least 2 more projected next Fall. We also have a student desiring to join The UMC.
2. We have launched a small group, The Called, which is made up of students who are discerning a call to vocational ministry. There are currently six students.
3. We have had our most successful fundraising year since 2020!
4. We have had challenges with recruitment. Particularly, we do not have connections to Methodist students.

5. We have been invite twice now to participate in the Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International Organization at MUSC. Partnering with existing ministries at MUSC is a fruitful approach to ministering to these graduate students.

Objectives:

1. We want to continue leaning into College of Charleston and The Citadel to now our presence and service to the students.
2. We want to relaunch the Charleston Southern Group and create a more effective and efficient ministry presence there for Methodists.
3. We want to continue improving our fundraising in order to outpace changes to Conference financial support as well as create more opportunities for students to be disciple.
4. We want to create opportunities for students discerning a call to vocational ministry to visit seminaries and discuss with their peers their options for higher learning.
5. We want to connect more students to local churches and have them become members of those churches.

God is moving in the hearts and minds of students from The Citadel, MUSC, College of Charleston, Charleston Southern, Trident Technical, and the American College of the Building Arts. They are hungry for the goodness of God, and we are serving as vessels for that goodness on the campuses.

Four years ago, Kevin Lopez was not a member of a church; he was skeptical if there was a God. He didn't realize that church services could be different than Latin Mass. He did not know many things. Today, Kevin is an active member of the Wesley Foundation, a member of a local UMC (John Wesley UMC), a vital member of our Praise Team, an evangelizer to his Company at The Citadel, and an aspiring UMC Elder.

What happened in between was the grace of God working through the Charleston Wesley Foundation.

Rev. John Sterling Poole, Director

COLUMBIA WESLEY (METHODIST STUDENT NETWORK)

Rooted in The United Methodist Church's mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ, Columbia Wesley offers a welcoming home away from home. We embrace all without question, challenge each other to deepen our faith, and live out God's love through tangible acts of service to our neighbors and the world.

This year has been one of significant transitions for Columbia Wesley. We honored and celebrated the incredible 34-year tenure of Reverend Tom Wall. We welcomed a new Campus Minister, Rev. Jad Taylor. Thanks to wonderful support from the board and student leadership, Jad was able to take paternity leave during the fall semester while vital ministry continued. Over spring break, a team of 30 served in Spruce Pine, NC on a Hurricane Helene relief trip in partnership with UNC Chapel Hill Wesley, a group from Iglesia Metodista Obispo Francis Asbury in Puerto Rico, and an Emergency Response Team from Bahama, NC. This intergenerational trip offered opportunities to come alongside residents and offer physical, emotional, and spiritual support. We continued a monthly breakfast for the food insecure with Washington Street UMC, exploring ways to prioritize the dignity of guests. A student-led Queer Support Group began to create a space of spiritual support for LGBTQ+ students, the only one of its kind at USC. We expanded campus outreach, welcoming new people nearly every week in the spring. The year was filled with energy, growth, and faith-driven service.

We anticipate building a stronger small group ministry for all, especially freshmen, fostering community and faith growth. Creating more intentional opportunities for students to serve in leadership as well as discover and affirm their gifts is a top priority. We aim to renovate facilities to enhance hospitality and create a welcoming space for all. Observing increased use throughout the week, we want to ensure our space supports diverse needs. We want to explore outreach to other area colleges and universities. We plan to continue to strengthen partnerships with local churches in ways that are mutually beneficial for all involved.

Fully funding campus ministries, recognizing the vital role they play in shaping young adults, those who serve alongside them, and the church.

Columbia Wesley is deeply grateful for the South Carolina Annual Conference's support. Our ministry, shaping young adults to serve God and neighbor, relies on this partnership. We value the conference's commitment to campus ministry and celebrate our connection.

During our spring break trip, we witnessed the evolving connection between our students, UNC Chapel Hill Wesley, the folks from Iglesia Metodista Obispo Francis Asbury, and the emergency response team. Initially, groups sat separately at lunch.

But as the week progressed, they began to merge. On the final day, students pushed all tables together, sharing a meal as one community. They discussed future gatherings and digital communication, eager to maintain and strengthen their connection.

This experience exemplifies the Holy Spirit's power to unite diverse groups through shared service and faith. It highlights how our connection fosters lifelong relationships, driven by love for God and neighbor. Seeing these students, who otherwise might never have met, forge such strong ties was a testament to God at work in our midst.

Rev. Jad Taylor, Campus Minister & Director

FRANCIS MARION WESLEY FOUNDATION

Dedicated to a journey of love, we seek to deepen our devotion to God, embrace self-love, and to extend that love to our neighbors. Through faith and compassion, we aspire to build a community rooted in love.

Being a part of The Wesley Foundation at Francis Marion University offers a place of community and spiritual nurturing. In addition, it is great to see the students deepening their faith, finding purpose, and building lasting relationships. We continue to celebrate constant student involvement in our Monday night program, campus activities, fellowship meals, retreats and other campus events, and off campus activities. We are also celebrating an increasing number of students this past year, many who are freshmen.

We will continue to raise awareness of our group on campus by continuing to participate in campus events. Our group is always looking for ways to serve and help others on campus and beyond, and to welcome in new students who are in need of a faith community. There is interest in Bible journaling; we are exploring how and when to possibly implement this in our programming for interested students.

Our ministry is dedicated to showering God's love upon each of our students, and encouraging them on their faith journey. We thank all of you for your support in various ways. We truly appreciate everyone that supports the campus ministries.

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

Wesley Foundation provided me with an outlet to let go of what was happening in school and allowed me to find relief in my relationship with God. My favorite thing about the Wesley group was the weekly Monday meetings. I looked forward to Monday meetings because it gave me the opportunity to forget about school and just relax and learn something new with people who were all like-minded. This group saved me when I thought all was going wrong. I am so glad to have been a part of this group for the past two years, and I am grateful for the people it has brought into my life and for strengthening my relationship with God." — Makalya Willets, Mastic, New York

Lou Jordan, Campus Director

FURMAN WESLEY FOUNDATION

The mission of Furman Wesley Fellowship is to serve the Furman community in the United Methodist Church's values of making disciples for the transformation of the world. We seek to be "A Place to Be, Belong, Connect, and Engage" for the students, and community, of Furman.

Every year represents its own challenges and successes. As we began this year, we were excited to welcome new students, both first-years and returning. It is always enriching to meet the freshmen as they arrive with hopes and expectations. It is an honor to meet new but returning, students who still search for community. Finally, it is rewarding to have our returning students show up with a desire to greet, and journey with, all who now call Wesley home. While it is hard to compete with busy schedule and campus interruptions, we are blessed to provide space for worship, study, fellowship, and service ... both on and off campus.

We continue to be a visible presence on Furman's campus by participating in University-wide events ...

- We provided the devotion and prayer for the Furman Board of Trustees Meeting.
- We hosted our annual hospitality event, Warm Up w/ Wesley, in which we gave out coffee, hot chocolate and doughnuts to students, faculty, and staff at the beginning of December.
- We partnered with our Furman Heller Service organization in mission outreach events.
- Co-sponsored events highlighting the diverse worship experiences in our group, and church, with a Bluegrass Gospel event and a praise night with the Furman Gospel Ensemble.

In addition to our on-campus presence, we have led worship at local church events and at the state-wide Wesley Gathering held annually at Asbury Hills. There are great things happening at Furman Wesley!

Obviously, our continued priority is finding ways to stay connected to our students. Our student's lives are busy and they get pulled in competing directions; Wesley provides space for acceptance and love, and rest. Other priorities and projects include:

- Finding ways to support other campus organizations. We are partnering with our Office of International Student Engagement to assist with their work. We continue working with Heller Service Corp, providing mission opportunities both on and off campus.
- Finding ways to connect with all our wonderful students at Furman. We have a diverse campus, and it is important for us to live into the whole of United Methodism. This is happening with events like our FUGE [Gospel Ensemble] Praise Night.
- Finding ways to continue leadership development and vocational discernment. It is our desire to help all our students identify their gifts and discover the ways God can use them for the kingdom.
- Finding ways to provide a sustainable ministry at Furman University. We are blessed with gracious supporters for our ministry. However, we recognize the importance of being proactive in the ever-changing environment of the UMC and the world in which we live. Our Wesley Board is continually looking at ways to remain a healthy and vibrant ministry.
- Finding ways to engage the larger Greenville and UMC communities. We recognize the connectional nature of our church, and honestly our world, and desire to reach beyond the walls to give back to the people who are so gracious in supporting our ministry.

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

"Simply put, Wesley Fellowship is a collection of the coolest, most awesome individuals at Furman University. In more elegant terms, however, I would say that the Wesley Fellowship provides a great environment both for

1 first-year students and for upperclassmen. Meeting and becoming friends with people who are willing to share
2 their faith and help me strengthen my own has been an amazing experience for me, and I would not have met
3 any of these wonderful people if not for the Wesley Fellowship. Freshman group has been great for acclimating
4 to life at Furman, making friends across year groups, and learning about our faith. It is great to have people to sit
5 with at lunch and in the Trone Student Center on Thursday afternoons. Thanks to Wesley, I have been able to
6 make great friends with great people. The retreats and time spent with other Wesley fellows has done much to
7 make me feel like part of a community and enhance my Furman experience.” [Noah Bridgers, Columbia, SC]

8 Rev. Edward L. McCutcheon
9 Director and Campus Minister

10 **WESLEY OF ORANGEBURG**

11 To create a space where students can discover and live out their purpose through worship and fellowship with a
12 community that accepts them just as they are. And to help them grow deeper in their faith through discipleship
13 and service to the community and world through outreach and witness.

- 14 • Students of D.R.E.A.M. providing music for SCMYP during Revolution
- 15 • Students continue to support the Granville Hicks Academy
- 16 • Students participated in Exploration 2024
- 17 • Power Hour for Claflin University

18 **Objectives**

- 19 • Continue to bring awareness of ministry opportunities at The W.O.O. to Claflin University and South
20 Carolina State University students.
- 21 • Leadership development retreat for Student Bible Study Group
- 22 • D.R.E.A.M. one-day retreat
- 23 • Support the organization of the Student Christian Association
- 24 • No action for this Annual Conference

25 The students are excited about serving God and establishing ministry opportunities for all students.

26 The Wesley of Orangeburg is excited about student involvement and their desire to create a long-lasting
27 ministry. As we develop ministry programs, leadership development is our focus this year. We will continue to
28 bring awareness of the ministry of the W.O.O. to African American churches through the conference.

29 Shirley P. Gordon
30 Director/Campus Minister

31 **WINTHROP WESLEY FOUNDATION**

32 The Winthrop Wesley Foundation serves as a ministry to and with students at Winthrop University, York
33 Technical College, and Clinton College. We are committed to openness, authenticity, and community-building.

- 34 1. In the 2024-25 school year, regular student attendance has more than tripled, from an average of 2-4
35 students per event to an average of 12 students per event. We have 25 students who regularly attend at
36 least one event a month.
- 37 2. In August 2024 and February 2025, students from Winthrop Wesley served dinner, and in February
38 prepared dinner at Bethel Shelters in Rock Hill. We served about 75 unhoused men in August and about
39 90 unhoused men in February.
- 40 3. In September 2024, when Hurricane Helene made it impossible for a student to hold their junior
41 composition recital (a requirement of their major), the Winthrop Wesley community came together to

1 host this recital at the Wesley Foundation. Students and board members acquired as many battery
2 operated lights and fans as we could find, and students retrieved nearly a dozen instruments required for
3 the recital. With less than 12 hours' notice, our community hosted a full recital for this student.

4 4. This year, two of our students expressed an interest in attending seminary.

5 Objectives

6 **WORSHIP:** Winthrop Wesley students have expressed interest and excitement in hosting our own worship
7 service, which has not been a regular part of this ministry for several years. We are planning to add a weekly
8 worship service in addition to our regular weekly events of dinner, Bible study, and movie nights.

9 **SMALL GROUPS:** With our current numbers, which are continuing to increase each semester, we are planning to
10 incorporate student-led small groups to help foster leadership and community among the students.

11 **REPAIRS:** The Wesley House, which houses up to 5 students (who are also part of student leadership), is in need
12 of attention. Deferred maintenance has resulted in needs for mold remediation, improvements to the
13 ventilation system, electrical repairs, and more.

14 We are in our thriving era! We have tripled our numbers, and we continue to see new faces every month. The
15 students of Winthrop Wesley are in our building every day of the week, because it is a safe space for them to
16 make friends, to be creative (I keep the craft shelves stocked!), to grow spiritually, and to be themselves. These
17 students are also taking our mission outside of our building by showing up for one another's big
18 accomplishments (performances, art shows, etc.), getting involved with local churches, and serving local
19 community organizations.

20 Now is the time to reinvest our time, treasure, and talents in campus ministry and support the young people
21 who are not just the future, but who are also the present church. They are here to love and be loved, and I pray
22 we can love them well.

23 Within our Wesley Foundations, I have found that students are fostering that classic church family mentality
24 that so many of us long for in our churches. At our Valentine's Day party, one student handed me a Valentine
25 and said, "Make sure you read what it says!" She wrote, "Thank you for helping me reconnect with my faith." A
26 student who graduated at semester saw our Wesley crew after commencement, and he shouted, "Mom!! This is
27 Laurel and my friends from Wesley!" Another student said in a testimonial, "Being at Wesley has been one of
28 the best decisions of my life. I have finally found a Christian community that accepts my sexuality and loves me
29 for who I am. Huge thanks to Reverend Laurel for being such a fantastic minister! I wouldn't trade Wesley for
30 the world."

31 A key part of the Winthrop Wesley Foundation is our weekly dinners, which are completely free for students.
32 These dinners are hosted by local churches and groups, whom I wish to thank (as of March 2024): Woodland
33 UMC (Awakening Class, Serendipity Class, UMM, and UWF), Cornerstone UMC (UWF), Belair UMC, St. John's
34 UMC (Rock Hill), New Hope UMC, Mt. Olive UMC, Wesley UMC, Bethel UMC (Rock Hill), The Circuit, Aldersgate
35 UMC, Camp Chestnut Ridge (North Carolina UMC), and the Winthrop Wesley Board. Your partnership in this
36 ministry is invaluable!

37 Rev. Laurel Capesius
38 Director and Campus Minister