



# THE CONNECTION

June 25, 2023

## Confronting Change in Our SC UMC

### *A Report from the SC UMC Annual Conference*

by Sam Waldrep

*with contributions from the WSUMC delegation*

**M**ore than 2,000 South Carolina United Methodists gathered in Florence on June 4-7 for the denomination's 52nd Annual Conference. Washington Street UMC was represented by its two clergy, Rev. Becky Shirley and Rev. Alston Lippert, and five lay delegates: Debra and Ben Schooler, Carol Fowler, Sarah-Kate Gravelly, and Sam Waldrep.

South Carolina Bishop Jonathan Holston presided over the four days, and highlights included 22 ministerial ordinations, 38 ministerial retirements, 49 clergy/spouses memorialized, and 31 new local pastors authorized for licensing. A \$13.2 million dollar budget was approved, and ministerial appointments were fixed for the next twelve months.

#### **Two Resolutions on Key Social Issues Approved**

Two resolutions were approved by the assembly. The first was a resolution to unequivocally oppose the death penalty. It passed without any amendments or debate. The second concerned gun violence and sparked considerable debate. Two controversial aspects were proposed as amendments to the comprehensive resolution: 1) deleting the language opposing the militarization of police and 2) striking the language opposing a ban on large-capacity automatic weapons. The resolution passed with the first amendment accepted and the second one failing.

In her report to the congregation on June 11, Carol quipped, "There were only a couple of close votes during the Conference, which was fortunate because the attempt to use electronic voting (on mobile devices) failed miserably. So much for technology!"

#### **113 Churches Separate from the SC UMC**

The defining—and historically significant—aspect of this Annual Conference was the separation of 113 local churches from the UMC. Our Conference had previously approved a prescribed discernment process for churches to follow if they believed that the UMC had not abided by its human sexuality doctrine, which is "homosexuality is not compatible with Christian teaching." These 113 comprised 12% of the local

churches in our state and were from all 12 districts, but a disproportionate number was from the Pee Dee.

The names of these churches and the detailed resolution were released just two hours before the actual vote to the voting members. This information had remained confidential until this time. The names of the 113 churches were read along with a prayer from Bishop Holston before and after the affirming vote. "There was no debate on this action, but a number of people made statements that brought out the genuine sadness in the room. Our hearts were heavy as the names of the churches were read," Carol reported

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In her guest commentary in the July *Advocate*, Sarah-Kate wrote: "During this year's Annual Conference, the SC Reconciling Ministries Network put forth four resolutions in front of delegates with the hope of open conversation between delegates. The resolutions were calling for the support of the leadership of the UMC for a restructuring of the Conference to provide less biased voting, for the affirmation of LGBTQ+ people, and for the Conference's support in removing the harmful language against LGBTQ+ individuals within the *Book of Discipline*." Bishop Holston ruled that the resolutions were

*"As we continue to join our hearts and minds together in partnership with God, there is no doubt in my mind that WSUMC will be a model for others of what it means to be church—a hopeful, joyful, loving, and just community, committed to nothing less than changing the world for the better."—Rev. Becky Shirley*

ruled out of order based on a technicality with standing rules and were therefore not considered by the assembly. That action left many frustrated. “There is still work to be done on the resolutions we were not able to discuss,” Ben said.

“It’s possible that some of these [113] churches found the Wesleyan tradition incompatible with their own beliefs, but the overwhelming reason for their decision to leave was the possibility of inclusion. The conversation, or lack thereof, around equality for LGBTQ+ individuals in the UMC appeared to be the deciding factor for their exit,” Sarah-Kate wrote in her commentary.

### Opportunities for Worship and Fellowship

One feature of this year’s Conference was the addition of more worship opportunities throughout the day—from early morning to evening. The themes of the messages helped attendees cope with the unusual feeling of stress and sadness. “The young pastors who preached during our times of worship provided us with hope for the future with their inspirational messages and enthusiasm,” Debra said.

This was also the first in-person Annual Conference since 2019 due to the pandemic, and this sense of normalcy was especially uplifting as we were able to greet old friends. “Our delegation appreciated spending time with each other and with our pastors. We were happy to see many of our former ministers, too,” Carol said.

### Looking Ahead to the Future

Themes of reuniting, hope, renewal, and rebuilding were common among those who addressed the delegation, especially after the disaffiliation of the churches. As we look to the next General Conference—April 23 to May 3, 2024 in Charlotte, NC—we wonder what is in store as the delegates consider possible changes to our *Book of Discipline*. In her June 11th sermon, Rev. Alston told the congregation: “I hope that at the

next General Conference we can make the changes necessary to be fully inclusive of everyone. None of us knows what the future holds, and this uncertainty creates anxiety. While the future shape of the UMC is unknown, we know who holds the future, which is reason for hope and optimism... [Jesus] demonstrated what God cares about, which is lifting up the downtrodden, including the outcast, and valuing the marginalized. Consequently, I am sure that when we faithfully follow the Lord, God will lead us to a more loving, inclusive future.”

The final action at Annual Conference each year is known as the “fixing” of ministerial appointments. As part of that action, it was officially announced that Rev. Becky and Rev. Alston are reappointed to serve this congregation.

In reflecting on this year’s Annual Conference, and anticipating the possible outcomes of the 2024 General conference, Rev. Becky stated: “I feel extremely blessed to be reappointed to WSUMC. I am incredibly proud of this congregation and the prayerful work you have invested and continue to invest in making sure that we continue to be a community that:

- Emphasizes God’s grace;
- Serves the needs of others;
- Practices a theology based on scripture, experience, tradition, and reason; and
- Welcomes, affirms, and includes everyone.

So, while there is uncertainty about the outcome of the General Conference, I celebrate the reality that at WSUMC there is a lot of prayerful and creative thinking taking place and giving birth to a number of exciting new ministries. As we continue to join our hearts and minds together in partnership with God, there is no doubt in my mind that WSUMC will be a model for others of what it means to be a church—a hopeful, joyful, loving, and just community, committed to nothing less than changing the world for the better.”

**Sing-Along  
Messiah**

**Monday, December 11, 2023**  
**7:00 pm**  
**Sanctuary**



**wsmethodist.org/sam**  
**NOW SEEKING DONATIONS!**



**UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DR. LILLIAN QUACKENBUSH**



# Salkehatchie 2023

by Sarah-Kate Gravely

This year, Washington Street UMC took 19 individuals to Salkehatchie Penn Center. The Salkehatchie Penn Center camp had been closed for two years along with several other Salkehatchie camps because of the pandemic. A few of the volunteers had previously been to Salkehatchie before, but almost all the young people were brand new to the experience.

If you haven't been to Salkehatchie, the entire camp is split into groups so that each home site gets at least 10-13 people working on each house. Throughout the week everyone wakes up early and works on their home site, then breaks for lunch, typically at a supporting church. Work continues until dinner. After dinner, the camp has a program with games or other activities.

This year there were 63 total in attendance and we split up to work on five different houses on St. Helena Island. Two of the houses needed new roofs, and all five houses needed new sheetrock, lots of trash removal and clean up, patches replaced in the ceilings and floors, and general updates in livability for the homeowners. None of the homeowners have trash pick up so the dumpsters provided to each homesite helped to clear things like broken toilets and flooring from the homes.

The young people were able to learn new skills such as cutting drywall, and pulling up and laying shingles. Some young people worked with power tools for the first time ever.

Asher Zhong was excited to share how he learned

to rewire a ceiling fan and spray popcorn ceiling. Elijah Hughes learned how to lay flooring and carpet, and Thompson Adams said he "learned that you have to make sure your decking boards are level over and over again while building." McCullough Adams was excited to be working on one of the hardest home projects because she said that seeing the progress at the end made her feel accomplished.



Above: the Penn Center crew; right: Beth Robinson and a member of one of the families being helped. Far right: Dane Waund supervises roof repair.

Even though the students were the ones getting sweaty and dirty, it can't be understated how much work Susan Caskey, and Beth and Marshall Robinson put into the week as well. The Caskey/Robinson Family started thinking about Salkehatchie last year. From their efforts to choose the houses and connect with the churches, to their management of the camp and energy for the kids, they did a fantastic job! Susan and Beth took over as Director and Assistant Director when the original Penn Center Director, Rev. Steve Brown, had a serious medical emergency the day before camp started. Marshall ran the kitchen and planned fantastic meals for all 63 hungry people with enough for seconds.

Overall, the work that the young people and adults completed this summer was life-changing. We all learned new skills and had experiences that we can take with us forever. It was also life-changing for the five families who now have a safe, warm, and dry home. Thank you to all of those who prayed for us while we were there. Please continue to keep Rev. Steve Brown in your prayers as he recovers and be sure to check out our Facebook page at [facebook.com/washingtonstreetumc](https://facebook.com/washingtonstreetumc) for more pictures of our Salkehatchie experience.

## WSUMC Mission Team Hard at Work at Texas/Mexico Border

The WSUMC Mission Team is currently in McAllen, TX at the border of Rio Bravo, Mexico. The team includes Mackin Wall, Tom Wall, Patricio Aravena, Kay Garren, MJ Fox, John Evans, Mary Edmonds, John Pannell, and Abby Kiesow. We will have a wrap-up article in the next issue of *The Connection*.



**VBS: July 10-14, 2023**

**STELLAR**  
SHINE JESUS' LIGHT

**Washington Street UMC | Threatt Hall**  
**9 AM to 12 PM**

"Jesus...said,  
'I am the light of the world.'"  
(John 8:12)

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER  
OR VISIT WSMETHODIST.ORG/VBS**



## PRAY FOR OUR VBS

Dear God, thank you for going before us as we prepare for VBS. Help us meet any supply need, decorations, and volunteers we may have. Provide the opportunity for families far and wide to attend VBS. Thank you for the opportunity to pour into the lives of these kids in deep and meaningful ways. We pray that above all else you are glorified in our VBS.

# Welcome Table Breakfast Serves Over 90 Individuals



On Saturday, June 17, the Welcome Table Ministry team held a breakfast for those with food insecurities in Threath Hall. Guests were served a large breakfast of scrambled eggs, grits, bacon, pancakes, muffins, juice, coffee, and waters. Along with the breakfast, the team distributed socks, hygiene products, and haircuts. The guests were also treated to the musical talents of Jim Tuell. Thank you, Jim!

We want to say a special thank you to Heyward Street Methodist and their team for not only volunteering, but taking some wonderful photos, donating orange juice, haircuts, and 10 dozen eggs to the event! Rev. Tammy Blom has been a tremendous supporter of this event for a number of years. We appreciate her and her team. You can see more images on our Facebook page at [facebook.com/washingtonstreetumc](https://www.facebook.com/washingtonstreetumc).



Above: guests enjoy their breakfast and music from Jim Tuell; Volunteers serving up breakfast; Below left: Pastor Tammy Blom from Heyward St. UMC welcomes our guests in the parking lot.; below right: guests receive haircuts from Ara-Viktoria McKinney-Bookman (The Ara-V Project). Ara-Viktoria is the music leader at Heyward St. UMC, and teaches chorus in middle school.





# Church Council Updates

Members of the church council met via zoom on Tuesday, June 20th. Here are some of the highlights from that meeting:

- **The Finance Committee:** Joe Epting, chairperson of the committee, shared a new budget summary format with the council which showed a proposed budget of \$866,231 for this year. The council members unanimously approved the proposed budget. Members also expressed appreciation to the committee for the work they've done on the new reporting format, which they believe will assist teams and committees in preparing their budget request moving forward. Copies of the budget summary as well as full detail reports are available in the church office. Please contact Robbie Douglas to request a copy or for more details. ([rdouglas@wsmethodist.org](mailto:rdouglas@wsmethodist.org))

- **The History and Archives Team** presented a document detailing several new procedures that were approved by Council. The procedures include a formalized process for accepting and cataloging new donations and guidelines governing the removal or change of location for historically significant furnishings and related items. A copy of the this new procedural document is available upon request by contacting Mike Broome, WSUMC historian, at [smkbroome@aol.com](mailto:smkbroome@aol.com).

- **The Reconciling Next Team (RNT)** continues to host a monthly Friday Unwind in partnership with Reformation Lutheran Church and encourages WSUMC members to invite those who they think would be interested in attending no matter where they attend church or especially if they do not attend a church. Friday Unwind is an informal time of fellowship and conversation held at a local coffee shop. Time and location details for each gathering are published in *The Connection* and in our E-blast each month,

RNT is also hosting a Summer Pride book discussion series. The first of three book discussions will be held on Sunday, June 25th at 3:00 pm in the Wesley Room and on Zoom. The event will include a panel of three persons, (Sophie Farthing, Wayne Hall, and Jim Lane), sharing their stories of estrangement and return. Light refreshments will be served and everyone is invited to attend. Please email Jim Lane at [jlane@columbiasc.edu](mailto:jlane@columbiasc.edu) for a link to join via Zoom.

- **The Trustees** have been busy giving several spaces a facelift. The downstairs restrooms have new doors and better lighting; the Youth Room kitchen has been redone, as well as the women's bathrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors. Plans are in the works for some new landscaping, and the Sign Committee is pricing options for a new sign on the Bull Street corner. Stay tuned for more updates.

- **Communications and Technology Team** has developed a new form designed to help us coordinate and publicize church events and meetings more effectively. This new form is to be used by church members, classes, committees and teams whenever space at the church is needed for a meeting or event. A fillable online copy of the form is available on the church website at [wsmethodist.org/facilities](http://wsmethodist.org/facilities). Paper copies of the form are available in the church office. To request a paper copy, email Jammie Watters at [jammie@wsmethodist.org](mailto:jammie@wsmethodist.org), or Jane Peterson at [jane@wsmethodist.org](mailto:jane@wsmethodist.org).

## RECONCILING NEXT'S SUMMER PRIDE STUDIES

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 2023

3:30-5:30 pm

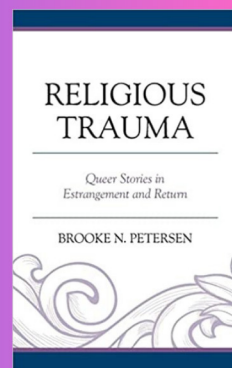
Wesley Room & Zoom

*Religious Trauma: Queer Stories in  
Estrangement and Return\**

by Brooke N. Petersen

Facilitator: Jim Lane

*Small panel format with breakout discussion  
groups.*



## Gifts (as of 6-21-23)

IN MEMORY OF RICK ROWE

to WSUMC

Given by Sally Mings

IN HONOR OF ALSTON LIPPERT

to the Music Ministry

Given by Bill Westerkam

IN MEMORY OF DEBBY JOYNER

to WSUMC

Given by Charlotte &  
Mike Broome

IN MEMORY OF

ANDREW MARTIN

to WSUMC

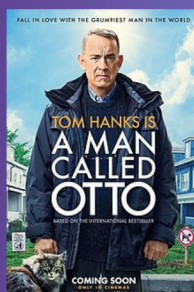
Given by Charlotte &  
Mike Broome

IN HONOR OF  
MG (RET) JEFF & LYSSA COLT

to the Soup Cellar

Given by  
Robin & David Anderson

6/26



7/24



8/28



## WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

A SUMMER MOVIE  
DISCUSSION SERIES

JOIN US IN PERSON OR ON ZOOM  
7:00 PM-8:00 PM | WESLEY ROOM

SIGN UP ON REALM OR EMAIL  
CHRISTINE@WSMETHODIST.ORG



# JULY BIRTHDAYS

- |  |  |  |   |                                  |
|--|--|--|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>July 1</b><br>Alston Lippert<br>Michele Owen                                | <b>July 5</b><br>Gayle Aycock<br>Jenny Dalrymple | <b>July 15</b><br>Beverly McClanahan             | <b>July 20</b><br>Mary Ann Betenbaugh<br>Judy Harrelson | <b>July 26</b><br>Paula Walters  |
| <b>July 2</b><br>Rosemary Aravena<br>Tracy Powers<br>Ellis Rowe<br>Mackin Wall | <b>July 6</b><br>Anne Sinclair                   | <b>July 16</b><br>Madelyn Geddes                 | <b>July 22</b><br>Sam Waldrep                           | <b>July 29</b><br>Leila Jackson  |
| <b>July 3</b><br>Judy Bailey   | <b>July 7</b><br>Jay Parmley                     | <b>July 17</b><br>Steven Brown<br>Michael Oehler | <b>July 23</b><br>Mary Lide                             | <b>July 30</b><br>David Williams |
|  | <b>July 8</b><br>Candace Cain                    | <b>July 18</b><br>Heidi Ankeny                   | <b>July 24</b><br>Jackson Price                         | <b>July 31</b><br>Robert Bowers  |
|  | <b>July 13</b><br>Carol Krebs<br>Eva Nance       | <b>July 19</b><br>Sue Dillon<br>Mack Ouzts       | <b>July 25</b><br>Ray Cobb<br>Hannah Marcel             |                                  |

## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Subject to change. \*Denotes non-member event; blue type indicates WSUMC event or meeting. Please contact Jammie Watters at jammie@wsmethodist.org to schedule an event.

### MONDAY | JUNE 26

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

**7:00- 8:00 pm | Who is My Neighbor? A Summer Movie Discussion (registration required) | Wesley Room & Zoom**

### TUESDAY | JUNE 27

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

**5:00-6:00 pm | RJAT Meeting | Zoom**  
6:30-8:00 pm | Private Group Meeting | Room varies\*

### WEDNESDAY | JUNE 28

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

### THURSDAY | JUNE 29

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

**7:00-8:00 pm | Psalms in the Summer with Isaac & Christine Taylor | Zoom (registration required)**

### FRIDAY | JUNE 30

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

### SATURDAY | JULY 1

10:00 am-3:00 pm | Limitless Fun Day | Threath Hall\*

### SUNDAY | JULY 2

**9:45-10:45 am | Sunday School Hymn Sing | Christ Chapel**  
**11:00 am-12:00 pm | Worship Service | Sanctuary & livestream**

### MONDAY | JULY 3

1:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

**THE WSUMC OFFICES AND CDC WILL BE CLOSED ON JULY 4.**

### WEDNESDAY | JULY 5

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

### THURSDAY | JULY 6

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

**7:00-8:00 pm | Psalms in the Summer (registration required) | Zoom**

### FRIDAY | JULY 7

11:30 am-12:30 pm | Soup Cellar  
Serving | Soup Cellar  
1:30-2:30 pm | NA Meeting | Soup Cellar\*

### SUNDAY | JULY 9

**11:00 am-12:00 pm | Worship Service | Sanctuary & livestream**

FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE CALENDAR, CHECK OUT THE REALM CALENDAR



### STEWARDSHIP REPORT

**As of 6-22-23**

#### **General Budget: \$866,231**

Church \$319,947  
Soup Cellar \$40,599  
Foundation \$950



#### **ATTENDANCE (as of 6-22-23)**

June 18: 161 (in-person); 102 (online) = 263  
June 11: 132 (in-person); 235 (online) = 367  
June 4: 153 (in-person); 180 (online) = 333  
May 28: 126 (in-person); 162 (online) = 288

## Prayer List

Betsy Alexander  
Karen Basso  
Martha Boynton  
David Byrum  
Mickey Epting  
Pat Griffin  
Rev. Paul Harmon  
Karen Horne  
Lisa Johnson

Jean Kanes  
Martha Helen King  
Paul McClanahan  
Sharon McCullough  
David Middleton  
Shawn Powers  
Genie & Ron Quinn  
Nancy Williams  
Our homebound