



Notes from SC UMC Annual Conference



WSUMC delegates and clergy attending the Conference pictured left to right: Carol Fowler, Rev. Jim Tuell, Ben Schooler, Debra Schooler, Sam Waldrep, Rev. Becky Shirley, Dr. Catherine Nance, Licia Jackson and Grant Jackson, Sr. (Not pictured: Rev. Alston Lippert, Rev. Kathy James, Rev. Adrienne Fink and Rev. Joel Jones)

The SC United Methodist Church's Annual Conference, held June 9 – 12 in Greenville, began with a powerful worship service celebrating the commissioning and ordination of 16 clergypersons and honoring 36 retirees. During the action-packed conference, new officers were elected for conference related institutions, boards and agencies, an \$11.7 million budget for 2025 was approved, and 17 persons were licensed to serve as local pastors. As local church missions and ministries were celebrated, two newly ordained elders and a new associate member gave encouraging and faith filled sermons during the morning worship services.

Throughout the conference, the atmosphere was one of care, concern, and compassion, even as delegates voted to allow 112 of the 836 churches across the state to leave the UMC honoring the fact that while we are not all of one mind on many things, we share a commitment to faith

in Jesus Christ. As a sign of compassion and care, delegates voted to forgive approximately \$3.3 million in debt owed by congregations who are committed to the UMC but are facing financial hardship.

Bishop Holston announced clergy appointments, including the reappointment of: The Rev. Becky Shirley as WSUMC's Senior Pastor for a 4th year, The Rev. Alston Lippert as WSUMC's Associate Pastor of Nurture for an 8th year and the official appointment of The Rev. Kathy James as WSUMC's Associate Minister of Discipleship.

Dr. Catherine Nance coordinated the music for each of the worship services including the memorial service remembering the 61 clergy and clergy spouses who passed since last year's conference. Sam Waldrep, in addition to serving as one of WSUMC's 6 lay delegates, shared his artistry with floral and altar arrangements throughout the conference.



Welcome Rev. Kathy!

Washington Street appointed Rev. Kathy James as Associate Minister of Discipleship, on May 15. She oversees age-level ministries and adult educational programs. Previously, Rev. James directed church relations at Epworth Children's

Home and SC Annual Conference's Connectional Ministries. With 30 years' experience, she holds a B.A. from University of South Carolina and an M.Div. from Candler School of Theology. Married to Rev. Joseph James, they have three adult sons. For details, visit wsmethodist.org.



Connections

1401 Washington Street
Columbia, SC 29201
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Christ Chapel Courtyard: Leave your legacy.

Janet Cotter's connection to Washington Street began during her years at Columbia College. After marrying Arlen Cotter, a lifelong member of WSUMC, in 1957, she became an integral part of the church community. Inspired by her vision of revitalizing the neglected courtyard, Janet proposed a brick naming plan to fund the transformation.

With approval from the church's Board of Trustees in 1996, the "Christ Chapel Courtyard" project gained momentum. Janet chaired the committee formed in June 1997. Today, the committee continues its work with members like Janet Cotter, Jamie Gerald, Alisa Liggett, Pam Jenkins, David Williams, Hal Hanlin, and Beverly and Paul McClanahan.

The committee, aided by landscape professionals and church members, selected plans for the courtyard, reminiscent of Charleston's famous Mrs. Whaley's Garden. Church member Paul McClanahan, an architect, drew the plans, and plants were carefully chosen, with significant contributions from expert gardener Beverly McClanahan.



Create a legacy. Bricks are available for purchase, priced at \$100 each, call Pam Jenkins at 803-528-5718 or Janet Cotter at 803-782-0752.

Generous donations from church members and others facilitated the project's progress, including contributions for significant additions like glass courtyard doors, lampposts, and fountains. Various items such as the eleanguas plant from John Wesley's Chapel in London, and a boxwood plant from George Washington's home, were donated in memory or honor of loved ones, enriching the courtyard's ambiance.

In 1997 work began, and in 1998, the courtyard opened officially, marked by the installation of the first bricks. Since then, the same brick mason, Mr. Ernest Washington, has continued to install bricks. Today, the courtyard stands as a testament to community dedication and historical preservation. Bricks are available for purchase again, priced at \$100 each, continuing the tradition of honoring loved ones.

As you explore our church, take a moment to appreciate the courtyard's history and the personalized bricks that adorn it, chronicled in a leather-bound notebook near the entrance doors.



Welcome McKenzie!

We are pleased to announce that as of June, McKenzie has joined the staff of the church to oversee communications. McKenzie is currently a junior majoring in Visual Communications at the University of South Carolina.

McKenzie grew up attending services here with her parents, Shawn and Tracy Powers. Outside of McKenzie's academic pursuits, she has also cultivated a photography business specializing in weddings, senior portraits, family portraits, and couples photography.

Please feel free to reach out to McKenzie at mckenzie@wsmethodist.org with any inquiries or communications needs. She looks forward to contributing to our community here at Washington Street Methodist Church.



Summer Movie Discussions

**July 22
7 PM**

Based on the story of Shirley Chisholm who made a trailblazing run for the 1972 Democratic presidential nomination after becoming the first Black woman elected to Congress.

We live in a world where some people think they are better than others. This idea leads to discrimination against people who look different than those in positions of power or authority. This grading of people contradicts God's idea of the Beloved Community where all are loved and valued equally...



Scan this QR code to register and learn more or email Alston at aflippert@wmcsc.org.

Papa Tank Theatre performing arts inclusion

Washington Street United Methodist Church proudly collaborated with Papa Tank Theatre for Inclusion for their recent production of "When the Trees Sing." Papa Tank Theatre for Inclusion is dedicated to providing young people of all abilities with opportunities in the performing arts. Their guided programs include workshops led by professional artists, culminating in live performances that showcase the talents of their diverse participants.

"When the Trees Sing" is an original production inspired by the Heartsongs poetry of Mattie J.T. Stepanek. Mattie, a renowned poet and peace ambassador, touched hearts worldwide with his profound insights despite his brief life due to Dysautonomic Mitochondrial Myopathy. His poetry, which he began writing at the age of three, reflects his belief that Heartsongs are unique gifts that express each person's purpose in life. The production interprets Mattie's poetry through music, movement, visual art, and spoken word, cele-



brating his legacy and the universal themes of peace and love that resonate in his work.

Washington Street UMC extends its gratitude to Papa Tank and the supporting organizations—Carolina Law Group, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Foundation, the Home for the Holidays Tour, the South Carolina Arts Commission, and South Carolina Humanities—for their contributions to this meaningful collaboration. *For more information about Papa Tank Theatre for Inclusion, visit their website at papatank.org.*

Sermon Series: Life Lessons from the Olympics

From July 26 through August 11 the attention of the entire world will be focused on the Games of the XXXIII Olympiad in Paris.

The scriptures are filled with Olympic terms and athletic metaphors urging us to use the commitment of an athlete to be what God would have us to be. During this fun summer series we will look at some of these passages and how ancient and modern Olympic athletes help us to apply these lessons to our journeys of faith.

Join us for an exhilarating week at our Vacation Bible School, themed "Olympics," happening July 22-25 from 9am to 12pm daily. Children ages 4-11 are invited to participate in themed activities each day, starting with "Light" on Monday, "Power" on Tuesday, "Encouragement" on Wednesday, and "Teamwork" on Thursday. We are seeking enthusiastic leaders and helpers to join our team; please call **Kathy James at (803) 256-2417 ext. 115 for more information.** Our VBS promises fun-filled mornings with snacks, games, crafts, and engaging lessons centered around the spirit of sportsmanship and teamwork.



Welcome new members!



WSUMC Ecuador Mission Trip

Members and friends of Washington Street UMC embarked on a mission trip to Ecuador from June 2-11.

The team's home base was in Otavalo, and they traveled to various communities and churches to provide service. During their time in Ecuador, the team engaged in several projects. In partnership with the Evangelical Methodist Church of Ecuador and missionary Sara Flores, the team conducted a medical clinic and pharmacy, tested and distributed reading glasses, assisted with Vacation Bible School, made home visits, participated in construction projects, and enjoyed fellowship and worship with both old friends and new acquaintances. A huge thank you goes out to everyone at WSUMC and beyond who supported this mission through prayers and financial contributions.

Sunday School Updates

Aldersgate Class:

Starting on July 14 and running through August 18th our class will begin a series of lessons based upon Rev. Adam Hamilton's book, *The Lord's Prayer*, the meaning and power of the prayer Jesus taught. The challenge is to really know the prayer, to understand and appreciate the meaning and power of its words and what we ask of God each time we pray it. Through it Jesus teaches us how to pray, and how to live as his followers. For questions, contact David Anderson, 803-318-8821; danderson@richardsonplowden.com.

Grace Class:

Join this diverse class on the 3rd floor. Topics vary weekly and include personal stories, favorite Bible passages, devotionals, and discussions on peace, justice, and much more.