

What happened at Annual Conference?

The South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church held its Annual Conference 2026 June 7-10 at the Greenville Convention Center. Here's what happened, courtesy of the *Advocate*:

Major actions and decisions

- Approved a \$9.8 million budget for 2027
- Passed a resolution supporting voting rights, democratic participation and equal representation, especially for historically marginalized communities
- Rejected (in a close vote) a resolution to increase support and resourcing of local pastors; four other resolutions were referred to committees
- Approved four changes to Standing Rules, including one keeping key metrics before the body annually
- Approved a statement of relationship with Epworth Children's Home, celebrating its 130th anniversary
- Tabled a request from the United Methodist Center Board of Trustees to explore selling the conference center; Bishop Fairley announced a task force to report on desired answers

Clergy and leadership

- Ordained, commissioned or recognized 16 clergy (4 elders, 5 provisional elders, 3 provisional deacons, 3 recognitions, 1 transfer)
- Licensed 11 new local pastors
- Honored 26 retirees, with a symbolic Passing of the Mantle
- Remembered 58 clergy and spouses who died over the past year in a memorial service
- Said farewell to three district superintendents (Terry Fleming, Steve Patterson, Cathy Mitchell) and welcomed three new ones (Megan Gray, Tiffany Knowlin-Boykin, James Friday)
- Welcomed Dr. George Ashford as director of innovation and strategy
- Announced a 2% cost-of-living increase for clergy
- Health insurance premiums will rise 13% next year

Worship and milestones

- Bishop Leonard Fairley preached the opening sermon, "Seeing the Possibilities," and closed with "What Do You See? Who Do You See?"
- Held the conference's first-ever intergenerational worship service
- Celebrated the 70th anniversary of women's ordination in the UMC and honored the late Rev. Vivian McFadden, SC's first ordained woman (1974) who passed away in May

- Recognized Bishop Robin Dease, SC's first African-American female bishop
- Reported 823 baptisms in 2025

Mission and giving

- Packed 125,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger with hundreds of volunteers
- Collected \$55,154 for Rise Against Hunger, \$13,028 for theological education funds, and \$7,655 for the seminary scholarship fund
- Wrote encouraging card for college students and camp staff

Other notes

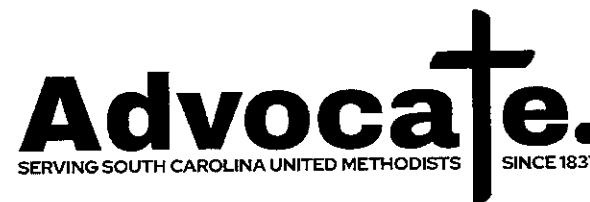
- Received a progress report on restructuring from 12 districts to 10, honoring the Florence and Greenville districts as they merge into others
- Again included high-school-age youth delegates
- Offered a "prayground" enabling children to engage in Annual Conference in age-appropriate ways
- Next year's conference: June 6-10, 2027, at the Florence Center (also the site for 2028 and 2029)

Read the full article at <https://go.advocatesc.org/ac2026>

You are invited to subscribe to the digital or print Advocate and support our work, or consider a discounted church plan. Conference support provides only one-sixth of our operating budget. Learn more at AdvocateSC.org/subscribe or scan QR code:



Download the Advocate app on Google Play or the App Store (Search "SC United Methodist Advocate")



Your source for South Carolina United Methodist news.