

# AC votes today on five constitutional amendments

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—Annual Conference members will have the chance today to vote on five constitutional amendments that passed at The United Methodist Church's General Conference 2016.

The language of the amendments cannot be altered, and the amendments will be ratified pending majority vote by the UMC's annual and central conferences across the globe. The amendments are as follows:

- Proposed Amendment I: This adds a new paragraph between current Para. 5 and 6 in the 2012 *Book of Discipline*, Division I, regarding gender justice. The General Conference-approved rationale for the amendment notes that the constitution contains a paragraph on racial justice but not one on gender justice.
- Proposed Amendment II: This changes Para. 4, Article IV, of the 2012 *Discipline*, also to modify gender equity language. The rationale notes that adding gender to the Constitution affirms and protects the UMC's commitment to gender equity throughout our worldwide connection, plus allows gender-specific groups like United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men.

• Proposed Amendment III: This attempts to fix what the rationale calls "unduly vague" language in Section VI, Para. 34, Article III, of the *Discipline*, with language about delegates to General Conference needing to be elected (not appointed). According to the rationale, the change adds clarity.

• Proposed Amendment IV: This adds language to Para. 46, Article I, of the *Discipline* about episcopal elections being held in the same manner for central conferences as in jurisdictions.

• Proposed Amendment V: This adds a new sentence to the end of Para. 50, Article VI, of the *Discipline* enabling the Council of Bishops to hold its individual members accountable for their work. According to the rationale, Judicial Decision 475 ruled unconstitutional the Council of Bishops holding its individual members accountable for their work, referencing Para. 50, so this legislation follows the Judicial Decision 1275 requirement of a legislative resolution from General Conference so the Council of Bishops may provide such oversight.

The constitutional amendments are available to read in full in conference materials and online at [ac2017.umcsc.org](http://ac2017.umcsc.org).



Photo by Allison Trussell

## Connecting the church

The Rev. Ross Chellis, convener of Connectional Ministries, and the Rev. Kathy James, director of Connectional Ministries, introduce a report Monday that lifted up the outreach, advocacy, discipleship, lay leadership and other work performed by United Methodist churches and individuals across the state, from disaster response to campus ministries to Imagine No Malaria to the Ghana Technology Project.



## Memorial service today to honor 36

Thirty-six clergy, spouses, surviving spouses and others will be remembered today in a memorial service preached by the Rev. John Hipp, Florence District superintendent. Hipp will preach on "Extravagant Love." Here, a memorial vase at last year's Annual Conference honored the saints departed.

Photo by Allison Trussell



# DAILY ADVOCATE

A joint publication of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church and

South Carolina  
United Methodist Advocate  
CONNECTING METHODISTS IN SOUTH CAROLINA SINCE 1837

Tuesday, June 6

## Today's Agenda June 6

- 7-10:30 a.m. Health Screening
- 7:30 a.m. Holy Communion, Room 203  
Awards Breakfast, Room 202C
- 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. American Red Cross Blood Drive
- 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Kids Konference
- 8:30 a.m. Bible Study
- 9 a.m. Voting on Constitutional Amendments
- 10:45 a.m. Break
- 11 a.m. Service of Recognition for Retiring Ministers and the "Passing of the Mantle"
- 11 a.m. Ministers' Spouses Luncheon, Room 102C
- Noon 2017 Retirement Luncheon, Room 202C
- 12:15 p.m. Lunch Recess
- 12:30 p.m. Columbia College Alumnae and Friends lunch, Room 102B  
Diakonia Luncheon, Room 101A  
Hispanic/Latino Ministry Luncheon, Laurens Road UMC  
Laity Clergy Partnership Luncheon, Room 202A  
UMVIM Luncheon, Room 102A  
Extension Ministries Luncheon, Room 101B
- 2 p.m. A Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving
- 3:15 p.m. Break
- 3:30 p.m. Report of Congregational Development  
Report of Commission on Equitable Compensation  
Report of Camps and Retreat Ministries  
Report of the Conference Chancellor
- 5 p.m. Dinner Recess
- 5:30 p.m. CF&A Business Meeting, Room 101B  
Candler Club Dinner, Room 102C  
Clafin/Gammon Alumni Fellowship Dinner, Hilton Greenville  
Duke Alumni Gathering, Room 102A  
Erskine Seminary Alumni & Student Get Together, ARP Center  
Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Alumni Dinner, Room 102B  
Wesleyan Covenant Dinner, Covenant UMC, Greer
- 7:30 p.m. Worship Service Celebrating Missions
- 9 p.m. Black Methodists for Church Renewal Worship Service



Photo by Allison Trussell

Volunteers adjust a donated bike brought to the Columbia District's youth bike dropoff, held in May at Mill Creek UMC, Columbia. The bike initiative is one of three UMCSC missions being celebrated tonight.

# Celebrating missions

## Tuesday evening service to lift up UMCSC's bike, homeless and disaster response efforts

By Jessica Brodie

GREENVILLE—United Methodists will come together tonight to celebrate a variety of missions embraced by the Annual Conference, from disaster response to homes for the homeless to bikes for people in need.

The mission celebration service will lift up the hard work of the countless volunteers who donate their time, skills, prayers and dollars to help these efforts and more.

"The service will focus not so much on the impact these missions are having on the people we are serving, but rather the impact it is having on those who are in service and looking at it from that standpoint—as part of our call to faith and as part of our faith

journey," said Chris Lynch, congregational specialist who is organizing the Tuesday service along with the Rev. Wendy Hudson-Jacoby, worship leader.

South Carolina United Methodists have always been mission-focused, said Disaster Response Coordinator Matt Brodie, but this year they have gone above and beyond to help people in desperate times of need.

See "Celebrating Missions," Page 2

The hashtag for all things Annual Conference:

#umcsc

Coming tomorrow (Wednesday)

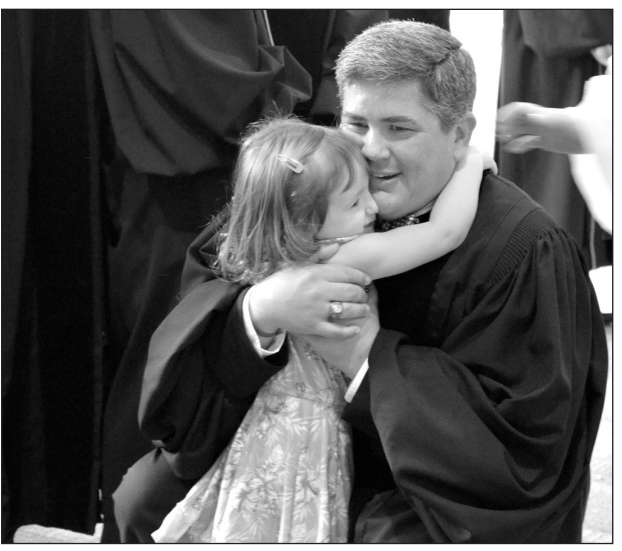
- Elections – Committee on Nominations
- Committee on Resolutions and Appeals
- Sending Forth and Fixing of Appointments



**AC2017 commissions, ordains 26**

In a service preached by Bishop Cynthia Harvey, resident bishop of the Louisiana Conference, joined by South Carolina Resident Bishop Jonathan Holston, Annual Conference commissioned or ordained 26 men and women as provisional or full elders or deacons last night. Earlier that day, Annual Conference licensed 43 as local pastors. At right, Eugene Aaron Aiken gets a hug just before his ordination as elder.

Photo by Allison Trussell



**“Celebrating Missions,” from Page 1**

The Tuesday night mission service will celebrate the three largest undertakings the conference has engaged in recently: the disaster recovery effort, as well as the two conference-wide mission opportunities for this year: the Homeless Initiative and the Youth Bike Initiative.

“Hundreds of people have been helped by South Carolina United Methodists through these three efforts, and tonight we lift up the people willing to be God’s hands and feet,” Brodie said.

Video vignettes of the three missions will be displayed onscreen, featuring testimonies and visuals of the work, and two musical acts will perform: the praise band from Advent UMC, Simpsonville, as well as Jasmine Lee, a Gospel praise and worship singer. Midway through the service, South Carolina’s Erica Oliveira will be commissioned as a missionary.

The whole evening reflects the theme of Annual Conference 2017: “We Walk By Faith, Not By Sight.” The three missions being celebrated are as follows:

**The Homeless Initiative:** This is a partnership between the conference and Homes of Hope, an Upstate nonprofit that provides low-cost houses for homeless families in need. The homes are energy efficient and designed for a small family, which will at first rent the home at low cost and later will be able to purchase the home if they wish. The homes are built by men who have graduated from a Christ-centered program of addiction recovery in a specialized job training opportunity.

**Youth Bike Initiative:** For this effort, youth in each district were tasked with collecting 100 new and gently used bikes for people in need, plus \$1,000, for a total of 1,200 bikes and \$12,000 conference-wide. The plan was that 1,000 of the bikes would be sent to people in need across the globe through Bikes for the World, with the remainder given to those in need locally through the South Main Chapel and Mercy Center in Anderson and the Triune Mercy Center in Greenville.

South Carolina has made its goal and then some, Lynch said—as of June 2, 1,453 bikes had been collected for Bikes for the World, which sealed and shipped the third container that day, in addition to the bikes that have already been given to Triune and South Main. More than \$12,000 has been donated to cover shipping costs and more.

“It’s awesome—we’re pretty excited about it,” Lynch said.

**Disaster Response:** South Carolina was devastated in October 2015 by a massive flood that swept through the region, impacting eight of the 12 districts in the annual conference. One year later, South Carolina was swamped again, this time because of Hurricane Matthew, which made landfall on the coast. Countless United Methodist volunteers stepped up in a number of ways to help people get food, water, shelter and other assistance. In the initial aftermath, early response teams deployed to tarp roofs and muck out homes. Long-term disaster response teams stepped in next, and they continue to work hard to get people back in their homes. Many people are still displaced.

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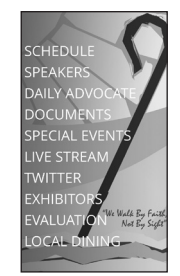
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Tuesday night’s offering will support Imagine No Malaria, which was the 2016 Annual Conference initiative.

**AC OKs new health plans for UMCSC**

By Jessica Brodie  
GREENVILLE— South Carolina United Methodist clergy and lay employees now have a bevy of health care choices on their plate thanks to a new program approved at Annual Conference yesterday.

Beginning in January 2018, the conference is switching to the HealthFlex Exchange, a private insurance exchange administered by The United Methodist Church’s Wespath. The plan features six HealthFlex medical plans, from PPO to high-deductible, plus optional dental and vision plans.

David Anderson, conference pension and health benefits officer, said rising health costs necessitated a change, but the conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits didn’t want to just do away with conference plans and send participants to the state or federal marketplace. The HealthFlex Exchange is “the best fit for our conference,” Anderson said.

“We believe it offers benefits to the church and conference, as well as to the participant,” he said. “We can continue to offer group coverage and not terminate the plans due to unsustainable cost. You’ll be able to

choose a plan that really fits your needs.”

The Rev. Chris Lollis, chair of the BPHB, said the extra choices will be helpful overall. “We realize insurance is not one size fits all,” Lollis said. “The board feels this is a win-win for both clergy and lay employees.”

All six of the plans feature the same health plan partners; there will be no need to change doctors, hospitals or pharmacies.

In September, there will be conference workshops and a benefit counselor available to help participants make their insurance choices. Elections will be made in November, and the new benefits go live in January.

**Seven resolutions slated for a vote Wednesday**

**Bishop: Disaffiliation resolution ‘out of order’**

By Jessica Brodie  
GREENVILLE— Annual Conference will vote on seven resolutions Wednesday—all those included in pre-conference materials with the exception of the disaffiliation resolution, which the bishop has said is out of order.

The resolutions are Resolution to Oppose Human Trafficking and Help End Suicide and Homelessness among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth; Healing from the Legacy of Lynching; Resolution Against a Muslim Ban; Resolution Against the Dakota Access Pipeline, in Solidarity with Standing Rock; Resolution Supporting, Recognizing and Honoring the Services of Law Enforcement Officers; Resolution: A Formal Apology from Trinity UMC to Centenary UMC; and Welcoming the Migrant in our Midst.

The Rev. Steve Simoneaux gave the report of the Committee on Resolutions and Appeals Monday, noting that with the human trafficking resolution, many of the signer names had to be struck in order to make the resolution compliant with Standing Rule 71. Other than that, the resolution has been properly submitted.

However, regarding the disaffiliation resolution—Resolution for the Realignment of the South Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church and Its Disaffiliation from the Structures of The United Methodist Church—Bishop Jonathan Holston said that only General Conference, not annual conferences, can allow such an action, and for him to be asked to appoint such a task force violates the vows he took to uphold the church and the *Book of Discipline*.

“From my perspective, this resolution is out of order and will not be considered,” Holston said.

The Rev. Keith Sweat, pastor of the Mount Bethel-Kings Chapel Charge who submitted the disaffiliation resolution, spoke in response, noting that requesting a task force to consider the disaffiliation is not the same thing as withdrawing from the denomination.

But Holston disagreed: “The task force (would be) asking me to do something I believe is not in unity with the *Discipline*; therefore I do believe it is out of order ... and not properly before us.”

These resolutions go before the body Wednesday. Voting members of Annual Conference will have the chance to amend, pass, refer or reject the resolutions by majority vote.

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