

**SOUTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODISTS
CELEBRATE 2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AT CIVIC CENTER**

The Methodist Church first organized in South Carolina in 1785, and in 1787 held its first annual conference. For the past 220 years, the people of the Methodist movement have gathered each year in a conference to worship, plan, make decisions, and enjoy fellowship together.

This year, June 3-7, the United Methodists of South Carolina will hold their annual gathering in Florence. The Conference will begin on Sunday evening with the service of Ordination and Commissioning, as new ministers are ordained, commissioned, and licensed for the work of the church throughout South Carolina.

This is also an “election year”, as the conference will elect clergy and lay people to represent South Carolina at the General Conference of the United Methodist Church. Approximately 1,000 delegates will gather next year from around the world in Fort Worth, Texas, to set the direction of the denomination for the next four years. And later in 2008, delegates from around the Southeast will gather at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, to elect bishops.

A new element of the conference this year will be the Great Day of Service. On the afternoon of Tuesday, June 5, hundreds of United Methodists will spread out across Florence to help in nursing homes and food pantries, take on small construction projects and engage in many other kinds of service to the Florence community.

Finally, at the conclusion of the Conference on Thursday afternoon, Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor will set the appointments for the coming year. During this closing worship service, the appointments of clergy to the 1,024 United Methodist churches across South Carolina are set, and the representatives of the church then return home to work for Christ in their local setting.