

**Resolution: To Change the Geographic Boundaries of the Southeast Conference
58th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference, United Church of Christ
Final Amended Version**

Background

In 1965, after an unsuccessful attempt a year earlier and by only a 54 percent vote, the Southeast Convention decided to invite the churches of the Convention of the South and former Evangelical and Reformed churches in its territory to join. This will become the new Southeast Conference.

In 1966, the Southeast Conference, one of the last conferences to take shape in the UCC, began operation, with the Rev. Jesse Dollar serving as interim conference minister. Nine associations, only one of which is integrated, enter the Conference. The area that constituted the Southeast Conference included the Florida panhandle west of the Apalachicola River.

In 2019, the last Southeast Conference congregation located in the Florida Panhandle closed. There is one remaining congregation in this area, but it relates to the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Rationale

Separating congregations that might be located in the area of Florida that currently is part of the Southeast Conference from the other UCC congregations in Florida that make up the Florida Conference can be isolating to those potential congregations. Such things as disaster response and recovery and social justice advocacy and organizing are most frequently state-focused, including the agencies and organizations that are engaged in those responses or the sources of required action. Additionally, dividing this small section of the state of Florida out into the Southeast Conference requires staff attentiveness to such issues and concerns, as well as engagement with the entities, such as VOAD and state legislators, from two conference staff teams (the Florida Conference and the Southeast Conference), which does not promote good stewardship of either conference's resources.

Whereas, the area of the Conference currently includes the states of Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee (excluding the city of Memphis), Alabama, Mississippi (excluding the coastal area surrounding I-10), and the Florida panhandle west of the Apalachicola River, and

Whereas, the Local Churches of the Conference shall be all Local Churches that are within the boundaries of the Conference, and

Whereas, the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ has not developed nor is currently developing new congregations in the Florida Panhandle that is currently part of Southeast Conference, and

Whereas, the Southeast Conference believes that local congregations who in the future might be developed and minister in the Florida Panhandle west of the Apalachicola River would best be supported and resourced by and in covenant relationship with the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ

Therefore, be it resolved to change the geographic boundaries of the Southeast Conference, with the agreement of the Florida Conference and subject to the approval of the General Synod, so the boundaries of the Southeast Conference would include the states of Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee (excluding the city of Memphis), Alabama, and Mississippi (excluding the coastal area surrounding I-10)
This action would excise the Florida Panhandle west of the Apalachicola River from the Southeast Conference.

Passed August 17, 2024
2nd Plenary Session

Danielle Elliott

Danielle Elliott, Secretary, Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ