Dear UMCSC Archivist,

The attached file includes historical information from Lyman United Methodist Church as requested through our separation. Two factors greatly impacted our ability to collect historical documents.

First, Lyman UMC experienced a catastrophic fire on May 22, 2004. The building was deemed a total loss and the congregation was displaced for two years until the current facility was complete on March 19, 2006. The fire resulted in a loss of many (not all) historical records and other data in the life of the congregation.

Second, it appears that there have been gaps in record keeping over the past several years. We have provided different versions of membership rosters, including the secretary’s “Red Book” and a complementary membership roll in PowerChurch. Unfortunately, it appears that the church did not create a hard copy membership roll after the fire.

The files in this folder include the two digital membership records, copies of charge conference reports, copies of annual statistical tables, and a few other items of interest.

We hope these documents will be fruitful both in the present and as a research tool for future generations.

Thank you for helping preserve our history.

Grace and Peace,

Erik Grayson

Rev. Erik Grayson
Pastor, Lyman United Methodist Church
LYMAN -- Though teary-eyed at times, the Rev. Jay Hatchell took comfort in his faith even as flames devoured his church.

Lyman United Methodist was destroyed Monday by a fire that firefighters said was sparked accidentally by a worker using a blowtorch on a metal handrail of a wheelchair ramp outside the church.

As the fire blazed, Hatchell walked among the crowd that had gathered to watch, offering hugs to members of the 360-member congregation.

"We know that in the end, God's going to bless us and we're going to be stronger," Hatchell said.

One blessing was that the 35 or so preschoolers in the church's day-care facility all made it to safety unharmed, as did the eight child-care employees, the church secretary and the worker who accidentally started the fire.

Day-care workers said they evacuated the children, ages 2-5, after noticing smoke. The day care occupied the entire bottom floor of the U-shaped church.

Spartanburg County 911 operators received the first call at 9:31 a.m.

Tyger River Fire Department Chief Jim Redd said by the time his crew arrived, the children were already out of the building.

Firefighters from Duncan, Westview-Fairforest, Pelham-Batesville and Startex fire departments also responded to the blaze.

Children were taken next door to the Middle Tyger Community Center where parents came to pick them
up. Since the fire knocked out power to the MTCC, the remaining children were taken to Wellford Baptist Church.

One firefighter, Duncan Fire Department Chief Barry Frost, was injured when part of an exterior brick wall fell on him. He was taken to Spartanburg Regional Medical Center where he was treated and released.

The church had working fire alarms in the day care area and smoke detectors in other parts of the building, though it did not have a sprinkler system, Hatchell said.

The church was insured -- $1.8 million worth of coverage for the building and $370,000 for its contents, the pastor said.

The fire started in the older part of the church on the west side of the building closest to Groce Road.

A worker's blowtorch sparked a wooden wall and flames traveled up the wall into the attic, defying the worker's attempts to extinguish them, the Tyger River fire chief said.

"He got a garden hose -- he was trying to put it out. He probably didn't realize the fire had spread into the walls," Redd said.

As the fire reached the sanctuary smoke poured out of the steeple, and just before 11 a.m. the entire steeple dropped straight down through what remained of the roof.

Monday's high winds helped spread the fire through the attic, which did not have firewall partitions, Redd said.

"It (the wind) got in the gable end and just blew it like a blowtorch throughout the building," Redd said.

Modern fire codes require such partitions, Redd said, but the church was built before such requirements.

The original church building was built in 1932, with a new sanctuary added in 1957.

The loss was a crushing blow to Jerry Frady Carlisle, a lifelong church member who stood in tears as she watched the flames.

"I was baptized there and married there," Carlisle said.

Another lifelong church member, Amy Harter, expressed optimism about the church's

Harter's two daughters, Alyssa, 4, and Ansley, 16 months, were among the children evacuated when the fire began.

"It is hard, but it is just a building. We've got a real strong church family, a real close church family, so we'll make it through this," Harter said.

After the fire was largely extinguished, firefighters entered the pastor's office to pull out some framed pictures, a few boxes of files, a table and a computer hard drive.

But many of the church's archives, stored in a room near where the fire broke out, were presumed lost.

"There's a lot of memories that are gone," Hatchell said.

Susan Orr can be reached at 877-3225, 574-5980 or susan.orr@shj.com.
Lyman United Methodist groundbreaking is Sunday

DEBRA G. LESTER Staff Writer
Published 10:15 a.m. ET March 28, 2005 | Updated 11:00 p.m. ET March 27, 2005

On a day that celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Lyman United Methodist Church also will celebrate the resurrection of their church.

The church on Groce Road was destroyed by fire on March 22, 2004, when sparks from a worker's welding torch ignited a wood column, traveling up the interior of a wall into the attic, according to fire investigators.

The new $4 million church will be 30,000 square feet, about 2,000 square feet larger than the previous church. It will be on the same property, which has increased by four acres donated to the church by Springs Industries.

The church will have three major wings, including a 400-seat sanctuary, educational and administrative areas, a fellowship hall, kitchen, dining room, lobby, parlor, separate choir rehearsal room and regulation-size basketball courts. The sanctuary also will have a 40-seat choir area and a bell tower.

The 360-member congregation has been meeting at the courtroom at Lyman Town Hall, across the street from the church property, since the fire. Sunday's service will be held at 11 a.m. and the congregation will walk across the street at about 11:30 a.m. for the groundbreaking and worship service.

Debra G. Lester can be reached at 562-7264 or debra.lester@shj.com.
LYMAN -- Members of Lyman United Methodist Church will have to wait until late next year to get one thing on their Christmas lists.

Construction will begin within the next two months on a $4 million facility to be built on the site where the old church was destroyed by fire in March.

It will be the end of next year before the building is completed, said Marvin Woodson, chairman of the church's building committee.

"It was a heartbreaker to lose the other church, but we worked through it and have taken the attitude that this is an opportunity to build a bright, new building," said Woodson, a former superintendent for Spartanburg School District 5 schools. Woodson said the new church would have three major wings, including a sanctuary, educational and administrative area and a fellowship hall with a kitchen and dining area.

There will also be a new family life facility with regulation-size basketball courts, he said.

The new sanctuary is 2,000 square feet larger than the one destroyed by the fire.

It will be 30,000 square feet with a lobby area, parlor, separate choir rehearsal room and choir director's office.

There will be nearly 400 seats for the 360-member congregation as well as room for a 40-seat choir area and a bell tower.

The education wing of the church is designed for future expansion of more than 3,000 square feet, if the church continues to grow.

"We think that our new building will have much to offer the members who've been here for years as well as some of the younger ones and those looking to join," Woodson said.
The church will be built on the land where the former church, which was founded in 1928, stood on Groce Road.

But that land will include four more acres, thanks to a recent donation from nearby Springs Industries.

The March 22 fire that destroyed the building but caused no injuries started when sparks from a worker's welding torch ignited a wooden column, traveled up the interior of a wall into the church's attic, according to investigators.

The congregation has been meeting inside Lyman Town Hall since the fire, and Woodson said members are eager to get inside their new church.

So far, Woodson, who's been a member for nearly 20 years, said the church has nearly $800,000 more to raise to pay for the new facility, but he expects more donations and gifts. "We've been very fortunate that so many people have been willing to help us with this," he said.

Amanda Ridley can be reached at 877-3225, 574-5980 or amanda.ridley@shj.com.