THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

FALL 2026

Sharing & Caring

A Path Forward Starts Here

Board of Directors approve a new mission statement

By Beth H. Irick
Chief Executive Officer



At its August meeting, The Cooperative Ministry's Board of Directors approved a new organizational mission statement, updating the language for new and broader audiences while keeping the long-standing mission the same.

The new mission statement is this: *Helping our neighbors meet their needs for today and their hopes for tomorrow.*

The Cooperative Ministry's mission has not changed for 44 years. We believe everyone deserves a hopeful path forward. We meet immediate needs for today, connect families to resources, and help them build a more stable future. Services like free clothing, food, and furniture meet today's needs. In contrast, services like financial empowerment coaching, financial assistance, career improvement assistance, free tax help, and insurance coaching lay a foundation for a hopeful tomorrow.

Helping our neighbors meet their needs for today and their hopes for tomorrow.

We have also adopted a new tagline, *A Path Forward Starts Here*, for our marketing and communications. This reinforces our commitment to helping people move toward a better tomorrow.

I am appreciative of a board sub-committee that worked to create and recommend the new mission statement and tagline. Serving on the committee were Tina Clark, chair; Alexa Godwin, board chair; Stephanie Yandle, immediate past board chair; and Bill Edmonds, who is a former board chair. I, Wanda Pearson, our Chief Program Officer, and Scott Vaughan, our Director of Community Awareness, served in an advisory role.

We are rolling out the new mission statement through our signage and communications. We are excited and hope that you are, too.

We love volunteers!

The Cooperative Ministry welcomes church, business, and neighborhood groups interested in serving others through our clothing bank during business hours. For more information, please contact Scott Vaughan, Director of Community Awareness, at (803) 799-2428. Thank you!

Midlands Gives 2026

Thank you to our 2026 Match Donors

Your Gift Inspired Total Gifts of $77,147 to support our mission

We finished third among 523 participating non-profits.

Buchanan Construction Services - Blackbridge Financial - Collins & Wright - Colonial Packaging
Godwin Motors - IOA - Palmetto State Glass - Tucker Oil and The Corner Pantry - And Private Individuals

Financial Coaching Success Story

Mother, daughter improve financial stability

A Columbia mother and daughter have transformed their financial circumstances through participation in The Cooperative Ministry's Financial Empowerment Program.

The mother was living on a fixed income of $1,391.96 per month while her grown daughter relied on monthly disability benefits of $1,317 and a part-time job. Living together, the pair struggled with high rent, overdrafted accounts, and a title loan.

Working with a Financial Health Coach, their household spending plan was assessed, and they received personalized budgeting tools. The two women established a savings plan with a Columbia-area bank. In tandem with The Cooperative Ministry's other services, the women received free tax preparation assistance, free clothing, and free food. We assisted in securing more affordable housing. To make it work, the women committed to their appointments and stayed on track with their goals.



Today, the women have lowered monthly expenses through affordable housing. Better banking habits eliminated overdrafted accounts and created a $75 per month savings account. They eliminated the stressful title loan. Equipped with financial literacy, they became skilled at distinguishing needs from wants. The daughter was able to purchase a computer, opening up employment opportunities.

Their financial stability boosted their confidence and independence in managing their finances.

Car donations are needed; sales impact those we serve



The funds generated from the sale of donations to The Cooperative Ministry's Car Donation Program go directly to the General Fund, where 87 percent of expenses support program services to more than 15,000 clients. In the past decade, 598 cars have been donated, generating sales of more than $600,000. That's funding to help 700 families stay in their homes with financial coaching that often includes utility and rent payments.

Towing is free within 50 miles of Columbia. All car conditions are accepted. Weekday pickup is usually within 24 hours. A signed, clear title and keys will be picked up by the tow driver. Once the car is sold at auction, the appropriate IRS donation form is mailed to the donor.

There are three ways to begin the donation process: Call Scott Vaughan at (803) 799-2428 or visit our website (**www.coopmin.org**) and click the green **DONATE** button at the top of the page. You can also use the QR Code above to start the donation process.

The Cooperative Ministry accepts book donations



The Cooperative Ministry accepts book donations and sells them for cash to benefit our client services. Books can be donated through our clothing bank, which is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday, 9 a.m. to noon. Books should be delivered in boxes suitable for carrying by one person.

Alexa Godwin, Board Chair

Why I love The Cooperative Ministry



My relationship with The Cooperative Ministry began through my family business, Godwin Motors, and The Cooperative Ministry's Car Donation Program. As a family-owned business, we have always believed that being part of our community means more than simply doing business in it. When we learned about the opportunity to donate vehicles to The Cooperative Ministry, it felt like a natural fit.

Through the years, Godwin Motors has donated more than 15 vehicles to The Cooperative Ministry. Those vehicles sell at auction, and the proceeds go directly back into the organization's general fund, helping support the many programs and services provided to individuals and families throughout our community.

The more I learned about The Cooperative Ministry, the more I saw what makes this organization so special. It isn't simply about helping those in need. The Cooperative Ministry is special because it meets people where they are, treating them with dignity and compassion, and helping them find a sustainable economic path forward. That mission resonates deeply with me.

As a donor, volunteer, and board member, I have seen firsthand how powerful collaboration among churches, businesses, organizations, and individuals can be in touching people's lives. Someone may simply need a little help getting through a difficult season and an opportunity to take the next step toward economic stability.

That is why I love The Cooperative Ministry.

I love that this organization brings people together. I love that it focuses on dignity, not judgment. I love that it recognizes that sometimes a helping hand at just the right moment can change the direction of someone's life. And I love that our community believes in this mission enough to come together and support it. Most of all, I am grateful that Godwin Motors opened the door for me to discover an organization that has become so meaningful to me.

What began as a business partnership for my family has grown into something I am personally passionate about. Being asked to serve as Board Chair is an incredible honor, and I don't take that responsibility lightly.

Sometimes you give because you want to help someone else—and somewhere along the way, you realize just how much the experience has changed you, too.

The Cooperative Ministry's 2026-2027 Board of Directors

The Cooperative Ministry's Board of Directors is comprised of local individuals who believe in our mission to help others aim for economic self-sufficiency.

Alexa Godwin, board chair
Godwin Motors
Beau Kaneft, board vice chair
Colonial Packaging Inc.
Fred Manning, board secretary
Fisher Phillips, LLP
Mark Scriven, board treasurer
Elliott Davis, LLC
Stephanie Yandle,
Imm. past board chair
BlueCross BlueShield of SC
Elise Bidwell, CFP
Edward Jones
Davis Buchanan
Buchanan Construction Services
Rev. Wes Church
First Baptist Church, Columbia
Tina Clark
TC Squared Marketing & Advertising
Bill Edmonds
Northstar Leadership Solutions
Mike Farmer
TD Bank
Lisa Gadson
South State Bank
Jimmy Herlong
Midas Auto Service
Chief William "Skip" Holbrook
Columbia Police Department
Rob Motley
IOA
David Tucker
Corner Pantry Inc./Tucker Oil Co.
Kyle Whetstone
Palmetto State Glass

THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY
3821 WEST BELTLINE BLVD.
COLUMBIA, SC 29204

THE COOPERATIVE MINISTRY

3821 W. Beltline Blvd.
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 799-3853
Email: info@coopmin.org
Website: www.coopmin.org
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/
thecooperativeministry

Beth H. Irick, Chief Executive Officer

Scott Vaughan, Director,
Community Awareness

Serving the Midlands for 44 Years



- Free Towing within 50 miles of Columbia.
- Weekday pickup within 24 hours.
- Guidance with Title Transfer.
- Letter of Disposal for applicable tax purposes.