

#### Child of God

I'm sure you've heard the adage about knowing yourself. I certainly have, many times: "If you don't know who you are, the world will tell you." And I'll add to it, "What the world tells you won't be the truth of you and will likely have harmful effects."

The commercial world will tell you that you are a needy person, and fortunately they have the item to sell you that will meet your need. The political world will tell you that you are a victim (of something) and they are there to fix it for you. The sports world will tell you that you are what you achieve, or fail to achieve, on the sports field. You get the idea.

I've thought about that adage a good bit lately, especially with the schools starting back. I think of our students, many going into new schools, trying to figure out just who they are. That, of course, is one of the primary tasks of the teenage years, exploring abilities, interests, relationships and dreams and coming to an integrated sense of oneself.

All along that journey, "the world" (friends, teachers, parents, coaches, social media, etc.) will be trying to tell them who they are, or who they need to be. It can be overwhelming.

I remember someone saying once that when a toddler is learning to walk, we smile and chuckle at the child's efforts and many falls. We continue to encourage the little one: "You can do it!" we say. But then, with our teenagers, as they try to learn to "walk" the maze of identity (and emotions and relationships), instead of smiling at their stumbles and encouraging them along, we say, "You should know better." Or "Why can't you get it right!" or, "What were you thinking?"

This is one reason the church's voice is so crucial. We need to be repeatedly saying, "We know you, you are God's child." "You are the beloved of God, cherished and chosen." "You are the sheep for whom God would leave the 99 and come seeking you if you get lost."

"We know you, you are part of our body, the church, and we are incomplete without you." "You don't need a title or label because here you are simply valued and loved as a child of God."

Now, I know that the church doesn't always do the best job at communicating all that. The church is made up of imperfect people, sinners who are redeemed not by their goodness, but by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus. We at times pre-judge others by their appearance, by their status, or by their differences from ourselves. And sometimes we pre-judge ourselves too.

Yet, when we get it right, and let God's Spirit guide us, we become part of God's tremendous work of bringing healing to broken people and a broken world. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. -2 Cor. 5

Who are we as Union United Methodist Church? We are a people who are trying to live as children of God, and are trying to help others learn the truth of that identity as well. It's not easy in a culture that has a lot of other agendas, but it's worth it. And your participation, your prayers, your gifts, your service, and your witness makes a difference. This is us, seeking to *Know Christ, Share Faith and Show Grace*, as the children of God.

Blessings, -Stephen

SEPTEMBER 2023

#### **Welcome New Members!**

We welcomed new members, Ken & Margaret Spence, Zina Diaz, and Kristoff Tolbert into the Union family recently.

Be sure to introduce yourself to these wonderful people when you meet them in the hallways and offer them a warm welcome!







Ken & Margaret Spence

Zina Diaz

Kristoff, Miriam & Elias Tolbert

#### We're welcoming new members at both services on Sunday, September 17

If you're thinking about joining the Union family, this would be a perfect opportunity! Please get in contact with Erin at Erin@unionirmo.org about your desire to join.

#### **Union Family Night Gatherings!**

Join us in the evening for supper and fellowship on Wednesday, Sept. 6, Oct. 4, Nov. 1, Dec. 6, and Dec. 13 starting at 5:15 p.m. in the FMC Gym.

Sign up for the September dinner has begun! The link is available on our website and with our QR code in our pews. RSVP by the Sunday prior by 5 p.m. Cost is \$7 per person with a \$28 family max.

Be sure to stay on Wednesday, **Sept. 6**, to help assemble bracelets for the Zimbabwe team to take with them to share with Chitenderano UMC as a gift from the Union UMC congregation. When we work together, big things happen. Show our children how they can give love across the world.

If you, your Sunday school class, women's group, men's group, or a group of neighbors would be willing to help serve the meal and clean up, we need the help! Please let Erin know what dates you are available to help by emailing her at erin@unionirmo.org. Thank you!

Be in prayer over our Zimbabwe team members going on their mission trip September 13 - 30.

#### The Fourteenth Annual Sharing God's Love Benefit Golf Tournament

#### Love to golf?

Join us for the Sharing God's Love Golf Tournament on Monday, September 11!

All of the net proceeds will benefit your neighbors in need in the Dutch Fork, Irmo, St. Andrews, and Ballentine communities. Established in 1984, Sharing God's Love has faithfully provided thousands of families with food, clothing, personal hygiene items, and financial aid for utility, medical, and other emergency expenses.

During 2022, 2,322 families, totaling 6,958 people, including 464 new clients, received assistance valued at \$1,018,571, plus \$1,180,571, in assistance to other agencies.

Registration and sponsor forms can be found in the church office. Contact Jim Sharp at 803-727-7297 or Ron Feaster at 803-741-4846 if you would like to give, get involved, or with any questions.



ONE THING Marriage Enrichment Event will be held on Saturday, September 16, from 5-7 p.m. in the FMC Gym.

This event is open to all married (and committed) couples as a time for connection and fun! Strong marriages build strong families and Union is committed to helping families stay strong and Christ-centered!

Childcare and dinner will be provided. Please register by September 10. You can find the link on our website, or by typing this in: https://registrations.planningcenter online.com/signups/1877623

Contact Eleanor Cannon at Eleanor@unionirmo.org if you have any questions!









## BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Sunday, August 13th, we kicked off the school year with our second annual Back to School Bash. The Union Praise band led us in worship and Reverend Faye Jones blessed the bookbags of over 100 children and prayed for a safe and happy school year. It was a great day in the Sanctuary and in our FMC Gym as we tried to beat the heat by having games and fun indoors. The laughter and smiles on the faces of our youth and children was an encouraging sight to see. We appreciate the many hands that went into making this a fun afternoon.

In addition to fun and fellowship, we also collected many items for our Snack Pack Program and handed out school supplies for those who need a helping hand this school year. We continue to be amazed at the generosity shown to these children by our church family. We also want to thank Moe's, Dogs on the Run, and Kona Ice of Irmo/Chapin for a wonderful dinner and dessert! The 360 degree photo booth was a also a hit for all ages!

We pray each of our children, youth, teachers, administrators, and support staff have a wonderful and safe school year!



















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#### **Union Day School Updates!**

Join together in praying over our Day School staff, teachers, students and parents as our school gets back underway!

Check out below for important dates coming up and on the left for ways you can help support our school!



September 5, 6, & 7 for Half & Full Day students





## SAVE THE DATE Trunk or Treat! October 29, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

Start thinking about how to decorate your trunk, what you want to wear, and stocking up on treats!

We will once again invite the community to join us for a night of games, treats, and tons of fun!







#### Welcome to Bibleland!

Thank you all so much for your support and interest in our interactive storytelling room, Bibleland!

It is open and ready for kids, youth or adults to come an experience the Bible in a new way. If you have a group that is interested in visiting Bibleland, contact Suzy and she will be glad to set things up.

You can reach her via email: suzy@unionirmo.org or through the church office: 803.781.3013

## **Parents' Time Out**



#### Save the Dates!

Sept. 9 - 3-6 p.m.

Oct. 7 - 11-2 p.m.

Nov. 11 - 3-6 p.m.

Dec. 9 - 11-2 p.m.

Each month our nursery team offers childcare for infants through 1st grade.

We ask for \$10 per child to cover the cost of a snack and some supplies for the 3 hours.

RVSP by the Wednesday before to andreamarie6368@gmail.com, and include any allergies when you sign up.

For your family, it's time to <u>define</u> your relationship...

with technology.

Discover key principles, practical tips, and proactive and reactive solutions to help you parent in a tech world.

#### Parenting in a Tech World

Parents, grandparents, and other adults interested in supporting our children and youth, join us Sunday, **October 8**, from 5-7 p.m. We will be exploring the topic of "Parenting in a Tech World."

We will start with dinner in the FMC Gym, followed by a large group time of information and breakout groups for parents to share struggles and ideas. Mark your calendars!

Nursery will be provided for kids 3 & under and there will be separate breakout times for our children and youth too.

#### SonZone



We are excited and getting ready to kick off a great year with our 4th and 5th graders!

Join us and bring your friends on **September 17** at 4:45 p.m.! We will meet in the Education Building for games, lessons and tons of fun!

## EX

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Bibles

What a wonderful day! On Sunday, August 27, we gave our rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders their very own Bible with their name engraved on them.

We hosted a Bible Boot Camp that afternoon where our kids and a parent had the opportunity to learn about this book they were given. We sang some silly songs, learned about a talking donkey and why it is important to spend time with this book.

It is our prayer that this gift will be a starting point for a deeper relationship with God, enhanced through the study of God's word.

Third Grade Bibles are Presented to -

Emma Bowers

**Tripp Carter** 

Etta Price Cochcroft
Jackson Finney

Macy Gayle

Finley Haroff

**Betsy Moody** 

Lainey Powell

Lily Rankin

**Townsend Rhyne** 

Regan Rouse

McKennah Ruark

Maisie Thompson

Thomas Whaley

Luke Wheeler

Benjamin Williamson



#### UNION BASKETBALL

Registration is open through September 15 for 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> GRADE students. This is a FIRM deadline to register!

Register on the church website or here: https://union.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/1809521

Player evaluations will be held on Sunday, **Sept. 17**, from 2-4 p.m. and Sunday, **Sept. 24**, from 2-4 p.m. in the FMC Gym. Basketball practice will begin the week of Oct. 1. Players will be notified of their team/coach assignment after they have attended one of the two evaluation days.

Union Basketball focuses on teaching mechanics of the game, teamwork, character building and faith! All player skill levels are welcome - our coaches will teach students how to play!

\*Note: Friends are welcome and there is no fee to register, but each player must attend at least two Union events per month beginning October 1st through the duration of basketball season.

Contact Eleanor Cannon for more information at Eleanor@unionirmo.org.

#### **CONFIRMATION**

Class will be offered for students 6<sup>th</sup> grade & up beginning Sunday, **Sept. 10**, at 10 a.m. Classes will run weekly at 10 a.m. on Sunday Mornings (during the Discipleship hour) through April.

If you have not received an information packet and would be interested in

enrolling a student in this class, please contact Eleanor Cannon at Eleanor@unionirmo.org.



#### Parenting in a Tech World

An Event for Parents

→ When our parents were our age, they really only had to worry about how much time was wasted using technology. But these days? These days, technology changes rapidly and so do the dangers.

It's a hard job—keeping our kids safe, especially online. We want to help.

We've partnered with Parent Cue and Matt McKee—author, speaker and SVP at Bark Technologies—to guide us on keeping our kids safe online and offer practical tips on parenting in the digital age.

We'll also discuss some common questions and struggles parents are having and how we can help you be the parent you want to be when it comes to kids and technology.

Join us for the Parenting in a Tech World event.

Sunday, October 8 - 5-7 p.m. in the FMC Gym Dinner will be provided, followed by a large group time of information and breakout groups for parents to share struggles and ideas. Mark your calendars!

Nursery will be provided for kids 3 & under and separate breakout itmes for our children and youth too.



## We have Recreation time from 4:30-5 p.m. on Sundays and need a few adults each week to hangout with the kids in the gym and keep an eye on things!

Please sign up to help with this so we can offer this time before everything kicks off at 5 p.m.! Also, if you sign up to help, we will feed you and you can stay and worship with us!

Sign up on our website (unionirmo.org/youth) or type in this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/ 10c0d48aea92aa5fdc25-youth1#/

### We need your help on Sunday evenings to help feed our kids!!

We ask that each parents sign up for at least 1 meal per year to help, so please sign up so we can feed these kiddos!

Sign up to help on our website (unionirmo.org/youth) or type in this link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d48aea92aa5fdc25-sunday2#/



#### **COME IN ALL WHITE OR NEON FOR OUR BLACKLIGHT KICKOFF!**

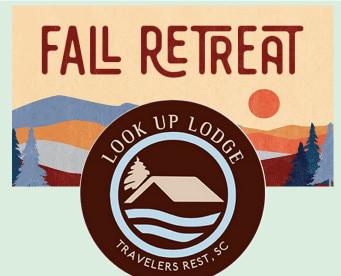
Dinner, music, games & friends to kickoff our ministry year! Prizes for those who bring a NEW friend! We'll party from 5-7 p.m. in the FMC Gym on Sunday, **September 10!** Email Eleanor Cannon with any questions at Eleanor@unionirmo.org.



#### YOUTH PARENT WORSHIP NIGHT -

YOUTH PARENTS: come out for our first "ministry" night to worship together with our students. Students and parents are welcome to meet for dinner and games in the FMC Gvm before we head over to the Chapel for worship & large group. Following worship, you'll go to your student's small group room to meet their leader and see what Youth of Union is all about! Don't miss this fun night of worship and connection!

All parents are strongly encouraged to attend! Friends are always welcome! Contact Eleanor Cannon with any questions! Eleanor@unionirmo.org



#### **YOUTH FALL RETREAT -**

All students are encouraged to register for our Fall Retreat at Lookup Lodge for a weekend of spiritual uplifting and enrichment, fellowship and shenanigans!

#### Retreat weekend is September 29-October 1.

Cost is \$160 and includes all activities and food. Registration is open and you can find the link on our website: UnionIrmo.org/Youth. Financial assistance is available, if needed.

Contact Eleanor Cannon with guestions at Eleanor@unionirmo.org.



#### The Living Christmas Story (TLCS)

Is celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of Union providing this special gift to the community. We have more than 600 volunteer/cast positions to fill across the 3 performances, so we hope that you and your family will sign up to participate! You are welcome to participate in more than one performance and in different roles. We also encourage you to invite others to participate with you!

Please put these dates on your Calendar:

#### **TLCS 2023 Performance:**

**Dec. 1, 2, 3** (Fri-Sun) from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

**TLCS Set Construction:** 

Nov. 4 (Sat), Nov. 12 (Sun), Nov. 18 (Sat), Nov. 26 (Sun).

TLCS Volunteer sign ups are open now through the end of October.

Roles will be assigned based upon the order that your signup is received. So please sign up to participate as soon as possible! To sign up, please click on our website or scan the QR code to the right.



If you have any questions, please email: UnionTLCSCasting@gmail.com.

#### Leaps of Faith is starting!

If you like to dance, you are invited to join one of the Leaps of Faith Liturgical dance groups. We welcome all ages from 4K to Senior Adult! No dance experience necessary!! Dancers will present during various Worship Services and special events.

This is such a wonderful opportunity to become part of a small group, get some great exercise, have fun, and learn to worship with mind, body, and soul. The start date, practice times, and locations are listed below. Please direct any questions to Linda Caldwell (803-422-2989) or Gloria Stansell (843-475-5978).

- Junior Leaps: (4K 4<sup>th</sup> Grade)- Sundays, 3:15-4 p.m. (Sanctuary) Start Date September 10
- Youth Leaps: (5<sup>th</sup> Grade Adult)- Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (Sanctuary) – Start Date September 6
- Adult Leaps: (18 and Over)- Sundays, 4-5 p.m. (Sanctuary)
   Start Date September 17

#### New Acolyte & Crucifer Training -

Any young person currently in 5<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade who is interested in becoming part of the acolyte team, which serves during the 9 a.m. service, is invited to attend an information / training session in the Sanctuary on Sunday, **September 10**, at 4 p.m.

Young persons who usually attend the 11 a.m. service, but would like to serve their church from 4 to 6 times per year as an acolyte or crucifer, are also welcome to attend and learn what the job of an acolyte is all about.

Anyone interested in just getting information and/ or in being trained should contact Gail Elfert at either celfert@aol.com or 803-466-2403(cell/text).

#### Wilson Circle Book Club



The Wilson Circle Book Club meets Tuesday, **September 12**, at 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall to discuss the book, *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah. If you would like to borrow a copy of *The Four Winds*, please contact Harriet Simpson at 803-530-5060 or Becky Dixon at 803-361-5046.

We will be meeting on **October 10** to discuss *A Knock at Midnight* by B.K. Barnett and **November 14** to discuss *The Prodigal Prophet: Jonah and the Mystery of God's Mercy* by Tim Keller. The October and November meetings will also be held at 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Plans for the December meeting are TBD. All are welcome to join us.

#### PEP! - People Enjoying People!



#### Bingo & Board Games -

Wednesday, **September 13**, at 1p.m. in the Fellowship Hall! Come join us for fun, fellowship, BINGO prizes and board games!

#### **September Event! -**

On Thursday, **September 28**, at 6:30 p.m. in the FMC Gym, we welcome Greg Adaline from WIS news as our speaker. He has written a book entitled, *True Stories: A Faith Journal*. He will talk about this book and have some available for purchase, if desired. Our catered meal will be by The Peanut Man. Cost is \$15 per person. Sign up and payment will be in Sunday School classes and are due by Sunday, **September 24**.

Any questions about these events or to get involved, please contact Phyllis Plyler at phyllisplyler@gmail.com.

## "IF" Friday Night Lights

Join us for a dinner, worship and small groups as we dig deeper into Jennie Allen's Virtual "IF" conference



FRIDAY OCTOBER 6TH
6PM @ UNION UMC
\$20 PER TICKET
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5PM MEET AND GREET AT
CRAFT AND DRAFT IRMO



Please save your treasures and donations.

Drop offs and pick ups start October 9-12 from 9 AM until 6 PM.

Sorry: No TVs, monitors, armoires, large desks, large furniture, mattresses, boxsprings, soiled or damaged items.

Thank you for your continued support!

If you have any questions contact Charles Ayer at 803-447-0212.



Jan's Van (the Lexington Medical Center's Mobile Mammography Van) will be at Union on Wednesday, **October 18,** from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.!

Sign ups start on Sunday, **September 3**, in the narthex! This mission is sponsored by Sarah Circle and named in memory of Jan Croft, who lost her courageous battle with metastatic breast cancer.

You can help offset the cost of mammograms that aren't covered through insurance by donating to "Jan's Van" at unionirmo.org, click GIVE, or by calling the church office.



#### Union's Prayer Ministry is Expanding!

Prayer Squares are now available to everyone to "tie" with prayers for those facing major illness, loss, or disruption in their lives. These squares are available for anyone to pick up and deliver. Supplies are in the Welcome Center in the Narthex and all adult Sunday School classes. What a wonderful and caring way to express love and concern for hurting souls.

Pillow Bags are being made to hold a book, toy, snacks, etc. These will be given to children at the Children's Hospital and other children in treatment for major illnesses.

Prayer Shawls and Lap Quilts continue to be available for you to take to someone facing a major hurdle in their lives. Both are comforting and practical for those receiving chemo where they must sit for hours.

We WELCOME everyone to join us in making these items. If you crochet, knit, quilt or sew, we would love for you to join in these projects. You can do them on your own time, or maybe you know someone who would like to help with these ministries.

Any questions or to volunteer, contact Susan Harrison, Prayer Warrior Leader, at susanhharrison@me.com or 704-657-6918. You can also contact Connie Warren, Congregational Care Leader, or Shari Johnson.

#### A Note of Thanksgiving -

Dear United Methodist Church,

We wanted to take a moment to express our deepest and most sincere gratitude for your unwavering support, both in terms of hands-on assistance and generous financial contributions, towards our home repair project. Thanks to the incredible dedication and selflessness of our Union family, we are now able to see the light at the end of the tunnel for this home repair. Your willingness to lend a helping hand and provide essential funds has made a huge impact on our lives!

For months, we endured the challenges of having an incomplete backside to our home and a partial roof, relying solely on tarps to

keep the rain at bay. During our moments of despair, you, along with the team lead by Wallace Steadman and his handy helpers - Jim Sharp, Brian Wisnewski, Ned Calvert, Greg Collins, John Bowen, Clarke Smith, Mark Kyle, Don Cornell, and Sam Schlagel - stepped in as a ray of hope, helping us rebuild and giving us the mental strength to persevere.

Today, we are humbled and overjoyed to report that we are almost at the finish line. Your support, along with the supplies from Stier Building, has been instrumental in transforming our living situation from one of uncertainty to one of promise and comfort. Special thanks also go to Michelle Cochcroft and Linda Steadman for providing food, and to our Union Sunday groups for their generous donations. Your compassion and love have not only helped repair our physical home but have also uplifted our spirits in ways words cannot adequately express. We feel truly blessed to be a part of such a caring and compassionate community.

As we near the completion of this project, we are filled with profound gratitude for the love you have shown us. Your kindness has made a world of difference, and we want you to know that your love and care have touched our lives in immeasurable ways.

With warm regards and heartfelt appreciation, The Haroff Family















#### Memorials - July 23rd - August 20th

#### **Memorials received in memory of:**

John Lucas By: Dr. & Mrs. Johnston May, Jeanette Davis, Jean Eng, and Margaret Morris Cammy Wann (Fran Wann-Fulghum's daughter) By: Jewell and Bob Hill, and Margaret Morris Forrest Bouknight By: Judy Weston

## We extend our sympathy to the following families at the loss of their loved one: IN MEMORIAM

John Luke Lucas, Jr. August 11, 1937 - July 25, 2023

Susan Phelps in the loss of her sister, **Annette Cyr Thibodeau** 

Bob Wolff in the loss of his mother,

Mary Joyce Hamel Wolff

Robert Forrest Bouknight, Sr. October 16, 1927 - August 12, 2023

JoAnn Timmerman in the loss of her son-in-law,

Charles "Chuck" Aldine Horton

#### We celebrate the brith of:

**Lucas Port Orr** was born August 15. He was born to Ashley and Steve Orr. He has a sister, Vivian.

#### Do you need the help of a TRANSPORTATION ANGEL?

If you have a temporary, or longer term, need for transportation to and from medical appointments, or help picking up medication or groceries, then the TRANSPORTATION ANGELS team members are ready to serve you!

Please contact Gail Elfert at 803.466.2403 or celfert@aol.com and let her know what kind and when you need assistance. The earlier you give us notice, the easier it is to get you matched with someone who is available at the time you need.

If you have trouble reaching Gail you can contact Rev. David Anderson at the church at david@unionirmo.org or 803.781.3013.

### The Church office will be closed September 4 for Labor Day.

### The October Union Connection Deadline is September 15.

The Union Connection is a monthly publication of Union United Methodist Church.

Articles should be submitted to Amy via email (amy@unionirmo.org).

#### **Our Ministry Team**

Senior Minister
Rev. Stephen Taylor

Associate Minister Rev. Faye Jones

Minister of Visitation Rev. David Anderson

Church Administraor **Susan Vinson** 

Administrative Assistant Erin Schoolmeester

Finance Barbara Tanner

Director of Communications and Promotions **Amy Gustafson** 

Director of Ministries to Children & Families
Suzy Broadus

Director of Youth and Leisure Ministries
Eleanor Cannon

Assistant Director of Youth Ministries
Thomas Walsh

Director of Music Ministries
Frank Turner

Coordinator of Contemporary Worship Michelle Cochcroft

Day School Director Leslie Kulp

Assistant Day School Director
Jenny Gantt

Facilities Manager Ned Calvert

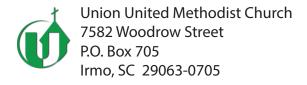
Assistant Facilities Manager **Steve Ragan** 

Nursery Coordinator Andrea Williams

Production Manager **Jake Cosentino** 

Organist

Joey Rothfuss



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