

A B C's for December

A stands for "Amazed."

Some of you know my Thanksgiving this year had a new twist. The Friday before Thanksgiving I saw a cardiologist. Three days later, he located two serious clots in my heart and inserted a stent to reopen the LAD artery, the one known as the "widow-maker."

I'd known for several weeks that I was short-winded, and frequently tired, but I had no realization of the danger my heart was in. Obviously, my thanksgivings this year have covered a lot of territory – from family to the professionals who took care of me (and continue to do so), to the support and love of so many people. I'm still working to get my mind around all that's happened, and the cardiac rehabilitation that awaits me.

I know that many others of you have dealt with this before, personally or with a family member, and I'm sharing like a late comer to the party. But I am sharing in hopes I can be an encouragement to someone else. If you have similar symptoms, or tightness in your chest, please don't ignore them. I'm glad I asked in time to get something done that gives me more Thanksgivings to look forward to! I stand grateful and amazed before God.

B stands for "Budget."

Well, that doesn't sound too Christmasy, I know! But the reality is that we need to finish up our 2024 budget commitments this month. We had a fabulous start with our Commitment Sunday in November, but still, a good number of our people were away for various reasons.

We really need everyone to be a part of our ministry, and the giving that makes our ministries possible. If you have received from the ministry of our church, then be a part of continuing it so others can receive as well.

Pray about this commitment: *Lord, what do you want to do through me*? If your circumstances make it hard for you to make a financial commitment, then write on your card, "I will give as God enables me," and let's see what God does! Thank you.

C stands for "Come."

Our theme this Advent is taken from the Chris Tomlin song, *Noel*: "Come and see what God has done!" Isn't that what Christmas should be about – joining the shepherds and wise men in coming to worship the new-born King, and inviting others to join us?

It is too easy to get into the habit of staying home and maybe catching the service on live stream. I'm thankful for our media volunteers who provide our online services, but as good as they are, we all know it just isn't the same as personally coming to worship our Lord.

Come and see what God has done, and what God will do, as we honor Him! In fact, I'm praying for record attendance this December as we come together to worship and encourage one another. We have so much for which to give thanks and so many reasons to bow before Him. Come and see what really makes Christmas merry and bright. Come and see what God has done.

~~~ With deep gratitude for being in this journey with you, I (and Cynthia) and all the Union pastors and staff wish you a Blessed Christmas! -Stephen



Come & see

what God

has done!

DECEMBER

# KNOW Christ, SHARE Faith, SHOW Grace

Worship with us in December!

# Come & see what God has done!

#### **December 3** - Second Sunday in Advent

9 a.m. - Traditional worship 11 a.m. - Contempoary worship Join us as we light the candle of Peace. Scriptures for the week: Psalm 85: 8-10; Isaiah 32: 14-18



December 17 - Fourth Sunday in Advent 9 a.m. - Traditional worship 11 a.m. - Contemporary worship 6 p.m. - The Living Nativity Join us as we light the candle of Love. Scriptures for the week: Matthew 2: 10-11; Luke 1: 26-38



Happy New Yearl

# We come for Peace

#### **December 10 - Third Sunday in Advent**

9 a.m. - "From the Realms of Glory" Choral Service 11 a.m. - Contemporary worship in the Chapel Join us as we light the candle of Joy. Scriptures for the week: Luke 1: 46-55; Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11

We come for Love

#### **Christmas Eve Services - December 24**

11 a.m. - Contemporary Candlelight worship 5 p.m. - Traditional Candlelight worship Join us as we light the Christ candle. Scriptures for the week: Isaiah 9: 6; Luke 2: 1-20

December 31 - New Years Eve
9 a.m. - Traditional worship
11 a.m. - Contemporary worship
Join us as we finish 2023 in worship!

# **December Special Events!**



FREE Admission! - At Union UMC - 7582 Woodrow St. Irmo, SC 29063

# The Living Christmas Story

The big event is finally here! After months of preparation, Bethlehem is coming to life with your help! It takes more than 200 people each night to make this presentation of Christ's birth a success, and we thank you for your continued support and your willingness to make this 30<sup>th</sup> year, the best yet!

Come enjoy this event as you drive along a 1/3 mile route through the church's parking area, which has been transformed into the city of Bethlehem to re-enact the 'greatest story ever told.'

People from our Union church family, & the Irmo community, including live animals, bring the town of Bethlehem to life. Villagers, a blacksmith, the innkeeper, Herod's Court, the marketplace and many more scenes come alive as you drive through and experience the night Christ came to us.



#### The Living Nativity

On <u>Sunday</u>, <u>December 17, 2023</u> at **6 p.m.** the Living Nativity will be presented by the Union Praise Band in the Sanctuary. This is a service with songs and children participating in the story of Jesus' birth. We are looking for children ages 4-18 to

participate. There are no speaking parts, you just need to be willing to take part.

If your child or youth is interested, please scan the QR code to the right and fill out the form on our website or by reaching out to Michelle at mgcochcroft@gmail.com.





#### "From the Realms of Glory" Lessons & Carols Service

On <u>Sunday, December 10, 2023</u>, our Chancel Choir will present "From the Realms of Glory" at **9 a.m.** During this service, we will have readings from the nine traditional, scriptural lessons followed by music selections (be prepared to share your voice with congregational singing!).

The choral repertoire being performed is sure to inspire and bless those in attendance.

The Chancel Choir will be joined by an orchestra to lead a dynamic service during Advent. We would love to have you and your family in attendance!



Join us for supper & fellowship on December 6 & 13 from 5:15-6:15 p.m.

Stay afterward for fun "reindeer" games each night! You must sign up in advance with the bulletin flap or by going on the website! Bring exact change when you pay at the door. Cost: \$7.00/person Family Max: \$28.00

#### December Menu

6<sup>th</sup> - Chicken vegetable soup, ham & turkey sandwiches, & salad
 13<sup>th</sup> - BBQ, slider buns, salad, wing chips, & coleslaw
 Tea, Lemonade & Water will be available each night
 December Activities

#### 6<sup>th</sup> - Bingo with a Christmas Twist! Pick up your bingo card as you come in and we'll start calling at 5:45 p.m.

13<sup>th</sup> - Name that Christmas Tune! Work with the folks at your table to figure out the Christmas song riddle



#### **Trunk or Treat!!**

Thank you Union for showing up and welcoming the community to our church!! We had 42 trunks... 300 cupcakes at a cupcake walk... We served 750 Kona Ice cups... And 300 pumpkins were decorated! **The smiles and costumes were endless!!!** We estimate we had **600 children** come through and receive a welcoming smile and a sweet treat. Check out just some of the pictures and joy that was spread around. Also make plans to join the fun next year!





# Advent Boxes!

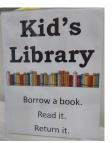
It is time to start counting down and preparing our hearts and minds for Christmas! We have Advent scriptures and activities for our children's families.

The box is small and easy to carry in a purse or backpack. Throw them in the car and talk about that day's scripture on the way to or from school. Or plan what activity you want to do that night or weekend. There are more cards than you can use this season so you can pick and choose what works best for your family.

Set aside time with your family and make it a habit for the new year!

# Kid's Library!

That's right we have opened a lending library in the Education Building for our kids (and parents). There are parenting books from our Phase events, and story books about friends, Christmas, Easter and characters in the Bible.



Stop by the shelves on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Education Building and check out some books to take home. There are old time library cards in the back of each book, we ask you to fill out and leave, so we know who is enjoying the books.







Bring a wrapped ornament for our gift exchange! There will be snacks, stories, and silly games!

# SonZone is having a great Fall!



Our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders just helped make snack pack ornaments for Advent and had a blast giving back. Be sure to check your calendars as our schedule starts to get off and on. We will meet **December 10<sup>th</sup>**.

Otherwise we hope families will

enjoy and participate in Thanksgiving time, The Living Christmas Story and the The Living Nativity we have coming up at Union.

| SonZone |
|---------|
|---------|

| Sunday               | Торіс                           |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Dec 3<br>No SonZone  | TLCS                            |
| Dec 10               | 7 -Sharing in the Lord's Supper |
| Dec 17 – 6– 8pm      | Dinner and a Movie              |
| Dec 24<br>No SonZone | Merry Christmas                 |
| Dec 31<br>No SonZone | Happy New Year                  |
| Jan 7<br>No SonZone  | Basketball Tournament           |

# Parent's Time Out! Save the Date! - Dec. 9 - 11-2 p.m.

2024 Dates coming soon!

Each month our nursery team offers childcare for infants through 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

# **Confirmation Retreat Recap**

Our 2024 Confirmands kicked off their Confirmation journey with a retreat to Epworth by the Sea at St. Simon's Island.

We had a great time together in worship, fellowship and adventures! We learned all about Methodism at the Arthur Moore Methodist Museum, explored Fort Frederica where the Wesley's landed in America, had deep discussions around faith and God, played on playgrounds, had beautiful intimate worship, ate lots of snacks, and hung out on the beach!

It was a perfect way to kick off the Confirmation year! Please keep the Confirm24 class in your prayers as they continue their Confirmation journey together!



# **Basketball Tournament**

# We need your help this January as Union is hosting the South Carolina UMC Tournament again!

The dates are **January 5-7**. Sign up at the link below or scan the QR code to help us make this event run as smoothly as you did last year!

Contact Eleanor with any questions at Eleanor@unionirmo.org. https://union.churchcenter. com/registrations/events/1937085

> Basketball Tournament Sign Up -





- Concession Wishlist Items









Our Costa Rica Mission team is doing a fundraiser selling concessions during the State UMC Basketball Tournament in January!

We are asking for donations of chips, cookies, sodas, gatorades, etc. to help offset the cost of those going on this trip! This is a great way to help support those who are answering the call to serve on this trip that will be happening in June 2024. Donations can be dropped off at Eleanor/Thomas's office.

Check out our QR code on the left for our Amazon wishlist of items!

You can also donate funds directly to the Costa Rica Mission Trip through our 'GIVE' page under the 'Special Identified Fund' and add a note to identify it as the Costa Rica Trip.

# YOUTH OF UNION CHRISTMAS CHRISTMAS PARTY DECEMBER 10 FMC Gym 5-7pm Trivia, Games, Gift exchange (\$10 max)



#### Youth Movie Night!

Sunday, **December 17**, is our annual Movie Night!!!

We will be watching the timeless classic, *Elf*, and we'll have hot chocolate and other goodies/activities!

This will begin directly after The Living Nativity in the FMC Gym. Bring your PJs to change in to!



# Sign up NOW for REVOLUTION2024!

#### January 26-28!

This will be an incredible weekend of worship, fellowship, and fun! We will lock-in at the church the entire weekend and head downtown to the Township Auditorium for sessions. Worship will be led by SONS the Band and the word will be brought by Reggie Dabbs.

The theme this year is **We are One**, based on Ephesians 4:2-6. Sign up today at the link below, or on our website!

Financial assistance is available as always, reach out to Eleanor at eleanor@unionirmo.org if needed.

https://union.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2028154

### **Service Opportunities!**

We have a few service opportunites coming up! These are great chances to be the hands and feet of Christ and share God's love to others. **Reminder**: To attend any non-mission related trips, your student must participate in a service project prior to the trip. These are great chances to earn this credit!

#### Sharing God's Love Toy Drive Dropoff/Service Day:

Meet at Union at 9 a.m. on Saturday, **Dec. 9**, where we will load up the remaining toys collected through our toy drive and head over to Sharing God's Love to drop these off and participate in a service project! Pick up your child from Sharing God's Love at 12 p.m. Sign up at the following link: https://union.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2023662

#### Washington Street UMC Soup Cellar:

Join us as we head downtown on Friday, **Dec. 29**, to serve our brothers and sisters experiencing homelessness/food insecurity. We will meet at the bus bay at Union at 9 a.m. and return by 2 p.m. There are limited spots avialable, so sign up

at the following link:

https://union.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2021306

#### **WARM Project:**

Volunteers are needed for our WARM Project on Dec. 28-29! All adults and youth over 14 are encouraged to sign up and help with our Winterization and Repair Ministry Project now through Dec. 10. This project helps repair and work on homes of those who cannot afford to do so. Hours will be 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. each day. You can sign up by reaching out to Chris Elvis at ccelvis3@gmail.com, Chris Lindler at chris@thelindlers.com or Wallace Steadman at wwstead@aol.com.



# THANK YOU for a hugely successful Toy Drive for Sharing God's Love!

We delivered multiple carloads to Santa's Shop for clients to choose gifts for children this Christmas!

Please continue to pray for the children and families who receive these gifts, that they may know the love of Jesus that comes along with them!

**Holiday Notes:** We will NOT have Youth on 12/24 or 12/31 due to the holidays. We will resume after Christmas on 1/7!



# THE SNACK PACK MISSION

Snack Pack provides nutritional food for students who do not have enough to eat through the weekend. A growing need for the basics of a healthy meal has been identified in the district.

The hope in supplying nutritional food is not only to fill a hungry belly, but also to give children the focus to be ready to learn come Monday morning with out the worry of hunger.

> Union is currently feeding 117 children per week at one school in our district.

Stop by our Giving Tree in the Narthex for specific items we're collecting.

Scan Here For Simple Shopping or Donate on Our 'Give' Page





**AVERAGE COST/WEEK:** 

14 food items for each child \$7.28 per food bag per week

117 children each week

Total Cost:

\$852 per week

DECEMBER 10 - 9AN "FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY" LESSONS & CAROLS SERVICE AT UNION UMC



Union UMC: 7582 Woodrow St. Irmo, SC, 29063

#### 2024 Altar Flower Calendar

Sign up is now available for flowers and you can recognize a special Sunday in your life by stopping by the table in the Narthex. The cost is \$42.50 per vase. Checks can be made out to UUMC and please put 'altar flowers' in the memo line. Christmas Lunch with the SLIMs (Single Ladies in Ministry)

#### Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 11:30 a.m.

Please wear your beautiful or Ugly Christmas Sweater for all to see. The agenda is food, friends and fellowship, mostly fellowship. Bonus: The Ice cream machine will be available.

#### At Lakeview Retirement Home

Address: 2134 N. Lake Drive Columbia, SC 29212 **Cost:** \$12 per person Pay when you arrive





#### Volunteers needed for our W.A.R.M. Project on **December 28-29**!

All adults and youth over 14 are encouraged to sign up and help with our Winterization and Repair Ministry Project now through **December 10**.

We're searching for volunteers in many capacities - to help on houses and doing repairs, as well as kitchen volunteers to help feed everyone. Hours will be 8am-4pm each day. Adults will need to be Safe Sanctuary trained if they're working on a house with youth.

You can sign up by reaching out to Chris Elvis at ccelvis3@ gmail.com, Chris Lindler at chris@thelindlers.com or Wallace Steadman at wwstead@aol.com.

# The Wilson Circle Book Club



Will meet Tuesday, **December 12**, at the Lakeview Retirement Home at 2134 N. Lake Drive, Columbia following the Wilson Circle's luncheon at 11:30 a.m. We will be discussing *Comfort and Joy* by Kristin Hannah. While this book is not on the UWF approved

Reading List, we chose it because it has a Christmas theme and it was written by the same author as *The Four Winds*, which we read and discussed in September.

If you are attending the Book Club meeting, you are invited to attend the luncheon as well. The cost is \$12 cash to be paid upon arrival.

Please contact Harriet Simpson at 803-530-5060 by Sunday, **Dec. 10**, if you plan to attend the luncheon and the Book Club meeting. If you are not attending the luncheon, plan to join the group in the lobby about 12:45 p.m.

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

We welcomed new members to the Union family on November 12! Be sure to introduce yourself to this wonderful family when you meet them in the hallways and offer them a warm welcome!

> *Pictured on the Right:* Brian & Amanda Noyes with Jagger and Arlo





# Christmas "Special Donations" for Sharing God's Love for 2023

Christmas "Memorial Donations" are being accepted thru **December 10**. The names will run in the December 17 bulletin. These donations can be dedicated "In honor of" and/or "In memory of" and can be any amount. Please denote on your check and envelope: UUMC Christmas Special Donation. The recipient of these monies will be Sharing God's Love, a Christian ministry that helps community families in crisis. Thank you for your loving gifts as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. - Traditional Worship Team



# Arty Party Fun!

The United Women in Faith held their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Arty Party on October 22<sup>nd</sup>- and it was a huge success! Ladies of all ages enjoyed an afternoon of fun and fellowship – and the creative juices were flowing!

We had 65 ladies attend this year and they participated in everything from painting a fall canvas to flower arranging to bow-making to making ornaments for their Christmas trees! There was something for everyone – and prior experience was not needed thanks to our wonderful ladies who were willing to share their talents with their sisters in Christ!



# And the Award goes too...

On November 7, the South Carolina UNVIM committee recognized our very own Robin Landers with the Nick Elliot Award. This award is presented annually to someone who demonstrates exceptional commitment to the goal of serving God through missions. Robin has successfully completed 10 mission trips to Zimbabwe and two to Costa Rica over a span of 20 years.

"Robin has been committed to serve Christ by bringing volunteers and mission teams to Zimbabwe for about 20 years... Robin has built strong partnership links with United Methodists in Zimbabwe and South Carolina Conferences... she has demonstrated what it means to be a part of [the] worldwide connection of the United Methodist Church. The teams that Robin has led have been involved in supporting orphanages, schools, hospitals, and providing clean drinking water for communities with hands on and financial support. Robin has been a consistent team leader and relationship builder," says Rev. Lloyd Nyarota.

"Robin's leadership has created teams that focus on being present and focus on relationship building in missions." says Marjie Rehlander.

Robin expressed that her prayer is that as mission minded people, we make it a goal to continue to create and foster more relationships with all people around the world.

# Congratulations Robin! Thank you for your outstanding work!





# Memorials - October 23rd - November 26th

#### Memorials received in memory of:

William Thomas McDaniel By: Buffy and Will Murphy, Jerry and Cathy Watson, and Joe and Tonya Watson
 Lesley and Keith Berkeley By: Anna Bess Tisdale, and the Aline Leitner Fellowship Sunday School Class
 Bob Keely By: Anna Bess Tisdale
 David Williams By: Joy Williams
 Woody Burch By: Joan and Orris Bickley
 Forrest Bouknight By: Joan and Orris Bickley
 Bo Ellisor By: Bob and Connie Warren, Joan and Orris Bickley, Guy and Rennie Owen, Barry and Bill Lide, Bonnie
 Stevens, Claude and Evelyn Evans, Charles and Helen Looney, and Jesse and Linda McCormick
 Lucy Fogle (Glenn Fogle's Mother) By: Joe Mac and Annie Bates
 Dr. Dave Gatti By: The Pearls (Jane Barnhill, Nell Lester, Kathy Rogers, Linda Thomas, Donna Wilmot and Joann Scott), and Barry and Bill Lide

Tedi Neely Butler By: North Carolina Music Educators Association, Barbara and Dub Hammett, Kit and Ava McNair, Karen Robertson, and Lyn Paschal

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

David Alexander "Bo" Ellisor September 14, 1933 - November 1, 2023

Tedi Neeley Butler April 30, 1957 - November 5, 2023

Dr. David Joseph Gatti August 19, 1939 - November 12, 2023

Dr. Billy Mac McCathern July 30, 1935 - November 17, 2023

Kelly Littlejohn McLaren in the loss of her father, **Roy Dean Littlejohn** 

#### **ROSEBUD** (in celebration of the birth of)

Margot Ruby Blais was born November 21. She was born to Kelsey Murrell and Frederic Blais. Her proud and excited grandparents are Bentley and Karen Murrell.

#### ATTENTION all committee chairs, Circle Presidents, Prayer group leaders and other group leaders:

You <u>must</u> reserve a church meeting space for 2024 through the church office. Please contact Susan at Susan@UnionIrmo.org and let her know the times, dates, and room you need reserved. The church calendar is updated in real time and available on our website at UnionIrmo.org.

# The January Union Connection Deadline is December 13.

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

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

# The Church office will be closed December 22, 25 & 26 for Christmas.

# 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

Day School Finance Stacie Vandervelde

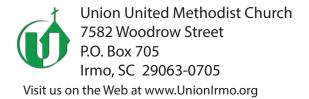
Facilities Manager Ned Calvert

Assistant Facilities Manager Steve Ragan

Nursery Coordinator Andrea Williams

Production Manager Jake Cosentino

Organist Joey Rothfuss



If you would like your name removed from this newsletter mailing list, please contact the church office at 803-781-3013.

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# Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina



Join us <u>this</u> weekend for Union's 30<sup>th</sup> presentation of The Living Christmas Story!

Sunday worship times: 9 a.m. Traditional worship 11 a.m. Contemporary worship Telephone: 803-781-3013 Fax: 803-781-3034

www.unionirmo.org

Ministers: Rev. Stephen Taylor, Senior Minister Rev. Faye Jones, Associate Minister

