



UNION Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina

Hints for a Healthy Body

You may be thinking of saying to me what they said to Jesus, "Physician, heal thyself." In other words, give your advice to yourself. That would be fitting since I begin my cardiac rehab this month and know I have some diet and lifestyle changes to make. But the healthy body I am referring to is not the physical one. It's the body the Apostle Paul wrote about, the body of Christ, which is the Church.

We have been blessed to have had an amazing year of ministry in 2023. It is by God's grace, of course, but it is also because Union has solid leadership on its Church Council and ministry teams. While denominational anxiety has swirled around us, we have been able to stay focused on our witness and making an impact on our community through service. Well done, good and faithful servants.

Now is the time to "keep on, keeping on," and keep our church spiritually healthy. This is the year of a General Conference for the United Methodist Church. There will be a continuation of rumors and dire predictions for churches that Stay UMC. But I still believe that if we refuse to get caught up in such divisiveness, if we keep striving to be disciples of Jesus, and if we keep demonstrating God's love that welcomes everyone, we will be fine, and God will bless our faithfulness.

So, here's three suggestions, or hints, for a healthy church body this year.

First, intentionally work on keeping yourself spiritually healthy. If you do not have a routine of spiritual practice, begin one. Just as you feed the physical body each day, you also need to be fed spiritually, with reading scripture and time in prayer. Get involved in a Bible study, a class, a circle or other small group to grow in your faith. Service is important, and our people are great at that, but we can't afford to neglect the personal time we spend with God.

Secondly, help someone else. We need to attend to our own spiritual state, but we can't stay inwardly focused. One hazard in a well-established church like ours is that long-time friendships and groups can unintentionally develop into cliques. So, make it your aim to add a couple of new friendships this year. Make new places in your life for new faces!

Finally, choose the positive. One of my wife's churches had a seasonal emphasis called, "Tell Me Something Good." Members were encouraged to think about and share the good things God was doing in their lives and in their church. Now that's a habit we can all develop. Let others dwell in negativity if they wish. Turn off the voices designed to keep you anxious and angry. Our God is with us, is at work doing a new thing, and is faithful to the end! Why should our hearts be heavy or sad?

You see, there's no great revelation in these hints. It's just a reminder as we start 2024 to attend to the things that will keep us faithful, united, and joyful – a healthy body called Union UMC!

Blessings to all, Stephen



The Living Christmas Story!

The 30th edition of TLCS started with a celebration on Wednesday, November 29, that included prayers for the rainy weekend forecast and God delivered! A total of **3,617 visitors** drove through Bethlehem and **169 dayschool students** walked through Bethlehem to become part of the story!

While TLCS has come and gone, the blessings will continue. With gratitude and love we put away our "Backyard Bethlehem" for another year, but not before thanking the many people who made it possible. This church-wide ministry involved people of all ages from newborns to our most senior members. ***We are grateful to all who helped.*** Volunteers prepared, repaired, and washed hundreds of costumes, laid miles of electrical wiring, placed lights, directed traffic, fed the cast and crew, assigned cast members, helped publicize the presentations, and did many other jobs, large and small, that were necessary for Union's presentation of the story of our Savior's birth.

This was truly a church-wide ministry! And judging from all the comments of appreciation from people who traveled through our "Backyard Bethlehem" it was worth every hour spent in our labor of love!





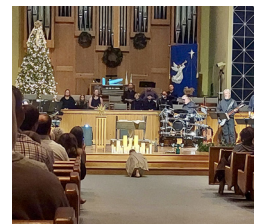
Lessons & Carols

Presented by Union Chancel Choir
on December 10



The Living Nativity

Led by our Union Praise Band
on December 17



SonZone Christmas Party Fun!



Merry Christmas! We had a lot of fun at our Christmas celebration on December 10. Check out the pictures of some amazing (Chocolate Chip!) cookie houses. There is a lot of creativity going on! And yes, some of the pieces were consumed and lot of sugary energy could be felt.

We then passed around our Christmas ornaments from left to right and right again. There was some laughter there trying to keep our lefts and right straight. And then we ended on a musical note with our Christmas song Pictionary. Boy did it get competitive! But fun and silliness were had by all as we wrap up our 2023 year.

SonZone will be back in action in the New Year on **January 14**. We hope everyone enjoyed The Living Nativity and Christmas Eve; and enjoys New Year's and the Basketball tournament. Merry Christmas!



Parent's Time Out!

Save the Date!

February 10 - 11-2 p.m.

April 20 - 11-2 p.m.

June 15 - 11-2 p.m.

August 3 - 11-2 p.m.

October 12 - 11-2 p.m.

November 23 - 11-2 p.m.

Do you need a break or need to get things done around the house and childcare is so expensive?

Check out our Parent's Time Out this year.

We are offering 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every other month 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.

RSVP by the Wednesday before to Andrea Williams at: andreamarie6368@gmail.com be sure to include any allergies when you sign up.

SonZone

Sunday	Topic
Dec 31	<i>Happy New Year</i>
No SonZone	
Jan 7	<i>Basketball Tournament</i>
No SonZone	
Jan 14	8 – Giving my All for Jesus
Jan 21	BE BOLD - 1

Youth Small Group Fun



NAUGHTY OR NICE HEIST

ESCAPE PLAN



Join Us!

Union is hosting the SC UMC State Basketball Tournament on Jan. 5-7, 2024.

Come represent Union and cheer on our several Union basketball teams!



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>

HIGH SCHOOL WINTER RETREAT REGISTRATION IS OPEN NOW!

HIGH SCHOOL ONLY winter retreat to Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg! We'll stay together in a mountain house where we'll cook, play games, and just hang out and have amazing fellowship together. Of course, we'll also visit areas of Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg as well! The purpose of the retreat is fellowship and spiritual renewal!

Sign up at the link below today as there are LIMITED spots available!

Dates: February 16-19, 2024

Cost: \$350 per person

<https://union.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2051829>

Christmas “Special Donations” for Sharing God’s Love - 2023

In Honor of:

- Lewis and Arlene Milligan from your children and grandchildren
- Gail Elfert and Jerry Todd from Frieda Todd
- Jessica and Thomas from Marshall and Lora McKinney
- A special gift from an anonymous friend
- Our children and grandchildren from Robert J. May and Ann A. May
- A special gift from John Michael and Beth Montgomery
- A special gift from Clarke and Paige Smith
- Evelyn McEntyre from Morgan and Joyce Stokely
- A special gift from an anonymous friend
- Our children, their spouses and our grandchildren by Lewis and Arlene Milligan
- Our children, Lee, Lauren, Sarah and Cate Hogan and Stephen, Joy, John and Hogan from Leon and Kathy Hogan
- A special gift from Patricia Burnette
- Our precious grandchildren, Ashley and Andrew from Jim and Ann Martin
- Our children Elizabeth Martin and Catherine and Todd Latiff from Jim and Ann Martin
- My wonderful sisters Jane Davis and Gayle Sheriff from Ann Martin
- Kenneth and Jean Peaden from Flora Kennedy
- Roy and Ann Copelan from Judy and Tim Livingston
- Tom and Cindy White from Reva and Jim Miller
- Burton and Mary White from Reva and Jim Miller
- Cathy Miller from Jim and Reva Miller
- Our friends and neighbors Jean Eng and Betty and Charlie Lorick from Reva and Jim Miller
- Our “Extended” families: Judy and John Vitters, Mary Ruth and Jim Negro, Elaine Bouxsein, and Frank Bouxsein and Mary Sue from Jim and Reva Miller
- The Staff and Volunteers of Sharing God’s Love from Brian and Ashley Samson
- Jim Martin, Thank you for always being there for me! From Debbie Goodman
- Thanksgiving to God for sending His son and in honor of the Upper Room Bible Study from Jane Graham
- The marriage of Kirk and Shannon on December 2, 2023 from Marcia and Grady Adkins
- Vic and Tim who lead us in Disciple Four, Thank you from your class.
- Pam Roberts, Connie Warren and Jane Brooks from Resel Bourne
- A special gift from an anonymous friend
- Our children and grandchildren from Bruce and Pat McDade
- To the glory of God and in honor of the Aline Leitner Fellowship Sunday School Class by Anna Bess Tisdale.

In Loving Memory of:

- Alice Milligan from Lisa Milligan, Anna-Stu and Hudson
- My sister Annette Thibodeau from Susan and Dud Phelps
- Jefferson Brody Bates, Jefferson Blakely Bates, II, Harriet Coleman Cox by Joe Mac and Annie Bates
- Our loved ones from Robert J. May and Ann A. May
- Celebration of the birth of Jesus, our Lord and in loving memory of Paul Jeter from Jeannie Jeter
- My husband Marion, love Judy Folk
- Cameron Littlejohn from Francis Littlejohn
- Verlon McEntyre, Dave and Nita Stokely from Morgan and Joyce Stokely
- Our daughter, Alice, by Lewis and Arlene Milligan
- J.P “Boots” Weatherford, Ruby DeHay Weatherford and Ken Weatherford from Leon and Kathy Hogan
- Ray and Helen Harrison, Loomis and Helen Haynes from Dave and Susan Harrison
- Lib and Ceil Sheriff, Dot and Bo Davis from Jane and Darren Davis
- Amelia McLane and Jeff McLane from Susan McLane and Ken Hoagland
- Lawrence and Jennie King parents of Hannah King Majewski, grandparents of Ashley and Melissa Majewski
- Frank and Mary Claire Majewski parents of Brian Majewski, grandparents of Ashley and Melissa Majewski

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

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Faye Jones in the loss of her sister,
Tierra Garvin

Richard Furman Jackson
September 16, 1943 - December 13, 2023

PEP! - People Enjoying People!

Bingo & Board Games - Wednesday, Jan. 10, at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall! We would love to have you join us!

January Event! -

Thursday, Jan. 25, at 12:30 p.m. in the FMC Gym. We'll be having a Lunch and Learn provided by Wellmore. There is no cost, but sign ups are due by Sunday, Jan. 21. More information will be on the sign up sheets in Sunday School boxes.

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

Christmas "Special Donations"
Continued

- "Tinkie" White from Reva and Jim Miller
- Robbie Miller from Reva and Jim Miller
- Our daughter Elizabeth, Terry Mooney, and Paul Jeter from David and Debbie Bruner
- Jan Croft from Richie and Vickie Eisenman
- Robert Gantt from Richie and Vickie Eisenman
- In memory of Terry Mooney from Jo Mooney
- To the glory of God and in memory of all the Soberg and Tisdale family members who have gone to their heavenly home by Anna Bess S. Tisdale.

**The February Union Connection
Deadline is January 17.**

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
January 2 and 15.**

Our Ministry Team

Senior Minister
Rev. Stephen Taylor

Associate Minister
Rev. Faye Jones

Minister of Visitation
Rev. David Anderson

Church Administrator
Susan Vinson

Administrative Assistant
Erin Schoolmeester

Finance Director
Eli Waltemire

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



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Visit us on the Web at www.UnionIrmo.org

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UNION Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina

***We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a wonderful New Year!***



**Join us January 5-7 for the SC UMC
State Basketball Tournament!**
Come represent Union and cheer on our
several Union basketball teams!

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

