

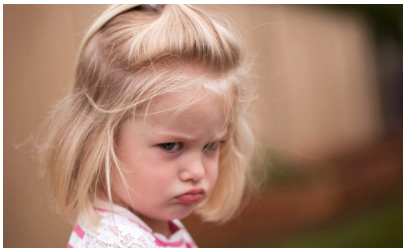


UNION Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina

The Big G

The other day I was simply a grump, and I'm willing to admit it. My wife, Cynthia, would probably ask, "What's unusual about that?" Wives have a constitutional right, I think, to make such remarks. But you know how it is when you're grumpy. You feel "put out" when things don't go just like you expect, when you're delayed a bit in your schedule, or when you're asked to do more than you think you should have to do. So, in response to such "grave and note worthy injustices" you become irritable and hard to get along with.



Grumpiness is a sly and persistent creature that will wait until you're tired, frustrated, or overwhelmed. Then it will quickly wrap you up in a deadlock before you know it. It's hard to break out of the Big G's hold on you and show patience and kindness. It usually takes outside intervention – like someone else being gracious to you for no reason at all, or God reminding you that you really aren't the Big Stuff you're starting to think you are, or, your wife's elbow jabbing you in the ribs.

Me? I rushed by the grocery store to buy a particular clothes detergent we use (for sensitive skin, ironically). It was half-price, and I was ready to load up. But the shelf was empty, and the stock boy said there wasn't any more in the store. I was "put out" and unfortunately grumpiness characterized my behavior to the hard-working stock boy and the checkout clerk. So much for my Christian witness that day! I'm just glad I wasn't wearing my shirt with the Union logo on it!

The truth is, it's just as easy for Christians to carry the Big G around as it is for anyone else. We can get "put out" when things aren't just like we expect them to be at church. Who knows how many church spats or damaged relationships have occurred because someone said something out of grumpiness instead of grace? Who knows the number of people who would make great leaders for ministries but refuse because they fear the people who have the Big G sitting on their shoulders.

But thanks be to God in that however much the chance exists for grumpiness to abound, the grace of God abounds even more! I see people repeatedly getting their "grumpiness guards" as they participate in worship, submit to God in prayer, study the scriptures, or work together in service to Christ. And the more we do these things, the more patient we'll be, and encouraging we'll be, when things aren't "just right." Others can then know us for the grace we show as we let God's Spirit guide us – and that's a lot better than an elbow to the ribs!

Blessings to all, Stephen

United Women in Faith Spotlight: Martha Circle

Martha Circle is a group of ladies of all ages that meet once a month from September to May. We typically meet on the second or third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at either a member's home or the church, depending on our mission work for the month. Our time together is spent in fellowship, supporting each other and growing in our relationship with God. We are currently studying Jennie Allen's book "Find Your People" and are discovering the importance of consistent, meaningful connections. We also host an annual "IF" women's weekend, featuring speakers from Jennie Allen's annual conference.

Our Circle's namesake comes from two very important ladies – Martha in the Bible, who was a significant New Testament figure, a personal friend of Jesus, and someone with whom many women today identify – and also Martha Thompson, the former Director of the Union UMC Preschool. From both of these amazing ladies, we learn the importance of balancing service with worship, of trusting the Lord even when all seems lost, and of using our resources for the glory of God.

Martha Circle's sole mission is to support the Lexington-Richland School District 5 Snack Pack Program. Our designated school is Harbison West in Irmo and we currently support 117 students at this elementary school. The Snack Pack Program provides nutritious food to students who do not have enough to eat throughout the weekend. The hope is to fill a hungry belly so that children are able to focus and be ready to learn on Monday morning.

We welcome all ladies to visit one of our monthly meetings and our "IF" women's gatherings throughout the year. Please join us! For questions and information about where our next meeting will be held, please contact Lauryn Harbour at (803) 727-0474.

Prayer Vigil for General Conference

We are part way through our prayer vigil for the United Methodist Church General Conference, which is in session April 23-May 3. If you didn't know or haven't started yet, join us!

We have prayer booklets in the narthex and available online! You can also follow us on social media and we have daily posts praying for General Conference.

Thank you for joining us in surrounding this conference in prayer!

Remember who we (Union) have decided to be -

"Union is committed to a discipleship of Jesus Christ, who is our Savior and Lord, and whose life and teachings serve as our standard and guide for all things.

We desire to live out the greatest commandment as taught by Jesus, which is, to love God with all that we are and have, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:27).

We believe that all persons are of sacred worth and dignity as part of God's creation and demonstrated by the ministry of Jesus Christ.

We therefore welcome all persons into the life and ministry of our congregation, without regard to race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, status, socioeconomic condition, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or faith history." - Union's Position Statement on Inclusion

Are Your Good Works Unending?

From The Endowment Committee

Salvation is in Jesus and not in our good works. We know we can't earn salvation through our actions. We do good works **because** of our salvation in Jesus - as a response to this gift.

How many of our good works occur from the work we do through Union? For a fair number of us, I would say a lot. What if our good works could continue into the future, long after we are gone, in tandem, side-by-side, with the future members of Union who are doing their good works in response to God's salvation? What a force for good in this community and in the world that would be!

This is not just a dream. This is precisely why the Endowment Fund was established; so that we can continue our good works through the ministries and the missions of Union, alongside of all those future members of Union, long after we are gone.

We're not asking for you to give money now. No, continue the good work you are doing through Union in response to your gift of salvation. What we are encouraging you to do today is to remember the Endowment fund in your will or as a beneficiary on your life insurance or retirement plan so that when that day comes and you are basking in the light with our Lord, your good works will continue here on earth as a response to the realization of your salvation.

For more information on the Union Endowment fund and how you can leave a legacy gift, please visit the Endowment page on Union's website at www.unionirmo.org/endowment.



Healing Service Recap

Union's first healing service was an evening set by the tangible presence of God. Members and friends from our community gathered for a night of worship, prayer and a short message intitled "A Thirsty Soul Revived," by Rev. Faye Jones.

Special thanks to the Michelle Cochcroft, our Contemporary Worship team, and our Praise band for the worship preparations. Also, a heartfelt thanks to our Prayer Teams who were willing to join people in prayer at the altar: Rev. Larry Hays, Susan Harrison, Tyquilo Moore, Rev. Stephen Taylor, Susan Elvis, Rev. David Anderson, and Grace McLane.

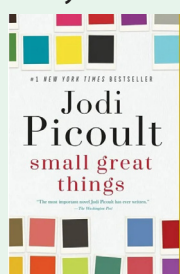
Be sure to look out for another healing service this coming fall.

The Wilson Circle Book Club

The book for our **May 14** meeting is *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult.

This meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall following the regular meeting of the Wilson Circle which begins at 12:00 p.m. If you are attending the Book Club but not the circle, please plan to arrive at 1:10 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact Harriet Simpson at 803-530-5060 or Becky Dixon at 803-361-5046.

May Book -



Line Dancing Class

Union's Leisure Ministries Team is offering a one time Line Dancing Class led by our own Linda Caldwell, our Dance Ministry lead choreographer.

Linda will lead us in some old favorites like Electric Slide as well as newer line dances! Headed to a summer wedding? Catch up on the latest moves. All ages are welcome and no dance experience is needed! It's all just for fun and fellowship!

Class will be held Saturday, **May 11**, 10-11:30 a.m. in the FMC Gym. Sign up in Sunday School or the Welcome Desk or call the church office so we know how many to expect.

Got questions? Email us at: UnionIrmoleisureteam@gmail.com.

Pastor's Tea

Pastor Taylor and Pastor Jones would like the women of the church to know of an opportunity to join them for an afternoon of tea and sharing. Pastor's Tea began a few months ago when Pastor Stephen realized that several women in our congregation had been widowed during the COVID years. At that time our Grief Share ministry had not resumed, so plans were made for small group gatherings to offer support.

Plans shifted as Grief Share started back, but with the volunteer guidance of a host, Linda Richardson, the monthly teas began on a trial basis. During this trial period, attendees were mainly selected from the retired members of our congregation. With encouragement from many initial attendees, we decided to continue the teas by offering the experience to the rest of the ladies of the congregation.

Pastor's Teas are held on the second or third Tuesday of the month, at 3:00 PM. There is no set agenda other than enjoying one another's company and getting to know each other better. The Common's Room comfortably allows for ten at a time, so each month invitations will be mailed to eight women. If you are interested, please let us know so we can include you on the list of women to invite. You may call the church office (803-781-3013) and ask to speak to Erin Schoolmeester, or email her at erin@unionirmo.org.

Rev. Lloyd Nyarota Preaching May 5

One of our Zimbabwe partners, Rev. Lloyd Nyarota, is coming to Union! Rev. Nyarota will be preaching at Union on Sunday, **May 5th**!

He will be preaching at both services - 9 & 11 a.m., so be sure to be here or check out our services online!

PEP! - People Enjoying People!

Bingo & Board Games -

Wednesday, **May 8**, at 1p.m. in the Fellowship Hall! We would love to have you join us!

May Event! -

Thursday, **May 23**, at 6:30 p.m. in the Family Ministry Center Gym. Our May patriotic program will be presented by our Director of Music Ministries, Frank Turner, and some of his IHS choral students. We will have a catered meal and the cost will be \$15 per person. Sign ups are due by Sunday, **May 19**. Sign ups will be in Sunday School boxes.

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



SonZone!



Hey Friends! We are in the downhill swing of our SonZone year and we are excited about the next couple weeks.

We hope all our 4th and 5th graders will join us Sunday nights at 4:45 p.m. for some games, snacks and lessons on being BOLD.

Watch the schedule as there are some special weeks we won't meet.

April 28	Where is God in hard times?
May 5	What does the bible say I'm supposed to be when I grow up?
May 12	No SonZone - Happy Mother's Day!
May 19	Wrap Party - Foam Party (Definitely wear soapy clothes!)



Save the Date!

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.



Vacation Bible School is coming!

Are you ready for a week of Camp fun?

Join us for Vacation Bible School as we head to "Camp Firelight: A summer camp adventure with God".

June 17-20 (Mon- Thurs) from 6:15-8 p.m.

The QR codes are active and ready to hear from you!

Volunteers - let us know how you can help! Some areas we will need help are: small group leaders, crafts, recreation, pack snack bags (before our week), traffic, and prayers for all our team and participants.

Volunteer Sign Up -



Parent Sign Up -



Parents - sign your kids up! (Please fill out a separate form for each child).

Be on the look out for our VBS friend Lumen...he will be stopping to check on preparations and be with us all week as we learn about God's love!

Save the Date and help us celebrate as we close our Vacation Bible School week at a Fireflies baseball game!



June 22nd at 6:05 p.m. we have reserved a block of tickets for a night out. Tickets will be \$11 each.

The ticket link is here!!

<https://fevo-enterprise.com/event/UnionUMC>
Invite family and friends! This is open to anyone who wants to enjoy a night of baseball!



Congratulations to our 2024 Confirmands!

Maddy, Duncan, Nora, Caroline, Caleb, Savannah, Charli, and Gretchen
 We are so proud of you and excited to continue to support and walk with you as you grow in your faith!



Student Leadership Team Applications

Applications are available! Rising 7th Graders and up may apply to be part of this fabulous team!

We gather bi-monthly to plan all things Youth of Union, and we have a blast doing it!

Our planning retreat will be **August 3-4, 2024**. See Eleanor Cannon for an application or more info!

VOLUNTEERS
 NEEDED

PARENTS: We need your help!

Each Sunday we have a meal for our Youth and we need YOUR help to make these meals happen!

Sign up at the link below to help prepare and serve a meal on a Sunday evening. We do ask that each parent signs up for at least 1 meal each year.

There are plenty of spaces open, so let's get them filled!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D48AEA92AA5FDC25-sunday2#/>

YOUTH OF UNION

End of Year PARTYYY!

MAY 19, 2024 5-7PM

FRIENDS WELCOME!

WWW.UNIONIRMO.ORG/YOUTH

Big Trustee Thank You!

Many thanks to all these volunteers and groups for their hard work across our campus!

- Removed dead shrubs at FMC by Jonathan Nash
- Power washed wall and walks at church office entrance by Larry Blosser
- Cut underbrush at lower parking lot on berm by Charles Ayer, Larry Blosser, John Gannon, Nick Harmon, and Brian Wisnewski
- Trimmed trees around Scout Building by Troop 95 Boy Scouts
- Trimmed trees and remove dead shrubs around campus by Bob Travis, Charles Ayer, Mac Sawyer, Van Peay, Larry Blosser, Darren Davis, Richie Eisenmon, John Gannon, Brian Wisnewski, Jon Mills, Wallace Steadman, Bill Gray, Henry Johnson, Donnie Allen, and Roy Copelan
- Cut underbrush in wooded area behind dentist office by New Life Sunday School Class
- Cleaned carpet and padded chairs in room LL 11 by Joy Sunday School Class
- Installed HVAC units in Wesley Center (Day School Administrative Offices) by Larry Blosser and Van Peay

Are you willing to help? We are still looking for individuals, classes, groups, and more to assist with other work projects around the church. Please contact Roy Copelan (803-917-1119) or any of the members of the Trustee Committee.



Adult Pickleball

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday are Pickleball Days, with Leisure Ministries Team hosting several Open Play times. **Open play does not require court reservations.**

Pickleball will not be available during weeks where the gym is reserved for events, such as the Joy Class Garage Sale or Vacation Bible School. Please check the calendar on our website for the most up to date information.

Come ready to play or watch! Paddles are available for use. ALL PLAYERS MUST SIGN LIABILITY WAIVER. To reserve private court time and paddles, scan the QR code on the right. If you have any questions, please email UnionlrmoLeisureTeam@gmail.com

- **Tuesdays** - 10am-12pm / 6pm-8pm - Open Play (12pm-6pm available for reserved play)
- **Wednesdays** - 6:30pm-8pm - Open Play
- **Fridays** - 10am-12pm - Open Play (12pm-5pm available for reserved play)

Sign up for
Pickleball here!



Memorials - March 26 - April 26

Memorials received in memory of:

Luke Utter By: Janet Sargent, Jane Graham, and Harriet Simpson

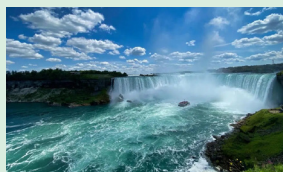
Iola Samson (Brian Samson's Mother) By: Mandy and Charles Ayers

David Gatti By: Donna and William McElveen, and Sharon and John Hanson

Mary Katherine Shealy (Jean and George How's niece) By: Connie and Bob Warren

Rev. James Shealy (Joan Bickley's brother) By: Harriet Simpson

Tedi Neeley Butler By: Mike Flippo



Best of Niagara Falls, Canada, and the Amish Country Trip - July 13, 2024

This is a PEP! trip, but is open to all family and friends. Also included: *Daniel* at the Sight & Sound Theatre. Trip starts **July 13, 2024**.

Meals included are 5 Continental Breakfasts and 3 Dinners. Price per person: Double: \$1389; Triple: \$1279; Quad: \$1225; Single: \$1779.

Deposit of \$350 per person and insurance is due at the time of booking. **Claim your spot now!** Final payment is due June 13, 2024.

Please contact Faye Bailey at fayebailey424@gmail.com or 803-331-4349 for itinerary, reservation forms and questions.

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

IN MEMORIAM

Arnold Medlock in the loss of his brother,
Peter Way

John May in the loss of his father,
Robert Johnston May Sr.

Celebrating the Birth of

Noah Thomas Keith was born March 25.
He was born to Matthew and Sara Keith.
His grandparents are Doris and Tom Keith.

Scam Alert

Some members of the congregation have received texts or emails which claim to be sent by Rev. Taylor. A request for assistance is made and some even ask the recipient to purchase gift cards. *Please know these are scam messages and either ignore, delete or report them.*

Careful investigation will show the return email address or the phone number listed has no association with Union UMC or Rev. Taylor. On our end we have changed passwords several times, and we make our passwords complex. Other churches and pastors are dealing with similar scam artists targeting their congregations.

Until we can find a way to stop such scams, please be aware they exist. Rev. Taylor says that if he needs money, he'll wait until you're in church and then have the ushers pass an offering plate! Otherwise, be on your guard, and pray that people who do such things will come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to transform their lives.

**The Church office will be closed
May 27 for Memorial Day.**

**The June/July Union Connection
Deadline is May 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 Administrator
Susan Vinson

Administrative Assistant
Erin Schoolmeester

Finance Director
Laura Mars

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

Assistant Day School Director
Paige Morgan

Day School Finance Director
Stacie Vandervelde

Facilities Manager
Ned Calvert

Assistant Facilities Manager
Steve Ragan

Nursery Coordinator
Andrea Williams

Production Manager
Jake Cosentino

Organist
Joey Rothfuss



Union United Methodist Church
7582 Woodrow Street
P.O. Box 705
Irmo, SC 29063-0705

Visit us on the Web at www.UnionIrmo.org

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 Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina

Joy Class Spring Garage Sale
This Saturday, April 27 - 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Day School Sunday
This Sunday, April 28 - 9 & 11 a.m.

Red Cross Blood Drive
This Sunday, April 28 - 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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

