



UNION Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina

Do You Want To Be Healed?

Jesus and some of his followers walked into the large double pools just north of the temple where large crowds gathered. Many of the people were there to wash or collect water, but the majority were there because they were sick. Under the porticos was a good place to hang out and beg, but there was also a legend that every now and then an angel would stir the waters and the first one into the pool was healed. Picturing the mad scramble to get into the water, it kind of sounds like a tragic pool game, doesn't it?



There was a beggar there who for 38 years couldn't walk. Jesus walked up to him and asked, "Do you want to be healed?" The man began to offer excuses, but that wasn't what Jesus was asking about. Jesus could make the man well, but he was not going to force healing and change on the lame man. He first wanted to know if the man wanted to be made whole.

That's a question each of us must consider. Without a doubt each of us needs the healing presence and power of Christ in our lives. Our needs may be physical, mental, relational or spiritual. But Christ will not force us to take the path to forgiveness, healing and wholeness.

That path brings changes. We may have to let go of some behaviors and attitudes. We may need to adopt new practices. Like the lame man, we may need to put our faith in Christ and figuratively roll up our old mat and walk into a new future.

As Union spends this year claiming the Year of the Lord's Favor, you will have opportunity to participate in several events designed to help us live into the mission Jesus proclaimed - to bring hope to the poor, sight to the blind, and release to the captives (Luke 4).

We hope you will join in the spiritual formation groups, Bible studies, healing services, community meals, and outreach and mission events. But first, deal honestly with yourself: ***Do you want to live into the hope and healing that Christ offers?*** Stand up, roll up your baggage and come with us!

- Stephen



Give Sight -

For every \$250 we raise for the April Cataract Camp at Healing Guatemala (one of our mission partners) we can actually give sight to a blind person! It may take a little work, and maybe a little sacrifice, but with success you can tell your friends, "I gave sight to a blind person this year!" This mission runs from February 2 to March 2. Get involved and Give Sight as we continue the mission of Christ!

More information on this mission can be found on page 8.

KNOW Christ, SHARE Faith, SHOW Grace

FEBRUARY
2025

The Living Christmas Story

The 31st edition of TLCS started with **230 preschool students** and their teachers walking through Bethlehem. Thank you to the PEP group for organizing volunteers. A total of **3,364 visitors** drove 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!



The Living Nativity

On Sunday, December 22, we loved sharing the story of Jesus with so many of our church family and friends. I would like to thank the band, the ensemble, the 11am worship team and all of the children and youth who are always willing to participate and help bring this event to life. For me, this year felt extra special being so close to Christmas Day. It also felt like with all the crazy happening in our world, we all needed to take a breath and sit in His presence as we prepared to celebrate His birth. I hope this gave you that opportunity. Thank you for your continued support. ~Michelle Cochcroft



Living into Hope & Healing

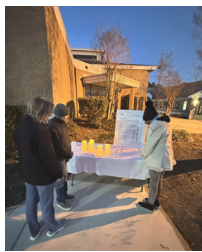
Creating habits of prayer that increase our mental health.

Mental health is a big topic in 2025. While it is growing in popularity and media presence, the things that are important for a healthy lifestyle and mental well-being remain the same and have been for years. Prayer is a habit that gets less air time in the mental health buzz. One can not deny that prayer provided us with opportunities for mindfulness, long before mindfulness was popular.

At Union, we kicked off our year of hope and healing with a Prayer Walk. The walk was a time to reflect, recenter, and focus on hope for the future. The time together as a community lets us remember what time together feels like without the busy hustle and bustle of the day's errands and worries. This community reminds us that we are not alone and through our shared time and habits we move forward with hope and healing. Each of the seven prayer stations focused on those things that help us to find hope, overcome challenges, and keep our hearts focused on the message of Jesus.

The prayers reminded us to focus on gratitude, find joy in developing faith, explore diversity in our community, listen to the music around us, set aside time for service opportunities, learn more about our faith, and release our fears for Hope in our future. Finding time to integrate prayer into your habits will grow your faith and your mental health.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this new event. Those who cooked the soup, acted as prayer guides, braved the cold, came for fellowship, gave your gifts of music, or just passed on the invitation to someone new. We hope you continue to have these opportunities in the year ahead. If you would like a copy of the prayers prayed during our prayer walk, there are copies in the narthex, as well as outside of Rev. Faye's office.



There were several requests for recipes for the soups, so by popular demand:

Taco Soup

- 3 cans Ro*Tel petite diced tomatoes with green chilis
- 2 cans of black beans
- 1 can white kidney beans
- 2 large chicken breasts-sauteed with taco seasoning (don't add water); cut into small pieces
- 1 ½ cup diced sweet peppers (any color)
- ½ cup finely diced onion
- 6-8 cups chicken stock
- 16 oz frozen corn

Put all ingredients in the crock pot and cook on high until a boil. Then add:

- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoon chipotle pepper
- 2 teaspoon cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ⅓ cup cornmeal

Turn the crockpot to low and cook for awhile. It's always better on the second day. Make early and refrigerate overnight to serve the next day with tortilla chips.

Check out your next opportunity to engage with "Living into Hope & Healing" on page 8.





SonZone Christmas & New Year Fun

We had a fantastic Christmas with our annual Christmas party and New Year's games. Check out the pictures for a glimpse into the silly fun we had!

All 4th and 5th graders are invited to join us in this new year, on Sunday nights from 4-5:15pm. We gather in room 227 just off the Sanctuary. If you want to receive email updates let Suzy know: suzy@unionirmo.org. Check out our spring calendar on the right!



Spring SonZone Calendar	
Feb. 2 - 4-5:15pm	Love Your Enemies
Feb. 9 - 4-5:15pm	Sharing God's Love Visit
Feb. 16	No SonZone
Feb. 23 - 3pm	Union Basketball Banquet
March 2 - 4-5:15pm	Don't Worry
March 9 - 4-5:15pm	Be Happy When Others are Mean to You
March 16 - 4-5:15pm	I am the Way, the Truth and the Life
March 23 - 4-5:15pm	The First Will be Last
March 30 - 4-5:15pm	Put Me First



Save the Date!
February 15 - 11-2 p.m.
 May 24 - 11-2 p.m.
 August 9 - 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 month. We are offering 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. break 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.

Kids Night Out Fun

What a fun night we had during Kid's Night Out on January 4! We had 14 kids from 7 months old to 9 years old. Since it was Epiphany weekend we celebrated the Wisemen coming to see Jesus. We played games and got some energy out in the gym. Then made our own treasure boxes to collect "gifts" in all year long. We wrapped up our night with pizza and a movie "the Star." Even our nursery kids got to make treasure boxes and enjoy some pizza! Thanks to our volunteers for making the fun happen!!!



Small Group Adventures

On November 24 we had our biannual small group adventures!
We had groups go bowling, jump at Flight, make pizzas and ornaments, and so much more!
Check out some of the fun below!



Sharing God's Love Toy Drive Success!

A huge thank you to all who donated toys for our Youth of Union Toy Drive to stock Sharing God's Love Christmas Toy Shop! We took several car loads worth of toys to SGL. Thank you for making an impact!





Union Basketball Banquet

Will be held on Sunday, **February 23** at 3:00pm in the FMC Gym. All 2024-2025 season players, coaches and parents are invited to attend.

Middle School Retreat!

MARCH 14-16, 2025

EPWORTH BY THE SEA
ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GA

Sign-ups start Feb. 1! Be on the look out for a sign-up link!

COST \$200

Youth of Union need your help!

We're looking for Sunday Morning Youth Discipleship leaders to lead our Youth classes on Sunday mornings. You will be put on a teaching rotation and teach either middle or high schoolers once a month. We are currently working on a discussion-based study series that is taking us throughout the Bible – each session is mapped out for you with discussion questions (and answers) – it's very simple to lead by!

For more information or if you are interested, please contact Thomas Walsh at thomas@unionirmo.org.



Souper Bowl of Caring

Will be celebrated on Sunday, **February 9** (Super Bowl Sunday). Youth of Union will be collecting monetary donations in "Souper Bowl" pots for Sharing God's Love. Bring your extra change for Sharing God's Love!

Youth of Union Christmas Party Fun!





Give Sight

Give Sight with Healing Guatemala

Bethesda Hospital has held several Cataract Camps, where doctors spend a week at the clinic performing as many as 80 cataract surgeries. Such surgeries are far beyond the financial abilities of the majority of people in the area. Healing Guatemala charges each person \$50, and depends on donations to cover the remaining \$250 of the cost of each surgery.

Beginning February 2, members and families can "adopt" a doll figure that represents the person to whom they will give sight. The goal is to raise funds during February and on Transfiguration Sunday, March 2, celebrate God's grace that allows us to directly be a part of Jesus' mission to give sight to the blind.

Check out the narthex on Sunday, February 2, for more information and how you can get involved and Give Sight as we continue the mission of Christ!

Union is partnering with Rev. Luke Rhyee, MD, and Healing Guatemala to bring sight to the blind through their Cataract Camps



YESENIA

Yesenia is 21 years old. She was born with congenital cataracts, which left her completely blind at 5 y.o. Yesenia lived blind for 16 years until she got cataract surgeries in both of her eyes at Bethesda Cataract Camp in October 2024.

Calling all Union Ladies!!

Save the Date



United Women in Faith

Come join United Women in Faith for their Lenten Celebration

Grits, Grace and Gratitude

Saturday, March 8, 2025, 10:00 am-12:00 pm

Family Ministry Center

Brunch to include a Grits Bar with all the condiments, Fruit, Muffins and Beverages

Speaker, Linda Richardson
The Three Gs and the Season

We will collect a Love Offering to benefit

Scan the QR code below to sign-up today!



Aldersgate
SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY



Friday Night Lights

Join us for our Friday night women's gathering. We will eat, worship, fellowship and go deeper into His word together. This is a time to step away from the chaos and into a space of peace and restoration with your sisters in Christ.



FRIDAY FEBRUARY 21ST

6PM - 9PM

UNION UMC CHAPEL

\$30 PER TICKET

WWW.EVENTBRITE.COM OR

UNIONIRMO.ORG

Be sure to save the date for our Spring IF Women's Conference!
April 4-5


HOLY SMOKES
PATHFINDERS
 BARBECUE

SUPER BOWL SUNDAY
GRAB & GO BBQ FUNDRAISER

Support the Pathfinders Sunday School Class
Funds raised assist local missions

<p>Pre-order in Narthex Jan. 12 & 19 or in Adult Sunday School Classes Jan. 12-Feb. 2</p>	<p>\$15 per lb. OR \$60 for 5 lbs. (packaged in 5-1 lb. tubs)</p>	<p>Pre-orders only Pick up Wesley Center Porch February 9 10:00 am-12:15 pm</p>
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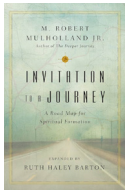
*cash or check made payable to Pathfinders Class or
 Venmo: @jenni-farmer-1
 Paypal: jennifarmer0228@yahoo.com

Spiritual Formation Covenant Group

Spiritual formation is a lifelong process of deepening one's relationship with God and becoming more Christ-like. We will cover: the process, aligning with the image of Christ, the scope and impact of our lives, spirituality, pilgrimage, spiritual disciplines and companions on the way.

This program will be divided into four sessions during 2025. The first session will be offered: (choose which works better for you, days or evenings)

Tuesdays - February 11, 18, 25 and March 4. 10:00-noon
OR Thursdays - February 6, 13, 20, 27. 6:00-8:00pm



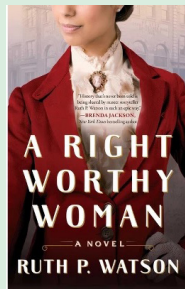
The book, *Invitation to a Journey, A Road Map for Spiritual Formation* by M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. will be used throughout. This book is available from a variety of sellers including Amazon and Thriftbooks. All participants should acquire their own copy. The book and a notebook will be needed for each class. The program will be facilitated by Susan Harrison.

To register: susanhharrison@me.com or text 704-657-6918 or by scanning the QR code on the right. Direct any questions to Susan. Room location will be announced closer to the start of the program.



Wilson Circle Book Club

The next meeting of the Wilson Circle Book Club is Tuesday, **February 11, 2025** at 1:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.



We will be discussing the book, *A Right Worthy Woman: A Novel* by Ruth P. Watson. Based on the inspiring true story of Virginia's Black Wall Street, the novel tells the story of Maggie Lena Walker, the daughter of a formerly enslaved woman who became the first Black woman to establish and

preside over a bank in the United States. She went from school teacher to secretary-treasurer of the Independent Order of St. Luke, founder of a newspaper, a bank, and a department store where Black customers were treated with respect. Best-selling novelist Patti Callahan Henry calls this a "remarkable and stirring" work.

There is one copy of the book in the UWF collection in the Church Library, one copy in the Lexington Public Library, and three copies in the Richland County Public Library. The Richland Library also has an audio book. All are welcome to join us. If you have questions, please contact Harriet Simpson at 803-530-5060 or Becky Dixon at 803-361-5046.

PEP! - Bingo & Board Games -

Wednesday, **February 12**, at 1p.m. in the Fellowship Hall! Bingo fun first, then board and card games to follow. Snacks and prizes will be awarded. We would love to have you join us!

LAKE MURRAY HISTORY TOUR

WELCOME UNION-UNTIED METHODIST

SATURDAY 12-2 PM
\$35 ADULT / \$30 CHILDREN

Spirit of Lake Murray

Saturday History Bunch Cruise

■ Saturday, February 22, 2025 12:00 PM

Saturday 2 Hour History Cruise! 12-2pm. Brunch Menu available for purchase during the cruise. Boat opens at 11am for seating. Hosted by PEP!

Reservations are required and must be completed online (spiritoflakemurray.com). If anyone needs help with booking their reservation, please contact Faye Bailey for assistance. Book now as this is on a first come basis.

We will meet in Ballentine at the Spirit of Lake Murray, 216 Shadowood Drive, Irmo, SC 29063.

Trustees Update and Thank you!

A big thank you to the following:

- Hannah and Brian Majewski for painting the handrails in the upper and lower parking areas.
- Charles Ayer - for putting out pine straw in the shrub beds
- Clarke Smith, Bob Travis and Charles Ayer - spreading pine straw around campus shrub beds (from TLCS scenes).

Volunteers needed to continue painting the hand rails around our campus. Contact Roy Copelan via phone at 803-917-1119.



PICKLEBALL

TOURNAMENT

Saturday - March 1, 2025
Mixed Doubles - All Skills Welcome
\$40 per player; donations accepted from spectators
100% profits toward Union's Snack Pack Program,
(a part of Lex-Rich District 5 Snack Pack)

More Information & Register
Union's Team Reach app

Union UMC
7882 Woodrow St
Irmo, SC 29063

Yoga Class Begins!

Leisure Ministries Team is sponsoring a new weekly Yoga Class beginning on Monday, January 27, 6-7 pm. Class will take place in the Underground Room in the Education Building. Use side entrance near courtyard. No Yoga experience is necessary. Please bring a Yoga mat, water bottle and \$10 for the instructor.

The instructor for this class is Shelley Owen, who attends Union and is an experienced, certified Yoga instructor. No advance sign up is needed. Please join us! For more information see Eleanor Cannon or Shelley Owen.

Quilt Update from Linda Walker

Many thanks to Union for the quilts and blankets that we took to Old Fort North, NC. We had 89 quilts and blankets that ranged in sizes for children to Queen size. The delivery to Cathy Moore was distributed at the Baptist Church as it was on a hill side. The baby and children's blankets were distributed that day and the adult blankets went to people who were displaced. Your gifts were greatly appreciated. Thank you for your generosity. - Linda and Don Walker

Recreation Updates

Basketball: Open gym play for adults who love basketball and enjoy friendly full court competition. Monday nights at 8:00pm. Contact Brian Samson at 803.608.2288.

Golf: Which team will be crowned this year's Union's Golf Champions? The tournament will be held on Monday, **October 13**. The format will be Captain's Choice with a shot gun start. Contact Scott Conley at 803.318.0130.

Hikepaths: Group hikes are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. The 5-6 mile hikes are coordinated by Dave Moxley.

Total Body Workout: Get your Total Body Workout with Libby Miller on Tuesdays from 5:45-6:45pm in the Wesley Center. Please bring your water bottle.

Walking Track: The walking track is open weekdays during regular office hours. Sign In required at the Church Office.

Memorials - November 24 - January 26

Memorials received in memory of:

Al Gibson By: Connie and Bob Warren, the John Rowland Sunday School Class, and Donna and Jimmy McLeod

Eugene Thompson By: Penny and Rob Thompson

Nancy Sauer By: Sue and John Gannon

Don Davis By: Fay Davis

Susan Derrick By: Nora Whitely

Holmes Bouknight (Susan Smith's Father) By: Libby and Donnie Allen

Orris Bickley By: Mandy and Charles Ayers, Leola Burch, Joan and Tom Goff, Toni and Maceo Nance, Judy Weston, Connie and Bob Warren, Jerry, Cathy, Harrison, Bethany and Evelyn Brooks, Fay Davis, Jean Eng, Jane Graham, Barry and Billy Lide, Patricia and Larry Morrison, Delores Stamper, JoAnne Timmerman, Patsy and Pat Towerly, and the Aline Leitner Fellowship Sunday School Class

Jerry Washabau By: Becky and Bob Travis, Connie and Bob Warren, Barbara and Dub Hammett, Jo Mooney, Annie and Joe Mac Bates, A. Richard Kron, Michael Blanchette, and Sandra Kammermann and Skip Valois

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

IN MEMORIAM

Lauryn and Kelly Harbour in the loss of Lauryn's grandmother, **Joni Young**.

Susan Smith in the loss of her father, **Holmes LeRoy Bauknight, Jr.**

Carroll and Richard Dent in the loss of Carroll's mother, **Jean C. Roberts**

Major Gerald "Jerry" McCullough Washabau
May 27, 1957 - January 10, 2025

Orris Franklin Bickley, Jr.
September 18, 1933 - January 14, 2025

Llewellyn Golson Hiott Hames
January 5, 1937 - January 24, 2025

ROSEBUD

(in celebration of the birth of)

Carson James Poston was born on December 22. He was born to Andrew and Alexis Poston. Carson's grandparents are Trina Poston and Larry Poston as well as Timothy and Tara Stewart.

Honorariums - November 24 - January 26

In honor of **Mandy, Charles, and Zoe Ayers** by: Claire and Frank Manning

In honor of **Ashley Majewski's graduation from Clemson University** by: David and Maria Anderson

Save the Date

Ash Wednesday Service - March 5

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper - March 4

More information to come on both of these events!

The March Union Connection
Deadline is February 12.

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 Nedbalek

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



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Irmo, SC 29063-0705

Visit us on the Web at www.UnionIrmo.org

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"The Spirit of the Lord is upon us,
because he has annointed us -
to bring good news to the poor
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind
to let the captives go free;

To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor!"
- Luke 4:18

***You are invited
to join us as we
Live into Hope
& Healing
throughout 2025!***

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

