

Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina

An Unexpected Lesson

Many years ago, I served as pastor of a church that was located on a busy highway. In fact, it was a major route to a popular beach. Two hundred yards up the road from the church was Madam Selene's place.

Madam Selene, as you might suppose, was a fortune teller, announced by a large sign in front of the modest white frame house.

Imagine my surprise one day when, working away in my office, I received a call from Madam Selene. She asked if I would please come to talk with her that afternoon. I had never met her before, but I wanted to be a friendly helpful pastor, so I said "Certainly."

After hanging up, I questioned my readiness to say yes to her. Did she have a complaint about the church? Were there questions about faith, or a personal crisis she wanted to talk about? She'd given no indication about why she requested the visit.

Then it dawned on me that everyone in that farming community knew my car. What would they think seeing it parked in front of the fortune teller's place? I thought about just walking up the road but decided that that would just raise more questions if I was seen.

So, mid-afternoon I knocked on Madam's door. When the door opened, I met the diminutive Helen Spears, aka Madam Selene. And before me was a richly furnished, dimly lit room, with the requisite round table and plenty of red crush-velvet draperies.

Helen thanked me for coming and said, "Let's go sit at the kitchen table to talk." She opened another door I hadn't noticed and ushered me through. The difference caught me off guard. I stepped into a bare dining room and through it to a starkly furnished kitchen, with a Formica dinette table and metal chairs.

After a bit of awkward small talk, Helen pulled out an envelope and slid it over to me. "I know your church does good work and I've been having a strong sense I need to make a donation" she said.

I looked in the envelope and saw five one-hundred-dollar bills. Surprised, and cautious, I then looked around the sparce kitchen again. Then I said something I shouldn't have. "Ms. Spears. I will be glad to put this gift in our mission fund, but as I look at your place here it seems you are barely getting by, and I don't quite feel right taking this much money from you."

Her eyes flared as she said, "Reverend, my heavenly Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and He will provide for all my needs! Please take the money and put it to good use."

Properly admonished, I apologized and thanked her. I invited her to come to a worship service some time, but she declined. "I appreciate the invitation," she said, "but my presence might not be appreciated by the people there."

A few minutes later I was back in my car again hoping I wasn't being watched by passing church members. Then it hit me. I didn't expect "Madam Selene" to know anything about the church, or the Bible (specifically Psalm 50), or God. I had set limits on the way I thought God could work or where God might show up.

A woman "outside the church," taught me, a minister "in the church," a lesson about being generous and trusting God. But sometimes God has to use the unexpected to teach us what we should already know. God is faithful. God provides. And we need to listen to God to shape our own generosity. Thanks be to God!

- Pastor Stephen

OCTOBER 2025



BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

On Sunday, August 3, we kicked off the school year with our fourth annual Back to School Bash! The Union Praise Band led us in worship and Reverend Stephen Taylor blessed the bookbags of over 75 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, face painting, and more indoors. The cake walk was a hit! Many thanks to everyone invovled, from volunteering to make cakes and cupcakes to donate, to face painting, to singing with us up front, and so much more; we appreciate you and your helping hands! As always we appreciate your generosity for our Snack Pack program, which feeds 100+ kids each week.

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









Welcome New Members!

We welcomed several new members into the Union family on September 14!

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



Chuck and Donna Lawrence



Peggy and John Wheeler



Kathy Strom



Cory and Ashley Anderson, with Clare



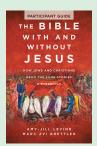
Lexy Poston, with Andrew, husband, and Carson, son

Wednesday Suppers are here!

Join us on Wednesday evenings through the fall for supper and fellowship. Menu's and study information are listed below. <u>Meals</u> are served from 5:30-6pm, and the activity or study is 6:15-7:15pm.

<u>Our study</u> for the fall is working through *The Bible With and Without Jesus: How Jesus and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently* by Amy-Jill Levine and Dr. Marc Zvi Brettler.

Participant books are \$18 each. You can order your own or indicate you would like to purchase one through the church and pick it up when you join us for the study.



Wednesday Night Schedule -

October 1 -

The Bible With & Without Jesus, week 3
Zaxby's Night

October 8 -

No Wednesday Night Supper
October 15 -

The Bible With & Without Jesus, week 4
BBQ Night, catered by TBA

October 22 -

The Bible With & Without Jesus, week 5 Soup and Salad Night, catered by TBA

October 29 -

The Bible With & Without Jesus, week 6
Pizza Night, catered by TBA

November 5 -

Snack Pack Night; dinner and activity

Online sign-ups are open now, scan the QR code on the right, or fill out one of our sign up sheets included in our weekly bulletins.

Recommended cost per person for dinner is \$9. (Union's cost per person is ~\$14.) Recommended family max (for a family of 5) is \$40.

RSVPs are due by the Sunday prior by 5pm.

Rest in Dignity Note of Thanks

On behalf of the Richland County Coroner's Office team, I want to thank everyone at Union United Methodist Church who attended our recent Rest in Dignity Burial Service and those who prayed over the work we were doing that day ... remembering those unclaimed and often forgotten. What a blessing to have several of your choir members sing and Rev. Stephen Taylor to share words of comfort as we laid our citizens to rest. Having your church support this service means a great deal to my staff, and to me personally. We are forever grateful for everyone's kindness and compassion.

- Naida Rutherford, Richland County Coroner









Thank you!

A note of thanks from our Day School for everyone's support at our Chick-fil-a Spirit Night on September 9. We raised \$600 from your mobile orders, and we already have another spirit night scheduled for the spring. Thank you for supporting our Day School!

Join us for Zaxby's Spirit Night on October 28!



SonZone

We have had a blast kicking off SonZone and looking forward to more fun to come. This Fall we are exploring God's Promises through games and activities. We have some special events coming up too, you don't want to miss.

Contact Suzy if you have not been receiving the email updates. (suzy@unionirmo.org) Hope your 4th and 5th grader will join us each Sunday night at 4pm.

SonZone Schedule for October	
September 28	God's Promise to Abram
October 5	God's Promise to David
October 12	God's Promise of a Savior
October 19	Pumpkin Carving Fun!
October 26	No SonZone - Trunk or Treat





GOOD CHICKEN FOR A GOOD CAUSE

15% OF PROCEEDS
WILL BE DONATED TO
UNION DAY SCHOOL

OCTOBER 28 • 3 PM - 7 PM



AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION: 1325 Dutch Fork Rd Irmo, SC

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Parents' Time Out! - Save the Date!

October 25 - 11-2 p.m.

We are offering an 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. break for infants through kindergarten. 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 (Oct. 22) to Andrea Williams at: andreamarie6368@ gmail.com be sure to include any allergies when you sign up.

Children's Music Team

Our Children's and Youth Music are off to a fantastic start! We are currently starting to work on learning music to sing for Christmas. Both groups will sing on December 14 for the Lessons and Carols service at 9am, and Christmas Eve at the Contemporary service at 4pm.

If you are interested in your youth/child singing, rehearsals are Sunday 4-5pm for Youth (6th-12th grade) and 5:15-6pm for kids (ages 4K-5th grade) in EB 106 (Underground). We are very excited our kids will be participating this year and would love to have as many families participating as possible!

Any questions contact Jaime Dow at Jaime@unionirmo.org.



14TH- KICKOFF! 5:15-6:00 PM 21ST- REHEARSAL 5:15-6:00 PM

28TH- REHEARSAL 5:15-6:00 PM

12TH- 5:15-6:00 PM

19[™] 5:15-6:00 PM

26TH- NO REHEARSAL TRUNK OR TREAT

NOV 9TH- 5:15-6:00 PM

NOV16TH 5:15-6:00 PM

NOV 23 5:15-6:00 PM

NOV 30 5:15-6:00 WITH YOUTH

DEC 10TH TENTATIVE DRESS REHEARSAL 6:00PM DEC 14TH CANTATA 9:00AM CHILDREN SING DEC 24 CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 4:00 CHILDREN SING

ContactJaime@unionirmo.org or text 803-391-0274



October 26 4:30pm

We need your trunk and we need you!

Set the date aside and get your trunk ideas in place!

Thanks for showing up last year with 55 trunks! Let's do it again!

Because of you, we were able to welcome over 400 kids and their families last year!

Sign up today by scanning the QR code on the right!



Signups in your Sunday School classes will be coming soon!

Let us know you will be able to come!

Questions? Email Suzy – suzy@unionirmo.org

Youth of Union Kickoff Fun!

We've had an incredible start to the year! With Lake Day, our Kickoff Party, and Family Worship Night, Youth of Union has had an exciting start to a new year. Check out some of the fun below!

























Youth Music Team

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FALL 2025

SEPT

21st- KICKOFF 4:00-5:00 pm 28th- Rehearsal 4:00-5:00 pm

OCT

12TH- 4:00-5:00 PM 19TH 4:00-5:00 PM 26-NO REHEARSAL TRUNK OR TREAT

NOV

2ND-HEALING SERVICE 6PM 9TH-4:00-5:00 PM 16TH 4:00-5:00 PM 30TH 5:15-6:00 WITH CHILDREN **

DEC

10th-Tentative Dress rehearsal 6:00pm 14th Cantata 9:00 am-Sing 24th Christmas Eve-4:00 pm Sing

Break until Jan 4th

Contact Jaime@unionirmo.org or text 803-391-0274



Youth of Union Fall Retreat: *NEW DATES*

Due to lack of availability of adult volunteers, Fall Retreat has been changed to November 14-16. We will still head to Awanita Valley for a weekend of fellowship, spiritual growth, relationship building, and fun! Registration is open large group teaching, and small group time. Lyndon Alexnow until October 27.

The cost is \$200 per person. Financial assistance is available. If needed or if you have any questions, please contact Thomas Walsh at thomas@unionirmo.org. Sign up using the QR code above!

October Schedule

Check out all we have coming up in the month of October. Reminder: Thomas will be out on paternity leave, but our incredible small group leaders have things under control!

Oct. 5 - Monthly Worship Night: Join us as we come together in worship and fellowship to kick off the month. As always, we will have dinner, games, a student witness, and small group time! You don't want to miss out, so make plans to join us.

Oct. 12 - With it being fall break weekend, we will take a night for fun and service. We will have dinner per usual, followed by helping pack Snack Packs. Then, we will play everyone's favorite, hide and seek, so make sure you don't miss out!

Oct. 19 - This will be a "normal" night of dinner, games, ander, Associate Pastor of the Hartsville Cooperative Parish and a good friend of Thomas' will be teaching and bringing some of his youth with him. Make sure to be there!

Oct. 26 - Come and either help out or participate in Trunk or Treat. You're never too old to dress up and get candy!



Union Basketball

The season is approaching, and we need your help and support in a few different ways.

- Our teams would love for you to come and catch a game and cheer them on throughout the season. Be on the lookout in November for schedules that will be available in the Narthex.
- Also, on November 2 and November 9 you can pick up your own merch to wear in support of
- Finally, we will be hosting some games at Union this year and we need help running the score tables. If interested, please contact Thomas at thomas@unionirmo.org.

We are looking forward to another great year of Union Basketball and can't do it without your support!

Union Basketball Merch



Hat: \$10

T-shirt: \$15

Sweatpants: \$15

Hoodie/Crewneck: \$25

FIRST EVER Union Basketball Pep Rally

Sunday, November 23rd



10am in the FMC Gym

Come meet and support our teams! Stickers for everyone!



Support our Youth

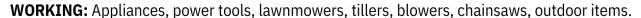
Are you interested in ways you can support our Youth here at Union? One great way to do this is to attend their events outside of church! Whether this is recitals, plays, concerts, or games, our students participate in a lot outside of the church walls and would love your support at their events. If interested, please contact Thomas at thomas@unionirmo.org for more information and schedules.

JOY CLASS FALL GARAGE SALE

SATURDAY, October 11, 2025 TIME: 8AM - 1PM

Union members and friends, we need your unwanted treasures!

Including: clothes, shoes, toys, bicycles, furniture, crafts, housewares, linens, video and audio tapes, CDs, books, jewelry, sporting goods, hardware, hand tools, and baby items.



Please: No TVs, monitors, armoires, large office or house furniture, mattresses, box springs, high chairs, cribs, baby beds, car seats, swings, playpens, encyclopedias, magazines, video or cassette tapes, non-working, soiled, ripped, worn or damaged items.

<u>Since our storage space is very limited</u>, you are encouraged to hold items until the week of the garage sale.

Your dropping off items during garage sale week is very helpful and appreciated. <u>Please note change:</u> No pick ups or drop offs on Friday, October 10.



Donation pickups and drop offs begin Monday, Oct. 6, through Thursday, Oct. 9, from 9am to 6pm.

No pick ups or drop offs on Friday, Oct. 10.

To schedule a pickup, or if you have any questions, please text (**preferred**) or call **Charles Ayer at 803-447-0212**, as soon as possible during the coming days.

Thank you for your continued support.

Ladies, Gome Join United Women in Faith for an Evening of



Tuesday, October 14, 2025 7-9pm in our Family Ministry Center

Don't know how to play? No Problem! Our UWF Ladies will be there to help you. It's easy, fun and a great way to meet people.

You can register online at unionirmo.org or with the QR code on the right!

Registration deadline is Tuesday, October 7th so we can prepare accordingly. You will pay your admission at the door.





\$25.00 Per Person



Wear Your Witch Hat and Get an Extra Door Prize Ticket!!





Proceeds to benefit the Lexington-Richland District 5 Snack Pack Program

PEP! - People Enjoying People!



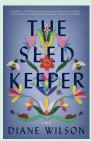
Bingo & Board Games -

Wednesday, **October 8**, at 1p.m. in the Fellowship Hall! Come join us for fun, fellowship, BINGO prizes and board games!

Apple Picking with PEP! -

A PEP! Excursion is planned for Thursday, **October 9**, **2025**. We will visit Jeter Mountain Farm in the Western North Carolina Apple Country. There will be apple picking via the fun tractor-pulled wagon ride to the many different orchard stops. You will view the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. There is no charge for the excursion. Lunch is on your own. We will meet in by the Union buses are no later than 8:15AM and depart promptly at 8:30AM. Riders will need to contribute money to cover the cost of refilling the gas in the bus prior to returning to the church. Estimated return time is between 6-7PM. There is limited space so if you sign up, please show up. FIRM DEADLINE FOR SIGN UP is OCTOBER 1, 2025. For any questions, please contact Faye Bailey at fayebailey424@ gmail.com.

Wilson Circle Book Club



The next meeting of the Wilson Circle Book Club will be held Tuesday, **October 14, 2025** at 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will be discussing *The Seed Keeper* by Diane Wilson. It's the story of Rosalie Iron Wing, a Native American girl from the Dakhota tribe, from the time she is placed in the foster care system at age 12 through her marriage to a

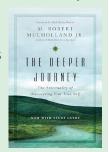
white farmer and her return to her abandoned childhood cabin in Minnesota following the death of her husband years later. As she struggles to survive, she discovers a hidden box of seeds left by her great-great grandmother. The story focuses on Rosalie but includes the perspectives of her great-great grandmother, her great aunt, and her best friend from childhood, each of whom reveals the effects of either the 1862 US-Dakota War, the removal of Indigenous children from their families, or modern farming practices on the water and land. *The Seed Keeper* won the 2022 Minnesota Book Award in Fiction.

There are two copies of the book in the UWF collection in the Church Library and 2 copies in the Richland Public Library. There are no copies of the book in the Lexington Public Library. It's available through Hoopla, although the Lexington Public Library system has announced that it is only providing Hoopla through September 30, 2025. 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.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH CLASS THE DEEPER JOURNEY

Robert Mulholland, jr. (author of *Invitation to a Journey*)

Join us as we delve deeper into our own spiritual formation and growth. Everyone is welcome (see prerequisites below). We'll be using Mulholland's *The Deeper Journey* book which you can acquire through any number of booksellers, including Amazon. Susan Harrison is the facilitator.



Tuesday, October 14 - 9:30 – 11:30am Fellowship Hall (read chapters 1-4) Tuesday, October 28 - 9:30 – 11:30am Fellowship Hall (read chapters 5-7)

<u>Prerequisites:</u> Read *Invitation to a Journey* or have taken the spring class; read assigned chapters before class as listed above.

To register, email susanhharrison@me.com or text 704-657-6918. Any questions, contact Susan.

Banner Babes at the Mann Event, an Artisan Fair

October 3 & 4 - Union's Banner Babes will have original, hand painted trees available for purchase at the Mann Event, an Artisan Fair, at Mann Tools (802 Chris Drive, West Cola). Come shop for your Christmas decorations and more. This artisan market is open on Friday, October 3, from 9am-4pm and Saturday, October 4, from 9am-2pm. All of the proceeds from the Banner Babes' sales will benefit Aldersgate Special Needs Ministry.

Union Needlers Need Your Help!

Our church is blessed to have 27 graduates (19 of which are boys as well as 8 girls) in the Spring of 2026. The Needlers need 100% cotton fabric to make quilts for them. Collections boxes will be in the Narthex and the church office. Thank you for helping us continue to gift our seniors with a token of our love for them!

Save the Date

Our next Service of Healing is **November 2, 2025** at 6pm

Congratulations Beth!

We congratulate our own Beth Sawyer who was awarded Woman of the Year for the United Women in Faith Columbia District on Saturday, September 20. The Woman of the Year award recognizes a woman who has worked within her church, as part of the United Women of Faith on a circle level and a church-wide level, and in her community to insipire others to be servants of God.

Beth has served as Union's UWF President for two years, and has been involved with her circle for over 35 years, serving in many different positions. Under her leadership, Union's UWF recently hosted its first Shower of Hope, a resource fair for families of young children which provided baby supplies and information from local community organizations. Beth volunteers her time with many different groups at Union, from greeting others at the welcome desk, serving on Church Council, participating in Disciple Bible study, leading a group at Vacation Bible School, and so much more.





Beth is a true servant leader. She gives her time and many talents to Union UMC on a daily basis with humility and grace, and she encourages others in our community to get involved. She is willing to take on any job, big or small, because of her vision for service at Union and the needs of others in the community. She is a living example of a true leader. She gives without receiving, responds to a call when asked, sees a need and fills it, and makes everyone she meets feel special. Congratulations Beth on being the Woman of the Year!

If you're interested in more information about UWF or would like to join a circle, please contact Beth at eosawyer22@gmail.com.



Will you be one of our 600 volunteers needed to bring Bethlehem to life for our Irmo community?

SIGN UP TO JOIN US TODAY!



Memorials - August 25 - September 21

Memorials received in memory of:

Flora Kennedy By: Herb Hames

William Kennedy By: Caroline and Jason Zimmerman, and Herb Hames

Jeff Rychener By: Herb Hames
Constance Bloom By: Judy Weston

Bill Anderson, Rev. David Anderson's brother By: Judy Weston, and Connie and Bob Warren

Honorariums - August 25 - September 21

Honorariums received in honor of:

Kay Brown By: Jane and Darren Davis

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

Gail Miller in the loss of her father, **Bob Harrell.**

Judy and Tim Livingston in the loss of Judy's step-brother, **Bruce Cullom.**

Mark and Domi Kyle in the loss of Mark's brother, **Karl Kyle.**

ROSEBUD (in celebration of the birth of)

Rhett Alexander Horne was born on August 29. He was born to Anne and Thomas Horne. Rhett's proud big brother is Grant Sanner. Rhett's grandparents are Kathy Anderson, Lynne McRae, and Tommy Horne. His great grandmothers are Dorthy Anderson and Terry Chapman.

Third Quarter Statements

The church will be emailing your contribution statement to you using the email address we have on file. If we do not have your email address, we will mail the statement to you. This is in effort to cut down on our cost for mailing with stamps, envelopes, labels & more. You can expect to receive third quarter statements the week of October 13.

If you have any questions, concerns, or would prefer to receive a paper copy, please contact Laura Mars in the church office. If you would like to verify or update your email address, please contact Tiffany Braley.

Thank you, Finance Committee of UUMC

The November Union Connection Deadline is October 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

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

Thomas Walsh

Administrative Assistant

Tiffany Braley

Director of Music Ministries

Frank Turner

Coordinator of Contemporary Worship

Michelle Cochcroft

Children's and Youth Music Director

Jaime Dow

Day School Director

Leslie Kulp

Assistant Day School Director

Paige Morgan

Day School Finance Director

Stacie Vandervelde

Facilities Manager

Tim Alewine

Assistant Facilities Manager

Steve Ragan

Nursery Coordinator

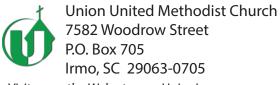
Andrea Williams

Production Manager

Jake Cosentino

Organist

Joey Rothfuss



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Dated Material Please Deliver Immediately

Trunk or Treat!

October 26 -4:30 p.m.!

Join us for games, crafts, popcorn, snacks, & trunks filled with treats!

