



UNION Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina

The Gratitude Crunch

Is November being squeezed out? It seems that November has significant days, important days that have lost their impact because of October and December.

Think about it. Halloween has become so big. People decorate at the beginning of October, and it carries on past the night of bewitching. On top of that, retailers begin pushing the Christmas season as soon as Halloween is over.

November's significant days, All Saint's, Veteran's Day, and Thanksgiving hardly have breathing room. And that's significant, because all three have to do with gratitude.

All Saint's calls us to reflect on those who have "finished their course of faith" and now know the reward of the faithful. We reflect on their lives and give thanks for their love and witness.

Veteran's Day calls us to acknowledge that the freedoms we enjoy are not free. Women and men have given of their lives in our branches of service so that we may know security and peace. We take time to remember, and give thanks.

And Thanksgiving, of course, calls us to bow before God in humility and thankfulness for the many provisions God has given us. Yes, there are traditional ways of celebrating, and a big meal, but at the center of it all is the focus on gratitude.

So, let me ask my question in a different way. Is an attitude of gratitude getting squeezed out of our lives? The haste that characterizes our days, the anxiety we feel from so many social changes, and the push that comes from trying to keep up, are they squeezing out the time we need for giving thanks?

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you" states 1 Thessalonians 5:16. Colossians 3:17 says, "what you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Thanksgiving does not occur accidentally. We have to make time for it. We have to push aside all the other things pressing in on our lives and say, "This is important. I will give thanks unto God – for those who have gone before me, for those who have served and sacrificed, and for all that God has done for me."

The members of Union UMC are wonderful servants of Christ, a reality expressed in many missions and ministries. Let's just be sure to be as equally devoted in our thanksgiving. Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endures forever!

Giving thanks with you, Stephen





Blessing of the Stuffies

Our Union Day School and a few of our pastors had a "Blessing of the Stuffies" soon after they started school on September 22. This was a precious opportunity to take a moment with each of the children who attend our school, along with their teachers, to extend a blessing over a beloved stuffed animal, the child, their teacher and their class. Enjoy some of these precious moments with some of our children!





**UNION UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**
"KNOW CHRIST, SHARE FAITH,
SHOW GRACE."



INVITES YOU TO...

**A SERVICE
OF
HEALING**

TRUST IN THE LORD ALWAYS... - ISAIAH 26:4A

THIS SUNDAY

**NOVEMBER 2, 2025
6:00 PM**

**7582 WOODROW STREET;
IRMO, SC 29063**



Friday Night Lights



Join us for our Friday night women's gathering.
Enjoy food & fellowship as we go deeper into
His word together.

This is a time to step away from the chaos
& into a space of peace & restoration with
your sisters in Christ.

We are thrilled to welcome our speaker,
Pastor Antoinette Gaboton-Moss

She is the pastor of Northeast UMC &
passionate about sharing the incredible hope
we have in Jesus Christ.

ALL women are welcome!

**Friday, November 21st
6pm at Union UMC**

\$30 / ticket

Tickets
here!



SNACK PACK NIGHT

NOVEMBER 5

5:30-6pm (dinner) 6-7:15pm (packing)

We're packing bags with food
for 120+ children.

WILL YOU JOIN US?



Sign up by Nov. 2
No cost for dinner.
Donations accepted
for Snack Pack.

ITEMS WE ALWAYS NEED FOR SNACK PACK

Donate directly to our
Snack Pack Ministry here

INDIVIDUAL PACKAGING

Mac & Cheese packets	Ramen noodle packets
Oatmeal packets	Juice boxes
Grits packets	Slim Jims
Fruit cups	Cereal bars
Applesauce cups	Granola bars
Fruit Snacks	Cracker packs
Ravioli or tuna cans	Rice Krispie Treats



Thanks
giving
Dinner

November 27

11:30-2pm

In the FMC Gym

If you don't have family plans, join your Union
church family and make new friends too!

It's a Potluck!

We furnish the meat and ask you to bring your
favorite side dish or two to share.

RSVP by November 24 at noon.

Call Judy Keating at 803-917-2798.



SonZone has been having a great time! Our 4th and 5th graders have been exploring God's promises. Our kids experimented in listening for the right voice. How do we hear God's voice through all the rest? Wait till you see our pumpkin creations from October 19th! See you Sundays at 4pm!!

A BIG HUGE Thank you!!

What an amazing Trunk or Treat! And it is only because YOU showed up and welcomed our community! Stay tuned for a full recap and pictures in our next newsletter.

In the mean time, a few numbers to celebrate:

57 trunks!

And 500 kids!

And 300 cupcakes consumed!

Thank you for everything!!!!



WE'RE HAVING A
BOOK FAIR!

November 3 - 7



Union Day School

Get ready the Scholastic Book Fair is coming to our school! Find bestselling series and characters that students love from more than 100 publishers. Plus every purchase benefits our school. We hope you can join us for the Best. Week. Ever!

Shop Open:
11am-1pm
3:30-5:30pm

Wesley Center
Room 1

How You'll Pay:
Cash, check
(made to Union
Day School),
debit, credit

Open to everyone!

Please join the **NIKKI CIRCLE**

NOVEMBER 23 - 12:30-1:30 PM
PICNIC LUNCH & CRAFTS

Bring your own lunch
and join us in the
Wesley Center for
holiday craft time.

Nikki Circle is for young ladies
ages 4-11
Devotions, fellowship and fun

**Please RSVP to Carolyn
Nicholson- 704-502-8348**



Pumpkin Carving!

SonZone was a gooey mess of fun this October with our pumpkin carving! Check out all the different faces and designs. Twelve pumpkins were carved and ready for Halloween fun.

We have been having a great time on Sundays at 4pm. We hope all of our 4th and 5th graders will join us as we check out God's Promises. Our November and December Sundays will be different so check out our schedule for special events.

SonZone Schedule for November	
November 2	God's Promise to Zachariah and Elizabeth
November 9	Jesus's Promise to a Woman in Pain
November 16	Jesus's Promise to Rise from the Dead
November 23	Thanksgiving with Friends!
November 30	<i>No SonZone - Thanksgiving</i>



Written by Annah Hiers

Hello, Union family! Thomas and I recently brainstormed and came up with a new name for the College-Age ministry of the church. We wanted to honor all of our young peoples' paths, whether they went directly to college after high school, or are pursuing careers, serving in the military, or are exploring other options. We wanted to convey this season of their lives as a journey and a time of connection/transition between adolescence and adulthood. Thus, we decided on The Bridge as the group's new name.

We currently have 28 young people with whom we are in communication regularly via text message. In addition to Thomas, our staff liaison, four adult volunteers have stepped forward and committed to praying for each young person by name a minimum of once a week. We ask for specific prayer requests from them as well. We send birthday cards, exam goodies, back to school time expressions of care, Christmas and Easter notes, etc. We incorporate personalized, hand-written encouragement, Bible verses, questions for reflection, and of course, coffee gift cards and snacks!! Hopefully, we can find a time to get together when folks are in town over the Holidays, too!

It is our prayer that, as our amazing young people traverse their individual "bridges," they always feel the presence and power of the Holy Spirit with them, along with the love and support of their home church family. We invite you to join us in this prayer, and we thank you for your continued support. If you are interested in serving on this ministry team, please contact me or Thomas!

BEFORE THE BELL

6-WEEK HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY!
 Oct. 29, Nov. 5, 12, 19, Dec. 3 & 10

LATE START WEDNESDAYS
 7:45-8:45am

LOCATION: SONIC (BALLENTINE)
 1150 Dutch Fork Rd.
 Irmo, SC 29063

QUESTIONS? CONTACT THOMAS OR REV. FAYE
 THOMAS@UNIONIRMO.ORG OR FAYE@UNIONIRMO.ORG

YOUTH OF UNION

CHRISTMAS PARTY

GAMES. FOOD. GIFT EXCHANGE

SUNDAY | 14 DEC | 5-7:15PM

Bring a gift to exchange (\$10 or less)



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 our teams!
- 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

Available for purchase in the narthex - **November 2 & 9!**



Hat: \$10

T-shirt: \$15

Sweatpants: \$15

Hoodie/Crewneck: \$25

Orders with pre-sale are available as well! Checks Payable to UUMC

FIRST EVER Union Basketball Pep Rally

**Sunday,
November 23rd**



10am in the
FMC Gym

Come meet and support our teams!
Stickers for everyone!



Help our Youth of Union stock the shelves for

SHARING GOD'S LOVE CHRISTMAS SHOP

Please
donate
items by
November 9

Collection bins are
located in narthex



What items are needed?

- TOYS FOR AGES 1-18
- CHRISTMAS PJ'S
- STOCKINGS
- CANDY
- GAMES
- BOOKS
- PERSONAL CARE GIFT SETS
- GIFT CARDS
- GIFT WRAP/BAGS

Thank you!

November Schedule

Check out all that's happening on upcoming Sunday nights!

Nov. 2 - Dinner and games to start, then we will head to the Healing Service. This is a powerful time of prayer, worship, and healing together as a church community.

Nov. 9 - "Normal" Sunday Night

Nov. 16 - No Youth: Fall Retreat weekend

Nov. 23 - Small Group Outings: Be on the lookout soon for more information on what your group is going to do!

Nov. 30 - No Youth: Happy Thanksgiving!

Dec. 7 - Sign up to participate in The Living Christmas Story!

Service Day at Sharing God's Love!

Join us on Saturday, **November 22** as we head over to Sharing God's Love to drop off the items collected from our drive, and to help out with a service project. We will meet at Union at 8:30am to load up the items and then wrap up at SGL at 12pm. Sign up today!



Save the Dates

We have a few retreats coming up in the Spring. Make sure to go ahead and save the dates!

Revolution: January 30-February 1

High School Retreat: January 16-19

Middle School Lock-in: March 21-22

A STEADY REMINDER OF GOD'S PRESENCE

Mark and I had been married 26 years. Our sons were 18 and 20. We loved being parents, but with our younger son graduating high school, we were eagerly anticipating the empty nest and having more time for each other.



In the fall, when our younger son started college, Mark began having stomach issues and back pain, which would linger for a few days and then disappear, only to reappear later. He also developed a cough. When his doctor ordered an MRI, the results were devastating—Stage IV pancreatic cancer, already in his liver and both lungs. Mark was only 53.

Our lives were turned upside down. I suddenly found myself trying to provide emotional support to Mark and our sons during the worst experience any of us had ever endured. I wanted and needed to keep myself together to focus on caring for Mark, but I was emotionally drained—full of sadness and terrified of what the future held. I had always been a “take responsibility for everything myself” kind of person. However, I *knew* I couldn’t do this alone.

I talked to my pastor about it, and she suggested matching me with a Stephen Minister. I agreed, and less than two weeks after Mark was diagnosed, my Stephen Minister came for the first of her weekly visits.

It’s difficult to convey how important this Stephen Ministry relationship was for me. Our pastor was wonderful, and we had an amazing amount of support from many other people, but the time I spent with my Stephen Minister was the only time in the week when I could truly focus on my own needs. *She was there just for me.*

My Stephen Minister let me know that, while she was very concerned for Mark, her role was to be *my* support—to listen and help me process what I was feeling and going through, without giving advice or telling me what to do. The consistency of our Stephen Ministry relationship was crucial in helping me cope. Her weekly visits became an anchor in my life—something I could rely on when everything else was so uncertain. She was a steady reminder of God’s presence, helping me know I was never alone.

Although Mark and I chose to talk publicly about his condition, my Stephen Ministry relationship was completely confidential. I knew I could share anything with her, and that’s where it would stay.

Mark’s illness progressed rapidly—ten weeks of treatment, followed by six weeks of hospice, and then his passing. My needs changed as I went from being a wife to being a caregiver to being a grieving widow and dealing with everything that the loss of a spouse entails. Through it all, my Stephen Minister’s love and support continued. She was there for me at every stage of my journey. It was never easy, but my Stephen Minister helped me through the most difficult moments of my life.

I really can’t say enough about how much I appreciate my church’s Stephen Ministry. The compassionate, consistent, and confidential support of my Stephen Minister was so important in helping me cope—and then begin to heal.

Surviving the Holidays

The holidays present unique challenges for people who are grieving. *Surviving the Holidays* is designed to provide support, understanding and tools to navigate through this season.

There are *Surviving the Holiday* books that will be available at the meeting for \$10. Please let us know you’ll be attending *Surviving the Holidays* by calling the church office or on the GriefShare website.

November 16, 5-7pm
in the Commons Room (LL3)

Thank You from Union Needlers

Dear Church Members,

Thank you for your generous donations of materials and funds, which were essential to the success of our 2026 Graduation Quilt Project.



Your support made it possible for our needlers to dedicate their time and skill to crafting beautiful quilts for every graduate. The funds you provided helped purchase batting and other finishing touches, while your material donations inspired the unique patterns and colors that make each quilt special.

Your generosity is what empowers our needlers to create these wonderful, personal gifts for our graduates. The quilts are a powerful testament to the supportive community YOU help build.

As each graduate receives their quilt, they will be reminded of the care and support of their church as they embark on their next chapter. We could not have done this without you.

With sincere thanks and blessings,
Union Needlers

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” – Jeremiah 29:11

PEP! - People Enjoying People!



Bingo & Board Games -

Wednesday, **November 12**, at 1p.m. in the Fellowship Hall! Come join us for fun, fellowship, BINGO prizes and board games!

Great Songs from Films You Remember -

November 20, 6:30pm, FMC Gym - Come settle in and travel back through great Hollywood films and songs from the past. We'll watch videos, hear great music, and answer trivia questions about how and why these songs have remained in our heads, our hearts, and our imaginations. There will be a catered meal! Cost is \$15 per person due by Sunday, November 16. Sign ups will be in your Sunday School boxes. If you have any questions or would like to get involved, please contact Phyllis Plyler at phyllisplyler@gmail.com. Come and join us!

Preparing for the Harvest Commitment Cards

Please remember to return your commitment cards for our Stewardship Campaign for Union's 2026 Budget.

Did you know you can fill out your pledge card online by scanning the QR code on the right?

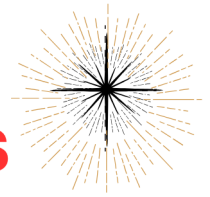
Thank you for continuing to support Union and all its missions and ministries!



Preparing for the Harvest



THE LIVING CHRISTMAS STORY



December 5-7

Help bring Bethlehem to life for our community!

This is your chance to come be a part of The Living Christmas Story as a volunteer - no matter your age or experience! The signups are open through the end of October, but we still need hundreds of wonderful people like you to fill all the roles.

If you're interested, just scan the QR code below or click on the link on our church website. Got questions or want to add extra nights to your original sign up? Feel free to reach out to us at UnionTLCSCasting@gmail.com. Thanks so much for your support!

Union will present the story of Jesus' birth to our Irmo community December 5-7, 2025.



THE LIVING CHRISTMAS STORY

Building Bethlehem!

Set Construction Begins! - Breakfast will be available. Everyone is welcome. Trucks and lots of people will be needed to move the sets out of the barn. No special skills needed, just a willingness to help.

Construction will take place on all the weekends in November. Dates and times are listed below. Contact Scott Rehlander at 803-605-4830 for questions about Bethlehem construction.

Saturday, **November 1** - 8 am-12 pm

Saturday, **November 8** - 8 am-12 pm

Sunday, **November 9** - 1-5 pm

Saturday, **November 15** - 8 am-12 pm

Sunday, **November 23** - 1-5 pm (*cookie baking too!*)

Sunday, **November 30** - 1-5 pm

Saturday, **December 13** - 8 am-12 pm (*set takedown*)

THE LIVING CHRISTMAS STORY

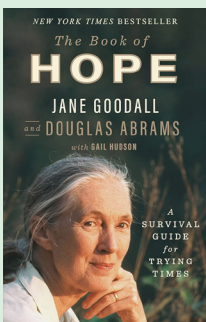
Costume Workdays!

Come help us pull out all our costumes, check everything over and get organized for our performances!

Saturday, **November 8** - 9 am-12 pm

Saturday, **November 15** - 9 am-12 pm

Wilson Circle Book Club



The next meeting of the Wilson Circle Book Club will be held Tuesday, **November 11, 2025** at 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will be discussing *The Book of Hope: A Guide to Survival in Trying Times* by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams. Looking at the headlines, it can be hard to feel optimistic; and, yet, hope has never been more desperately needed. *The Book of Hope* touches on vital ques-

tions, including How do we stay hopeful when everything seems hopeless? How do we cultivate hope in our children? What is the relationship between hope and action?

There are 2 copies of the book in the UWF collection in the Church Library; 2 large print and 3 regular print copies and 1 ebook in the Lexington Public Library; and 1 large print and 4 regular print copies in the Richland Public Library. 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.



Children's Coat Drive!

The John Rowland Sunday School Class is sponsoring a coat drive for several elementary schools in the Lexington-Richland District 5 school district. Class members are collecting any gently used coats or jackets (size 4 - small men's sizes) to distribute to the schools for children ages 4K- 5th grade. Please reach out to any member in the John Rowland Class or reach out to Jeannie Jeter, their president, at jjeter@bellsouth.net, if you have coats to donate.



Calendars for 2026

The new year will soon be here, and Union UMC will be busy, busy, busy! Circle chairs, Bible study leaders, Committee leaders, and any others that use the church facilities, please contact Susan in the church office (susan@unioniro.org) to make sure your meetings are scheduled on the church calendar for 2026.

Did you know that the church calendar is online and updated continuously? Please go to unionirmo.org and click on the calendar tab. You can always check the status of when and where meetings are being held on the church campus.

*Joy
To the
World*

Christmas at Union Save the Dates

December 5-7 - Union presents **The Living Christmas Story** to our community.

See page 9 for more information on this event.

December 14 - Lessons & Carols Service at 9am

Contemporary worship will be in the Chapel at 11am.

December 21 - The Living Nativity at 6pm

December 24 - Contemporary Worship at 4pm
Traditional Worship at 7pm

December 28 - "Christmas Continued"

ONE Worship service at 10:30am

Soup lunch and cookies in the FMC Gym after worship

Ways to help feed and support our community -

With SNAP benefits not being paid out in November, there will be a larger demand placed on our local food banks. If you can help, please send food or monetary donations to Sharing God's Love, Harvest Hope Food Bank, and Mission Lexington.

You can also lend support through Union by bringing items for our Blessing Box or donating items or by funds to our Snack Pack Ministry.

Thank you for taking care of our food-insecure friends throughout our community!

Sharing God's Love Pantry Needs 2025 147 Friarsgate Blvd - Irmo, SC

Baked Beans	Ensure
Spaghettios	Boost
Chef Boyardee	Diced Tomatoes
Quick Pasta Sides	Tomato Sauce
Quick Rice Sides	Pasta Sauce
Mac & Cheese	Whole Tomato
Cereal	Canned Fruit
Oatmeal	Pasta
Grits	Bow Ties
Pancake Mix	Elbows Spaghetti
Syrup	Tea
Peanut Butter	juice
Jelly	Dried Milk
Tuna Canned	Saltine Crackers
Salmon Canned	Packaged Crackers
Chicken Canned	Pop Tarts
Dried Beans	Protein Bars
Rice	Granola Bars
Soup	
Chili	
Stew	



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

IN MEMORIAM

Kim and Gary Ferguson in the loss of Kim's mother,
Patricia Steedly Shuler.

Patricia was also grandmother to Christopher Coward and Mary Blitch.

Charlie and Leslie Barrineau in the loss of Charlie's father, **Jacob Charles Barrineau, Sr.**

Bill and Nan Gray in the loss of Bill's sister,
Gisele Hammonds.

ROSEBUD

(in celebration of the birth of)

Poppy Rae Walsh was born October 9. She was born to Thomas and Hailey Walsh. Poppy's proud big sister is Clara. Her grandparents are Jack & Wendy Walsh and Brian & Gabby Horn. Thomas is Union's Director of Youth and Recreation Ministries.

Memorials - September 22 - October 26

Memorials received in memory of:

William Kennedy By: Henry and Adell Keen

**The Church office will be closed
November 27 & 28 for Thanksgiving.**

**The December Union Connection
Deadline is November 5.**

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

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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Visit us on the Web at www.UnionIrmo.org

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UNION Connection

Union United Methodist Church Irmo, South Carolina



Sunday, November 2 - 6pm in the Sanctuary

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

