

A silhouette of a nativity scene is centered in the upper half of the page. It depicts Mary, Joseph, the infant Jesus in a manger, and two camels. The scene is set against a dark purple background. Above the scene, a string of warm white Christmas lights is visible, and green pine branches hang down from the top edge of the page.

# *The* Heart *Of the* Matter

*DECEMBER 2023—Newsletter for Southport United Methodist Church*

## A SIMPLE INVITATION

Dear Friends,

What was your first introduction to the church, either Southport United Methodist Church, or some other church? Maybe it was recently, or maybe it was a long time ago. Do you remember the first time you came to a new church? Were you just a little child and your parents were bringing you? Or maybe you were a teenager or adult and coming to a new church or returning after not having been to church for a while.

My guess is that you came to church, whether it was for the first time, or returning after being away, as the result of an invitation from someone. Someone whose advice you respected and trusted, maybe someone whose life was setting a good example, invited you – and you came!

My experience over the years is that most people who come to church come as the result of an invitation from someone. Survey after survey shows that the best form of advertising that a church has, is not a slick marketing campaign, on TV or in the newspaper or Facebook or other social media, the best way to advertise and build a church is through a simple invitation from the members and friends of that church.

This month of December, this season leading up to Christmas, is the perfect time for you to extend a simple invitation to another person, or several, to a family, or several, to come to church with you. They might be thinking about their spiritual lives already, and the need to find out for themselves what a church is all about. They might respond right away to an invitation.

So my simple invitation to you is this: Extend yourself, invest yourself, reach out just a little bit more than might be comfortable and offer an invitation to someone to come with you on a Thursday night or Sunday morning or perhaps to one of our services on Christmas Eve. And then see what happens. See what God might do in that person's life through that simple invitation!

Grace and Hope to you during this most special time of the year.

Pastor Duane



# CHRISTMAS

## EVE WORSHIP

FAMILY SERVICE

*You Are Invited!*

TRADITIONAL SERVICE

5 P.M.

CONTEMPORARY SERVICE

8 P.M.

11 P.M.

## JUBILEE CHRISTMAS Has ARRIVED!

JUBILEE DAY IS SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2023

December is one of the most exciting months of the year. During Advent we prepare for the birth of our Lord and celebrate this on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Many of us continue the celebration through the Twelve Days of Christmas ending on Epiphany, January 6. God is with us and continues to be with us each day throughout our lives. His presence does not conclude on a day or date but lasts forever.

For the Jubilee Ministry much of the excitement is to have the church family participate in Jubilee Christmas. Your generosity and involvement has blessed in many ways our 18 Jubilee Families with 60 plus children and youth.

Blankets have been made, toys and gifts ordered, coats, hats and gloves are ready, children's necessities bought, supplies for Jubilee Day are ready, shopping gift cards purchased for each family, and delicious cookies baked for parents to take home as an extra surprise. Can you imagine the delight you have given at a time when all may have looked bleak. Our task and goals have been accomplished.

But it is not just about tasks and goals. As a ministry of Southport UMC, our **PURPOSE** is to share Jesus' love with the community, with those in need and with each other. Each family partnered with a host or hosts from church who welcomed and guided them through the process. What a blessing and what better way to introduce and invite others to know Jesus, His mercy, grace, hope and love.

Thank you for being part of the Jubilee Ministry and sharing Jesus' love with all!

Bethany Brock

Pam Clough

Sherry Davis

Kim Distel

Kristy Harris

Karen Kegerreis

Jennifer LaMar

Sandy Lewis

Jerrie Snell

Homecroft Staff: Anne Johnson

Socorro Romero



*One of the ways we can share God's love is by helping those in need. Every year we help with utility bills, make rent payments, provide gas cards, and much, much more. So far this year we have helped over 50 people with various needs. We can do this because of your support through Operation Transformation. Please purchase a poinsettia picture to honor a loved one or maybe in honor of someone you would love to see join our church family. And know that in doing so, you will be showing God's love to someone else with your financial gift too. You may do this by giving online to Operation Transformation and in the memo write the info for your poinsettia picture.*

*We also have Operation Transformation Envelopes if you would rather pick one up from the church. Below is the info that we will need!*

### *Operation Christmas Transformation*

☐ I would like to make a donation of \_\_\_\_\_ for Operation Christmas Transformation.

☐ I would like to recognize the following person (people) with a poinsettia picture.

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print clearly)



## *Making Room for . . .*

| Date                    | Title                         | Scripture       |   |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| November 26             | "Making Room for . . . Hope"  | Psalms 23       | The whole Advent and Christmas story that is coming is about making room – making room for baby Jesus; making room for the gift of new life that he brings; making room for others to whom we might share that gift. How can we make more room for things that are hopeful, for people, and for God, who brings hope into the world?  |
| November 30, December 3 | "Making Room for . . . Peace" | Luke 1:26-38    | Where are those places in our lives where we are often angry, or bitter, or we begrudge? How can we develop ways of bringing more peace into our lives and into the world? How can we be peacemakers in more situations and the bearer of peace to more people?   |
| December 7, 10          | "Making Room for . . . Joy"   | Luke 1:39-55    | Do you have enough joy in your life? Do you think there is enough joy in the world? How would you define what joy is, as opposed to pleasure or happiness? What makes for a deep sense of joy? Is joy something you can actually make room for, something you can decide you want more of?  |
| December 14, 17         | "Making Room for . . . Love"  | Matthew 1:18-25 | Think of the love that Mary and Joseph had for each other and for their baby and for God, that allowed them to overcome all kinds of obstacles and do what God asked of them. What obstacles do you face? How can love withstand anything and overcome anything?  |
| December 24             | "Making Room for . . . You"   | Luke 2:1-20     | We're told in the Christmas story that Jesus was born in a stable and placed in a manger, "because there was no room for him in the inn." What does it mean to make room - - for others to feel welcomed and accepted and included, for people to feel that they belong? What can we do as individuals, and as a church, to make room for those who need to hear the saving message of Jesus? |



## An *Invite* from the Discipleship Path Coordinators!



It is that time of year again where we are looking for Hospitality Volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering as a greeter, usher, or to help in the kitchen...please let us know! You can talk with Maggie Lucas or Jerrie Snell. Contact Emails: [maggie@sumc.org](mailto:maggie@sumc.org) or [jerrie@sumc.org](mailto:jerrie@sumc.org) !

TRAINING  
CROSS

11:45 am—1:45 pm

Join Us!

**DECEMBER 10**

1st—6th graders & guardians

**Food—Faith—Fun**

## New Member Class

**We will be holding a  
new member class  
on December 3 at  
11:45 in the music  
room!**

### ***A NOTE ABOUT GOD'S WILL BREAKFAST***

Hello!

Yes, we have served breakfast every month this year. During Covid we also served, but my dining room became the Fletcher place annex. Luckily I have 4 kids! We made 125-150 sack lunches and delivered them every month. In December of 2021 we began making hot meals at Fletcher again, but for safety we were not allowed to serve them. They were initially served from a doorway of the building, then from an outside stand closer to our population. Eventually, a new venue was obtained, and we now serve in person again at Southeast Community Services. The kitchen we use is in rough shape, so we have all donated various small appliances to make it work. Our numbers have been increasing every month, until we are now almost back to our pre-covid numbers. Last month we served 143!

We serve a hot meal as well as cereal and fruit, plus extras like muffins and granola bars depending on what is available. For many of our folks it is the only food they will have all day, so I try to fill their bellies and send them with something for later. We have many regulars and the word has gotten out so we have more new friends each month!

My volunteers vary each month. All four of my kiddos volunteer as they are able, and I also have Edie and Janet from SUMC when they are able. Occasionally other folks from SUMC are able to help. My daughter is able to recruit help occasionally from work, and I am working on some nurses from Riley. It always works out! Last month we served 143 with just myself and two of my boys!

As far as cost, we are blessed to have an incredibly generous church family at SUMC! Cost of food has almost doubled post Covid but I've never yet been asked to scale back my purchases! Now that we are serving more folks again we average around \$400 per month, not including a few things unavailable at GFS that I purchase and donate. If it helps for your tracking, we serve on the 3rd Friday of each month, and I pick up supplies from GFS the day before.

I cannot thank you enough for supporting this important ministry! We share fellowship as well as food with those who desperately need us. It has been my blessing to serve this ministry for over 10 years now. Initially I purchased supplies, then gradually began to serve along with my family, and then took over as ministry leader when Billie Huntzman moved away. As always with ministry, I receive much more than I give!

Peace and Blessings,  
Paula Miller



## WOMEN'S NEWS

The United Women of Faith (UWF) ladies are meeting on **December 15th at 1:00 pm in the Gathering Area for a Christmas pitch-in.** All women are welcome to join us for our final meeting in 2023. We have had a wonderful year gathering each month on the second Tuesday for faith, fun, fellowship and food. Join us all to support what Methodist women are doing each year to promote our **purpose.....The Organized unit of United Women in Faith shall be a community of women whose Purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ, to develop a creative, supportive fellowship, and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.**

Also Church Women United is hosting a program on Human Rights on December 11th at Allen Chapel AME at 10:00 am. Contact the president of UWF--Barb Em-mick or the church about carpooling with other ladies.

## HUNGER, INC. FOOD PANTRY

The Hunger, Inc food pantry is starting their 41st year of serving the neighborhoods of Perry Township, part of Beech Grove, and Franklin Township. The pantry is open 3 days a week and services as many as 500 families each month.

**The Meijer Simply Give Campaign at the Southport Road store is still collecting money for the pantry. YOUR \$10. can become \$30. So donate your money in an envelope on the collection table by the bathrooms. Be sure to put your name on the envelope and place it in the offering plate. The double donation day is December 16th. Your money will be taken to the store for you to help buy food to feed the many clients in need of food. Thank you for supporting the pantry for many years.**

## FEED A NEED

**The FAN** team will be bagging the 50 meals to feed the unhoused in downtown Indianapolis. The team will gather on Tuesday, December 5th ( this is a change of our normal day) at 1:00 pm in the Gathering Area at church to bag the sacks going out to those in need of food. This is a 30 minute activity and anyone is welcome to come help.

## CREATION CARE

Christmas is here and presents are being wrapped. Remember that most wrapping papers are able to be recycled. They need to not be glossy and made from foils and fuzzy. Others are able to be recycled. Collect them at Christmas activities in a paper sack from the grocery store and take them to the recycle bins located at the corner of Madison Ave. and Edgewood Ave. in front of Bandy car repair business. Also many of the packaging material around toys and boxes (flattened) can be recycled.

Also remember that there are many items that can be recycled from the Advent Dinners. Bins are located at the East end of the Gathering Area. **CLEAN--** Plastic cups, plasticware, and plates and napkins. God's creation needs all our help to survive for the future.





2023 was a  
great year!







After December 31, we will no longer have our recycling Container in the back parking lot. If this is a container that you use on the regular, please make arrangements for the beginning of the year. Kroger on Madison is a close alternative.



## Imagination Station

. S. Staff has been busy decorating for the season!



# MAKE ROOM

## ADVENT STUDY

**Nov. 29, Dec. 6, Dec. 13, and Dec. 20**

**Food & Fellowship @ 6 pm**

**Study @ 7 pm**

We had a great first Advent Study. Our next Study is next Wednesday, December 7! Join us for food and fellowship!

# SAVING ROOM

## FELLOWSHIP TIME



# Finance

| Church                               | Oct-23            | Year To Date      |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Income</b>                        |                   |                   |
| Offerings                            | \$46,105          | \$449,206         |
| Other                                | \$343             | \$3,352           |
| Imagination Station "Tithe/offering" | \$5,972           | \$57,997          |
| <b>Church Expenses</b>               |                   |                   |
| Conf. & Dist. Support                | (\$4,723)         | (\$51,770)        |
| Administration                       | (\$12,436)        | (\$125,227)       |
| Maintenance & Utilities              | (\$20,757)        | (\$142,401)       |
| Connect, Grow, Serve                 | (\$23,284)        | (\$230,323)       |
| Youth & Child Ministry               | (\$1,227)         | (\$15,693)        |
| <b>Net</b>                           | <b>(\$10,007)</b> | <b>(\$54,859)</b> |
| <b>Imagination Station</b>           |                   |                   |
| Income                               | \$41,332          | \$394,193         |
| Expense                              | (\$27,712)        | (\$272,531)       |
| "Tithe/offering" to Church           | (\$5,973)         | (\$57,997)        |
| <b>Net</b>                           | <b>\$7,647</b>    | <b>\$63,666</b>   |
| <b>All Together</b>                  |                   |                   |
| Total Incomes                        | \$87,780          | \$846,751         |
| Total Expenses                       | (\$90,139)        | (\$837,945)       |
| <b>Net</b>                           | <b>(\$2,359)</b>  | <b>\$8,807</b>    |

## Christmas Eve Services

**5:00**

Jesus' Birthday Party  
Family Service

**8:00**

Contemporary Service

**11:00**

Traditional Service

**Reminder: There will NOT be Sunday morning services on Christmas Eve.**

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Duane Thompson  
Karen Decatur  
Kathy Campbell  
Sherry Davis  
Jeff Horne  
Pat Hulfachor  
Doug Lewis  
Travis Miller  
Kathy Smith  
Margaret Trammell



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### SERVICE TIMES

Online

Sunday @ 9:00 a.m.

Sunday

9:00 a.m.-Traditional

10:30 a.m.- Contemporary

Thursday

6:30 p.m.- Casual Service

*Everyone is sharing God's love and grace through Jesus Christ in their everyday, 24 x 7 lives.  
So that... we are making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of our community and the world.*