

The Heart Of the Matter



FEBRUARY 2026 Newsletter of Southport United Methodist Church

WHAT LOVE IS (and What It Isn't)

February has a funny way of trying to define love for us.

Apparently, love is chocolate—preferably in heart-shaped boxes. Love is flowers that cost more this month than any other time of year. Love is romantic dinners, perfectly curated cards, and the quiet pressure to say *just the right thing* on Valentine's Day. And if we're honest, it can sometimes feel like love is something you either get right... or get very wrong. But Valentine's Day—sweet as it can be—is not the final authority on love.

Love is not always neat. It's not always easy. It doesn't always come wrapped in red and pink. And thank God for that—because the love we actually need is deeper, stronger, and far more transformative than a single day on the calendar. That kind of love is what February invites us to explore.

As we finish our sermon series on **forgiveness**, we're reminded that love isn't proven by grand gestures, but by the courage to release what still hurts. Forgiveness is one of the most honest expressions of love—not because it excuses harm, but because it refuses to let bitterness have the final word. Real love says, *I will not let this wound define me or us.* That kind of love costs something. And it heals something.

Then, just as we think we've wrapped our minds around love, the church leads us up a mountain for **Transfiguration**. In that holy moment, Jesus is revealed in dazzling glory—not to impress, but to remind us who love truly is. The disciples glimpse the radiant truth: God's love is not abstract or distant. It is embodied. It shines. It disrupts. And it calls us to listen. Before there is suffering, before the cross, love shows its face—brilliant and unmistakable.

And then comes **Lent**. Lent doesn't feel very "Valentine's Day," does it? There are no chocolates here. No shortcuts. Lent invites us into reflection, repentance, and honesty. Yet Lent may be one of the greatest acts of love God offers us. It is love that refuses to leave us

unchanged. Love that says, *There is more for you than this. Come and walk with me.*

This year, our Lenten journey begins with the sermon series "**I Am: Encountering Jesus.**" In these weeks, we don't just learn about Jesus—we meet him. As he speaks those sacred words—*I am the bread of life... I am the light of the world... I am the good shepherd*—we discover a love that feeds, guides, protects, and saves. A love that knows our hunger. A love that steps into our darkness. A love that calls us by name.

So maybe February isn't just the month of romantic love. Maybe it's the month that reminds us what love truly is. Love forgives. Love reveals glory. Love invites us to repent and begin again. Love walks with us toward the cross—not to shame us, but to heal us. Love is not fleeting. Love is faithful.

As we move through this month together, my prayer is simple: that you would encounter a love deeper than sentiment and stronger than fear. A love that doesn't depend on perfection, but offers transformation. A love that meets you exactly where you are—and loves you too much to leave you there. May you know that love. May you trust that love. And may you be changed by it.

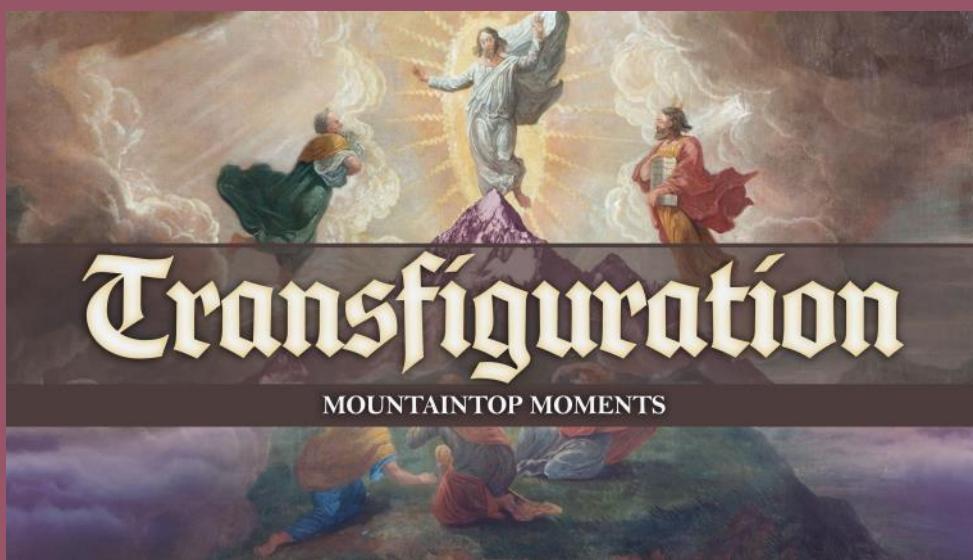
Blessings,

Rev. William G. Nickrand



We will prepare for Lent this year with a meal to show our gratitude for all God has done. Our doors will be open to all as we invite everyone to the table. Tuesday February 17th between 5pm and 7pm join us for pancakes, bacon, sausage, and fresh fruit. Don't forget to invite a friend!

If you are interested in volunteering for the Pancake Dinner, or for more information on how you can help, please contact the office!



Join us for our **Transfiguration services** Thursday, February 12 and Sunday, February 15.

Transfiguration Sunday invites us to encounter the glory of Christ and experience spiritual mountaintop moments. This sermon encourages us to recognize God's presence in times of revelation and transformation, inspiring us to carry that light into our daily lives.



SUMC's card ministry needs your help to reach our community. Do you know someone who is not feeling well or who is having surgery? Perhaps a loved one has died?

Maybe they are going through a difficult time and need to know that someone else is thinking of them.

If so, FREE cards are available on the wall next to the welcome area. Please pick these cards up and send them to those in your circle who could use a pick me up from knowing someone is praying for them.

By sending them a card, you are helping SUMC extend hope and love to those in our community who may never attend church, but who will feel the love of Christ through your caring presence and Christian example when they receive a card.

Thank you,
SUMC Card Team

Brita Hampton
Cheryl Cutshall
Cindy Pulliam
Diane Buchanan
Kim Kidwell
Sandy Tilton
Suzy Heilman

HOLY LAND 2027

January 19-28



includes*: Airfare, Hotel, transfers, 15 meals, entry fees, taxes

*see brochure for details



Some HIGHLIGHTS:

Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jericho, Garden of Gethesame, Mount Zion, Capernaum, Jordan River, Via Dolorosa



BOOK NOW

Register Now and Save up to \$150

Contact: Rodney Frieden
rodney.frieden@inumc.org

EO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TOURS

Please reach out to Kelley Lego for more information: kelly@sumc.org



Join us for ***The Way Café*** the first Thursday every month for fellowship, refreshments, and message in a cafe setting! Service Begins at 6:30 p.m.

Join us for our next gathering on Thursday, February 5



Southport UMC continues to accept applications for a Monday through Friday, 35 hours per week, Administrative Assistant position. This role supports the daily operations of the church and helps keep our ministries running smoothly. If you—or someone you know—has strong organizational skills, a heart for ministry, and enjoys working with people, we'd love to connect. For more information, please visit our website for a full job description!



WOMEN'S NEWS

The Rebakah Circle will host the **February UWF meeting on Tuesday, February 10 at 1 pm. in the Gathering Area.** We will welcome all women wanting to be part of a group of women gathering to praise God with worship, fellowship, fun and food. We meet every second Tuesday of each month, except in June, July or August. So mark your calendars and come join us. When we gather each month we collect cereal to deliver the Fletcher Place for their Food Pantry to help feed the hungry downtown

HUNGER, Inc. FOOD PANTRY

The pantry was blessed with your donations for last month. We also want to **thank all from Southport UMC that volunteered to serve at the pantry on MLK day.** You helped to feed 1,745 families with meals for last month and that turned out to be 14,221 lbs of food. The pantry is located at the corner of Madison Ave. and Epler Ave. It is also open every week on Tuesday, 10-1, Thursday 4-7 and Saturday 10-1. If interested in serving please let the church know and you will be called to help. Also, we are in need of help to serve at the pantry. We offer training when you decide to help serve.

Donations of Pancake mix and syrup and canned diced tomatoes are needed for the month of February. So drop off your donations at church in the grocery cart by the coat closet entrance. We will collect from February 1st- February 15th. Thanks for your help.

FEED A NEED (FAN)

The Feed a Need team is bagging the **50 meals on Thursday, February 12th at 1pm. in the Gathering Area.** This is a gathering that takes a small amount of your time as the team has it down to less than 30 minutes. Our ministry that helps deliver the meals is so thankful for the new cloth bags that are being made to fill with food each month. The leader of the "Tear Down the Walls" ministry said, "the people love the bags because they can put their phones in them as they ride their bikes and in the summer the water bottles can also be carried in the bags as they ride". Next Month, we could use some help with scrapes of material and spools of thread ,not needed at home, to make bags, and scrap yarn to use as drawstrings to close the bags. We have a team that prepares the bags each month...what a blessing.

CREATION CARE INFO

INDY HAS IT'S VERY OWN RECYCLING CENTERS!

It has been said that Indianapolis does not really recycle items, they just dump them....but that is not true!!!! Carey Hamilton, an Indiana State Representative and a long-time promoter of recycling is happy to share some good news for Indianapolis---and for all who care!!

We have two companies here IN INDY, and their websites where you can see the process. We will share those websites with you and encourage you to use the recycling station on the East wall in the Gathering Area. Stay tuned to next month's newsletters for more information on this very valuable topic. We need to help our Earth stay Healthy.

Wow, SUMC donated 736 pounds of food to Hunger Inc last year!
Thank you for making a difference in our community!

1/3/2026

Dear Friends,
This is your yearly total of 2025, food and supplies donated to Hunger Inc. Food Pantry - 736 pounds!
Because of friends like you we are able to give food to our neighbors within the community. The need has increased this year as we serve more and more clients.
We greatly appreciate your support and donations! Thank you!
Hunger Inc. Board of Directors



Ronald McDonald House Volunteers

Southport UMC will serve a meal once a month in 2026 as we have in the past. We are limited to volunteers to prepare and serve each meal. Please contact Paul Lucas at 317.319.5507 if you desire to participate. We meet at SUMC at 3:00pm and ride together and are most often back at church before 8:00pm. You may financially support RMHC by giving to the Faith Promise fund.

Thank you,
Maggie Lucas

GRIEFSHARE
Register
Online
YOU DON'T HAVE TO Grieve ALONE
Wednesday Evenings from 6PM - 8PM
beginning February 18, 2026
Southport Presbyterian Church
7525 McFarland Blvd
Indianapolis, IN 46237

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS
FEB 6TH WINTER JAM
Gainbridge Arena
Contact Kelley Lego for more information
KELLEY@SUMC.ORG

For more information on Winter Jam,
please contact Kelley Lego!
kelley@sumc.org



Celebrate Mindy Bennett

We are thankful for Mindy's service in our Office Administrator role at SUMC for the last year. Please join us on Thursday, February 26 and Sunday, March 1 as we celebrate her service here and support her as she moves forward in her next chapter.

MLK Day of Service

Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time and hearts for our MLK Day of Service. Your compassion and commitment makes a difference! As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, *“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?”* We are so grateful for your faithful service.



Save The Date: All Church Gathering

Please join us, after our 10:30 service on February 15, for an All-Church Gathering where we will be discussing the life of the church, 2025 Year-end finances, and more!



Pictured above: Our 2026 Leadership Team!

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Connie Klipsch
Kathy Smith
William Nickrand
Rebecca Hamm
Sherry Davis
Pat Hulfachor
Travis Miller
Margaret Trammell
Jeff Horne
Kathy Campbell



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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.