



SELLERSBURG

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Words to the Wise

December | 2024

Pastor's Pen...

Christmas is my favorite time of year. I enjoy the lights, the festivities, the generosity, and feeling of joy that are all associated with Christmas. Easter and Christmas have vied for the most important service of the year for centuries. In the Eastern Orthodox churches, Christmas is the pinnacle Sunday. In western churches, it is Easter and the resurrection. Christmas was hardly celebrated in western culture until Charles Dickens made it popular through his writings.

Both Christmas and Easter celebrate God's love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son..." The birth of Christ is God's love letter to the world. Jesus' death and resurrection is the culmination of that love letter. In his death and resurrection, Jesus promises God's love, forgiveness, and reconciliation to the world. I, therefore, don't see it as a competition as much as one long message of love, peace, hope, and joy.

Advent is a season of preparation and expectant waiting. For four Sundays, we await the coming of the Christ child, the opening line of God's love letter. Like those awaiting a special package, or important email, we await the arrival of God's son. We know the story well, of the angels and shepherds, Mary and Joseph, the stable and the animals; but what changes each year is us. We hear the story slightly differently each year, because we have changed. Our lives and situations have changed. Our perspectives and priorities have changed.

What has changed in your life since last Christmas? What blessings and losses have you experienced? What accomplishments and disappointments have come your way? All of these change us in small and large ways. The Christmas story is the same, but how we see it can change dramatically from year to year.

This year, we are going to offer two unique ways of experiencing the Christmas story. We will, of course, have our traditional candlelight Christmas Eve worship on Tuesday, December 24th at 7:00 pm. We will sing familiar carols, and hear the story in a unique way designed for the whole family. This year we will also be offering a Blue Christmas/Longest Night service on Saturday, December 21st at 7pm. This service held on the longest night of the year is a service of healing where sadness and the hope of Christmas can share a space. Many are filled with sadness, or even dread, trying to simply endure the holiday season. If you are weary, join us this year, for this special worship of healing and prayer.

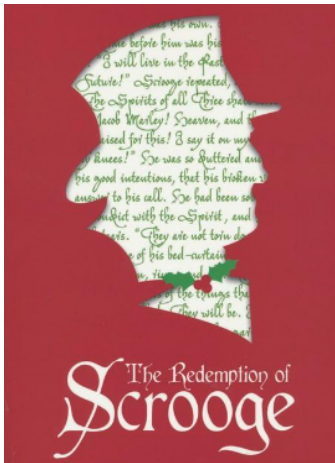
The power of God's love is one that meets us where we are. Whether we are celebrating or grieving, God's love surrounds, supports, strengthens, and sustains us. This December, may God's love fill your heart, soul, and mind. And may you find ways to share that love throughout the Christmas season, and the whole year through.

Blessings,

Pastor John

john.demaree@inumc.org





Now through **December 18th** (no class **November 27th**), the Wednesday Evening Bible Study is looking at Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* in this series by Rev. Matt Rawl called, "The Redemption of Scrooge." This 4-week session will

guide us through the evolution of Ebenezer Scrooge as he faces the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. EVERYONE is welcome to join the **Wednesday Evening** group which meets at **6:30 pm** every Wednesday evening in the church basement, Room 2. The easiest access is from the parking lot and through the backdoor of the church.



Join us **Christmas Eve at 7pm** for our annual celebration of Christ's birth. Whether you are 2 or 102, you will enjoy this special worship service of Joy and Hope. The service is designed for people of all ages. We will sing several of your favorite Christmas Carols and celebrate the story of Jesus' birth. The service will conclude with the traditional candlelight singing of "Silent Night."

It's Time to Hang the Greens



Now through **December 20th** (no class *November 29th*), the Friday Morning Bible Study is continuing an Advent Study based on the gifts that Christmas offers us. EVERYONE is welcomed and encouraged to join us on this Christmas journey. The series includes video segments along with

Bible Study. The Friday Morning group meets at **10:00 am** every Friday morning in the church basement, Room 2. The easiest access is from the parking lot and through the backdoor of the church.



Join us on **Saturday, November 30th, at 10am** for the annual Hanging of the Greens in our sanctuary and

throughout the church. We will need volunteers of all abilities from carrying heavy things to making minute changes to arrangements. If we all work together, the church will be beautiful and ready to celebrate the Advent and Christmas season. Last year, we finished right at 12 noon. If you can be there for all or part of the morning, please let Pastor John or Tony in the church office know.



In the midst of all the wonder, joy, and celebration of Christmas, it's easy for us to forget those among us for whom the idea of Christmas joy is not part of the season this year. Events take place at this time of the year that simply make celebration impossible – illness, the death of a loved one, or the burden of caring for a loved one, the loss of a job, oppressive financial difficulties, strained family relations, divorce, or separation. This year, we are offering a special time of worship, prayer, comfort, and healing. It is often in the dead of night that these emotions are the most difficult to experience, and so on the longest night of the year, we will gather in community to share in our grief and pain, and find comfort in the love and hope of God expressed in the birth of God's son Jesus Christ.

This year, we will be holding a special service called The Longest Night: A Blue Christmas Service. This special service will be held at Sellersburg UMC on **Saturday evening, December 21st at 5:00 pm**. This worship is open and designed for all who are hurting and grieving in our community whether they are a part of our church or any church.



OPEN HOUSE AT THE PARSONAGE



Join Pastor John and his family Sunday afternoon, **December 22nd from 2pm - 4pm** for their Christmas Open House. The highlight of the open house will be the Christmas Shelf which was started by Jennifer's grandmother in 1962. It is a large display with over a dozen finely decorated rooms depicting Santa's home and workshop. We will also have other Christmas decorations up along with Christmas treats and punch. Stop by anytime from 2 to 4 and enjoy the Christmas spirit. The parsonage is the brick home just north of the church across Penn Ave (the church driveway). The address is 300 N. New Albany Street.



Newsletter Articles

Newsletter articles are due by the 17th of each month. Please submit any and all articles by then to the church office. sellersburgumc@gmail.com



♪ Love Music? ♪

Start Your 2025 New Year Singing!
All to His Glory!
Practice: Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025
@ 5:00-6:00pm
Diana #812-207-3087



Check out What's Up Wednesday...

Available on Facebook and through our website



Beyond the Walls Ministry



Young at Heart

Young-at-Heart will kick off the holiday season on **Wednesday, December 4, at 11:30 a.m.**

Donna Moore will prepare a delicious baked ham and after lunch we'll enjoy a program by Pastor John. All are welcome to this pitch-in luncheon.

luncheon.

We have several members who are not able to attend church anymore. If you would like to send them cards, call them on the phone or go visit them, let me know and I will get you the information needed. Communion is taken to them when I visit.



Everyone is invited!

Kathy Waterman
812-256-5298



FRIDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Phyllis Hunefeld (502-693-3696)
Maureen Atkinson (812-786-2119)



Are you receiving Pastor John's weekly email?

If not, email the office and let Tony know!



SUMC Prayer Chain

If you'd like to be a part of our prayer chain, you can join by sending the message "@sumcprayr" to the number "81010" in a text using your phone. If you'd like to sign up for emails, then you can send an email to sellersburgumc@gmail.com and let us know so we can get you signed up.



United Women in Faith

Tis the Season!

Christmas is the season for giving and sharing – and what better things to give than COOKIES! SUMC's United Women in Faith will be hosting their third annual Christmas Cookie Exchange on **Sunday, December 8th at 2:00pm** in Fellowship Hall. We will have a time of fellowship, games, and refreshments to celebrate the season. We will share Christmas cookies we have made, to enjoy that afternoon and to take home to share with others. Most importantly, we will make Christmas tins to deliver to our SUMC shut-ins to share our love with them. We invite all bakers who love sharing and trying new recipes to join us. Just bake up one or two batches of your favorite cookies to share and bring a container to fill and take home some new favorites! We hope you join us.



ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS



We are once again looking for families, couples, or individuals who would like to light the Advent Candles at one of the four Sundays in Advent. We need lighters for

December 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd. As a family, you can share the responsibilities of reading and lighting the candles. For individuals, our Liturgist can read while you light the candles. Each week has one additional candle, so keep that in mind as you request a date. If you are interested, please let Pastor John know or contact Tony in the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY



We are looking for someone to take over our Congregational Care Ministry. This essential role in our church includes three parts. The first is being the contact person for our Prayer Chain Ministry. The second is visiting on the phone and in-person with our older members and those in the hospital. The third part involves sending out birthday cards each month to those active in our church community. Kathy Waterman has been serving in a position that included these roles, and has done a fantastic job. However, she will be stepping down at the end of this year. If you are interested in this paid position, please contact Pastor John or Janet Werle



MEN'S WEEKLY PRAYER GROUP

One hour a week filled with energy from the Holy Spirit, and sharing knowledge and life experiences is very rewarding. It's unbelievable the amount of prayers that have been answered. I'm sure we have more wise men in this church family that have experiences to share. Not only will you share, you will receive, and missing this fellowship weekly becomes a void in our life. What I'm saying is, this group is addictive. We can not emphasize the need for men to come together in prayer lifting all areas of the church to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Praying for you,

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

See Rob Lamb for more information.

roblamb2567@gmail.com



Time for fellowship, sharing, and making a list of prayer requests is a must for our Saturday morning open the day for the Lord to come and join us.



We take turns weekly, sharing whatever we desire to bring for prayer time.



Fred makes the best breakfast breads you've ever had.



Birthday List

See a mistake or omission? Need a mailing address for a card? Contact the church office sellersburgumc@gmail.com



December

- Angie Hendrix Dec 6
- Jacob Loppnow Dec 12
- Sylvia Liburd Dec 14
- Terry Sims Dec 15
- Darrell Boman Dec 15
- Barb Koehler Dec 18
- Joyce Adams Dec 19
- Jennifer Potts Dec 25
- Lillian Curtis Dec 25

January

- James Wells Jan 1
- Nancy Elrod Jan 6
- Connie Nunn Jan 15
- John Scannapieco Jr. Jan 21
- Andy Beyl Jan 23
- Gloria Hutchinson Jan 24
- Nora Pritchett Jan 28



Prayer List

1. Joyce Adams
2. Anthony Fugit & mother, Barbara
3. Alice & Denny Jones
4. Janice Jones
5. John Scannapieco
6. Pastor John's parents
7. The people of Ukraine
8. Ralph Raeinhardt
9. Isaiah Bahls
10. The people suffering in the Israel/Hamas War
11. Brenda Croucher
12. Paulette Davidson
13. Dottie Meyer
14. Donna West (Tony's friend that has cancer)
15. Austin Waterman
16. Lois Cook
17. Jodie Goforth
18. Jennifer Demaree



ADVENT SERMON SERIES



Some of the Angel Tree gifts collected this year. Please have your angel tree gifts turned in by **December 1st**.

Kathy Waterman
812-256-5298

Advent is the season of preparation and expectant waiting ahead of Christmas Day. As we celebrate Advent, we will look at the story of Christ’s birth from the perspective of the Angels. Angels came to Isaiah as he prophesied the coming of a Messiah. Angels came to Mary and to Joseph as they prepared to be parents of this special child. An angel came to Zacheriah and Elizabeth before the birth of their child who would become John the Baptist. Finally, angels came to the Shepherds tending their sheep at night. Through the perspective of the angels, we can see how God gave to the world his only son to show us just how much he loves each and every one of us. Come celebrate the wonder, joy, excitement, and hope that the angels brought 2000 years ago and still bring to us today.

Tony Goforth
Christmas
Special

**SELLERSBURG
UNITED
Methodist
Church**
226 N. New
Albany St.
Sellersburg, In.
12/15/2024
Show Starts
At 4pm Est

*Love Offering
Will Be Taken.*

SellersburgUMC.com



Visit our church website to view the worship service, set up online giving, or learn more about the church ministries.

Word Search Puzzle

Emmanuel - Messiah - Savior - Jesus - Hope
Peace - Joy - Love - Bethlehem - Shepherds
Angels - Star - Prophecy - Light - Manger

E M M A N U E L K P F X
P K Q S N C M M J F C R
G R M H A L M A B Q E I
R M O E O N I N E N V S
V U P P S P G G T A Q A
J S J H H S E E H A M V
L O V E A E I R L T R I
T I Y R S H C A E S T O
O Z G D T U H Y H S L R
B P M S A K S J E X K I
G F P B R V C F M P V F
G S Q A L R M U K M X R

November 13, 2024

Dear SUMC Church Family:

Similarly to what I wrote in last month's Newsletter, I want to thank those in the congregation, who continually support the financial mission of this church.

The financial results are nearly the same as reported last month:

- Giving through the end of September 2024 (\$136,385.47) continued to lag substantially from giving through the end of September 2023 (\$158,893.64).
- As described in last month's Newsletter, the church was experiencing a "summer slump" in giving. During a summer slump, giving tapers-off due to vacations, etc. Giving has shown improvement in October in comparison to September.
- Projected giving to the end of the year is down slightly from what was reported in the October Newsletter to \$ 183,000. The Budget for 2024 is approximately \$208,000

For the remainder of the Newsletter, below are various options available for giving to the church:

- *Sunday Morning Offering*. This is the traditional method of giving your tithes and offerings at the time of passing the plate during the worship service.
- *US Mail*. You can always mail your offering to the church, if you cannot attend on Sunday. It is strongly suggested that you not place any cash in the US Mail, due to mail theft, and send only checks. Giving by US Mail is a good way to continue to give to the church, when you are out-of-town.
- *OnLine Giving*. Several families are taking advantage of the OnLine Giving through ChurchTrac. As with the US Mail option, giving OnLine is a good method if you cannot attend on Sunday. If you are interested in OnLine Giving, visit the church's website to give online and click on the "Giving Tab" at the top of the page. If you have trouble giving OnLine, please contact Tony Goforth, Church Administrative Assistant, and he can walk you through the OnLine giving process.
- *Stocks and Bonds*. You can also donate stocks and bonds to the church. For stocks, this can be a tax advantage, particularly if you have a stock that has significantly increased in value. If you donate the stock, you can claim the appreciated value of stocks as a Charitable Donation and avoid the Capital Gains on those appreciated stocks. However, before using this method, you should first consult with a tax accountant!
- *Other Real Property*. While rare, in the past the church has received real estate as a tithe to the church.
- *Qualified Contribution Deduction*. If you have reached retirement age and are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from an IRA, you can send all or part of your RMD as a gift directly from your brokerage account to the church by using a Qualified Contribution Distribution (QCD). Before choosing this method, you should first check with your tax accountant.
If you have any questions about the finances of the church, please feel free to call me.

In closing, as always, thanks to you, who have continued to faithfully give to the mission of the church. Thanks to all, who have caught-up their giving during the past month. May God continue to bless you in your giving.

Respectfully,

Robert C Waterman
Finance Director
SUMC