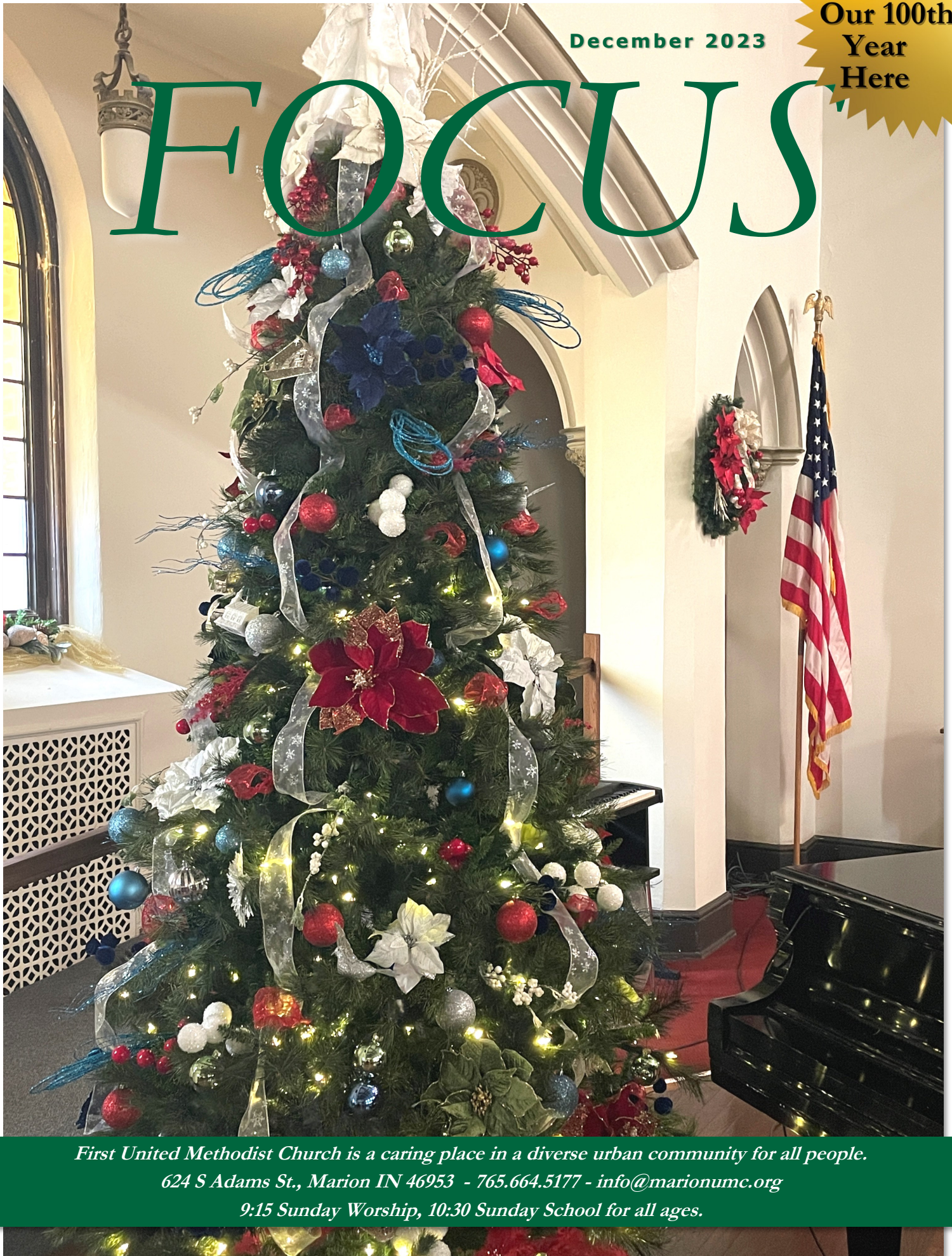


December 2023

Our 100th
Year
Here

FOCUS



First United Methodist Church is a caring place in a diverse urban community for all people.

624 S Adams St., Marion IN 46953 - 765.664.5177 - info@marionumc.org

9:15 Sunday Worship, 10:30 Sunday School for all ages.

A New Era Begins as Pastor Wes Answers a New Call

First Presbyterian Church of Hartford City invited me to serve as interim minister a decade ago, while they searched for a Presbyterian minister. JoAnn has been their organist for more than twenty years. Members of their Session/Board have repeatedly asked me to return.

It is an irresistible call because of our friendships over ten years, a dozen children under ten, a small active youth group, the potential for impact in the neighborhood and resulting growth, and the opportunity to worship and work together with JoAnn. Also, given the possibility of a younger pastor here, my leaving makes space for that to happen.

As I leave, I am pleased to know of recent discussions of efforts under the rubric of “nourishment of body and soul,” including increased support of other church food pantries and periodic lunch bags for Riverview Elementary School students and expanding the face-to-face Tuesday Supper Club and starting monthly community meals in collaboration with other churches. These will be wonderful opportunities for the involvement of all congregants.

The next five years will be crucial here. First Church has options that could promote relevance and growth. There are several areas of focus to be prioritized.

First Church leaders could 1) make local and overseas missions and evangelism the main goals of the budget, preaching, and programs. Or 2) the future could be the continued repetition of preaching, music, and activities of the last century. 3) Efforts to replicate John Wesley’s tradition of small groups, service to the outcast and marginalized, and inclusive love, all to revitalize the church could guide the future. Or 4) leaders could align with a progressive emphasis on future issues and tomorrow’s challenges of leadership in the community.

All members and attendees should help determine the emphasis that will enliven First Church in the future. The outcomes of that deliberation could turn the decline around and see effectual community impact and growth.

In the story of the prodigal, we remember the father’s merciful and grace-filled love for both sons - the irresponsible one who wasted his life, but repented and came home, and the loyal hard-working son who stayed home, but resented his father’s generosity to his errant brother.

From this parable, we have confidence that Father God will love us whichever way we move forward, and even when we go backward. God loves all humanity, and we can love all people too. God showers us with unmerited grace, and we can humbly share it with others through meaningful face

-to-face relational service.

With many endearing and continuing friendships in the congregation, I hope and pray for the best possible future for First United Methodist Church, here in Marion.

-Wes Rediger



Today we announce the departure of Pastor Wesley Rediger from the pastorate of First United Methodist Church. Wes has been pastoring First Church in Marion for 2 ½ years. His tenure here has been filled with some big challenges as well as some wonderful successes. Wes has pushed our congregation, has asked us to think beyond our boundaries and to move outside of our walls. We have laughed together and cried together. We have found times that we did not agree and we have had situations that brought us all into alignment. Wes has been our friend, long before he was our pastor and hopefully for many more years. We are grateful for his enthusiasm, his passion and his unrelenting desire to get engaged with others. We are a better church for his time with us here.

As Wes moves on to give his energy to the Hartford City Presbyterian Church, we send him on his way with our hopeful prayers for his time with that congregation. Might his pastorate there be one of great opportunity.

Pastor Wes will be with us through the end of December. This will be a time of celebrating our years with him. We will hold a formal farewell for Wes on Sunday, December 17th at 2:00 in the Fellowship Hall. We certainly hope that everyone makes it a priority to be there to share our thanks and best wishes to Wes as he moves on.

Sarah Dougherty
Evans

Chair of the Staff-
Pastor Parish
Relations Committee

Front Cover Photo

The 2023 Holiday decorations are up thanks to the Simpsons, the Iveys, the Lanes, and many others. We truly appreciate all the hands that have helped to make our beautiful building just sparkle for the Advent season.





FOCUS

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Marion, Indiana

DECEMBER 2023

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Prayer Concerns

Please call the office (765) 664-5177

- Carolyn Ellis
- Pat McCarty
- Susie Flynn's nephew Russell and niece Jana
- Ryan Howell's brother Dustin
- Ruth Ann Rust
- Cheryl Philbert
- Louise Webb
- Barbara Piper
- Carolyn James
- Jane Hiatt
- Betty & Jim Fletcher
- Linda Simpson's granddaughter, Lucia Tomlinson
- Friends living in Health Care Facilities
- Government: national, state, and local elected officials and employees
- Victims of disasters and relief workers
- Unspoken concerns of relatives and friends
- Other churches in Marion and Grant County

December/January Birthdays

Ann Zobrosky	12/06
Jan Michos	12/12
Sally Bancroft	12/13
Jane Scholar	12/15
Sue Bratton	12/17
Lauren Swathwood	12/18
Joe Simpson	12/21
Phylis Kepler	12/22
Jack Stace	12/24
Mary Ann Frankenfield	12/26
Ruth Ann Rust	12/26
Leland Gamson	12/30
Sidonia Stace	01/12
Beverly Paul	01/26
Catherine Miller	01/29

Anniversaries

Rex & Cathy Lane 12/12 46 yrs.

Missions & Outreach



Trunk-r-Treat was a great success on Halloween Night. We moved the party into the Fellowship Hall because of the cold. We had 100's of people come through with some truly amazing and entertaining costumes. There were very little babies in arms and big folks celebrating with the heart of a child. There were at least 10 "trunks" – also known as tables – decorated and full of candy. But there was the need to make candy runs multiple times during the night for more treats. It was a fun time as we invited the community in to celebrate together.



Thank you to the congregation for the wonderful response to the food collection during November. We will be taking our contributions to the Sunnycrest Food Pantry as they help feed our neighbors.



Missions Committee put baskets together for shut-ins on November 30. They have been delivered to those who are a part of our church as we enter the Advent season.

Thanksgiving Dinner at FUMC

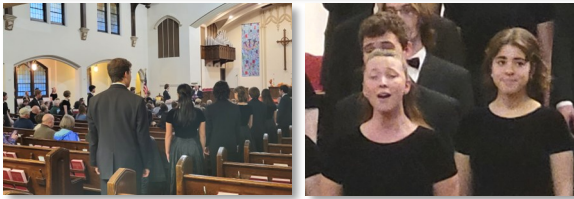
After Sunday School on November 19th, we gathered for a truly magnificent feast in Fellowship Hall. Much thanks to Nancy Worthy for organizing the event and to all of the excellent cooks who provided such delicious food. We were able to share the meal with some of our neighbors who joined us.



Taylor University Chorale



The Taylor University Chorale and the Taylor Sounds held a concert in the First Church sanctuary on Saturday, November 4th. It was a lovely evening of beautiful music.



December Themes & Scriptures

Dec 3: Advent 1 “Let The Good Times Roll”
Rev. Glenn Howell
John 2:1-11

Dec 10: Advent 2 “Comfort My People” Isaiah 40:1-11,
1 Thess. 5:16-18

Dec 17: Advent 3 “Rejoice! Gaudete!” Isaiah 61:10-11,
1 Thess. 5:16-18

Dec 24: Advent 4
Christmas Eve Psalm 89:1-4

Christmas Eve Service –
Lessons and Carols – 5:00 PM

Dec 31:



Who We Are:

Our predecessor, First Methodist Episcopal Church, was founded in Marion in 1832 and by the 1920s had become The Methodist Church. In 1969, the Methodist denomination merged with the Evangelical United Brethren denomination and became the United Methodist Church. “First Methodist Church” is carved in stone over the Adams Street entrance above the canopy. Today, First United Methodist Church of Marion is an affiliate of the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.



Reverse Advent Calendar

Each day add an item to a box. Food collected will be given to local pantries to help feed our hungry neighbors.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| December 1 - Box of cereal | December 13 - Canned beans |
| December 2 - Peanut Butter | December 14 - Box of crackers |
| December 3 - Stuffing mix | December 15 - Package of rice |
| December 4 - Boxed potatoes | December 16 - Package of oatmeal |
| December 5 - Macaroni & cheese | December 17 - Package of pasta |
| December 6 - Canned fruit | December 18 - Spaghetti sauce |
| December 7 - Canned tomatoes | December 19 - Chicken noodle soup |
| December 8 - Canned tuna | December 20 - Tomato soup |
| December 9 - Dessert mix | December 21 - Canned corn |
| December 10 - Apple sauce cups | December 22 - Canned mixed vegetables |
| December 11 - Canned sweet potatoes | December 23 - Canned carrots |
| December 12 - Cranberry sauce | December 24 - Canned green beans |





Carolyn, Chris, Wendy, Millie and Mary enjoy fellow



...wship at the chicken Noodle Dinner on November 4th.

Education

Tuesday Night Supper Club Coming Attractions

December 5th, Stories behind the Carols: We'll sing a few and also discuss forming a quartet or choir for the Advent season!

December 12th, What the Messiah Means to Me. Share your thoughts on Handel's music.

December 19th, Thanking our Neighbors. Bring a dozen of your best cookies to share with our local fire station.

Tuesday Night Supper Club will not meet on December 26th or January 2nd.



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith (UWF) have had a very busy year. At the November meeting of UWF, we reviewed the Wicks Pies Sale and the Chicken Noodle Dinner. We ordered 26 cases from Wicks - that's 156 pies - and have sold all but about a dozen. (You can still purchase a pie for \$9. Contact Sarah Evans at 317-431-7604.) And we had great success with the Chicken Noodle Dinner, serving around 350 people. All of this leads to the really exciting decisions we made at our meeting on November 20th to authorize the distribution of more than \$5000 in missional giving. We are grateful for the support of our friends and neighbors who have supported our projects this year and who have been a part of our ability to make such a significant contribution.

We hope this encourages other women to join us in the year to come. We need more helping hands, fresh ideas and joy in being together.

Please join us on December 18th for a Finger Food Pitch-in at 6:00 and a simple time of sharing and celebrating the season.

See our Missional Gifts below:

- Mission Pledge to the District - \$1000
- Church Office - \$200
- FUMC Parish Nursing Program - \$400
- CASA - \$500
- Meals on Wheels - \$500
- Hands of Hope (Women's Shelter) - \$300
- Clothes for Kids - \$300
- Lucille Raines Center - \$300
- Salvation Army - \$200
- AA - \$200
- JROTC - \$200
- Mission Committee – for Shoe Drive or other Project - \$500
- Food Program - \$500
- Adopt-a-Teacher/School Project - \$500

Nourishment for Body & Soul

With leadership from the Conference Superintendent, Rev. Saneta Maiko and Pastor Wes, the Church Council has been working on developing a focus as we head into 2024. We looked at the asset mapping that we did with the congregation in the summer, and we considered our building, our neighborhood and our gifts as a congregation. As a Council we discussed different areas that we could develop into a programmatic and missional emphasis. After pulling all of these pieces together, in October the Council voted to approve a theme: Nourishment for the Body and Soul. This gives our congregation many different avenues that we can use to reach out to our community. We began in November with our Food Drive. All of those items will go to the Sunnycrest Food Pantry where we send folks needing food. We will be collecting food again in December with our Reverse Advent Calendar (page 4 of this FOCUS). We remember in the stories of Jesus that he would feed people before they were ready to hear his message. We have neighbors who need the message of hope, faith, joy, peace and love. But they are hungry in the body. So, our committees are being intentional about

thinking of the ways that we can feed those who hunger and thirst – both in the body and in the soul. Watch for the ways that we as a congregation will live into this focus. And if you have ideas, let someone on Council know what you are thinking.



Financial Gifts

I'm reminded as we enter this season of gift giving, how much my perspective on gifts has changed over the years. As I have matured, gifts have taken on a different meaning. Those tangible gifts that were such a big deal when I was a child are now just "stuff". Today, relationships, gifts of service and precious time spent with family and friends have trumped "stuff". Gifts are given as an expression of love, friendship, gratitude or charity. A gift can be defined as any item or act of service that makes the other happier, better or less sad.

The gifts that God has provided us can be easily missed if we are too focused on the things of this world. All the beauty of nature, the talents and abilities we possess and uniqueness of each living thing are gifts from God and part of his creation.

If you look at the Bible as a gift, then unwrapping that gift becomes a source of joy and a way to deeper understanding of the nature of man and the nature of God. It culminates with the greatest gift, grace and redemption through Jesus Christ.

I invite you to look around with a new perspective. Let us enter the Advent season with open generous hearts. We can share the gift of love and belonging with all who enter.

What the world needs now IS love!

With Gratitude,

Denise Pearson-Harshman, Finance Chair



Fundraiser Celebration!

We are so blessed and grateful for the generosity of all who have supported our fundraiser for the new boilers. Our doors are open and our building is warm thanks to YOU! The total received plus remaining pledges has reached \$45,000. This is enough to make the final payment for the boilers and additional costs incurred for improving the safety and efficiency of the weekly maintenance required for the boilers. In addition, there will be some



money remaining to help us troubleshoot and repair other parts of the heating system throughout the church that need attention. We celebrated your great accomplishment on Sunday with cake and confetti. Thanks again for your love and support!



Stewardship Campaign

Our stewardship campaign for anticipated 2024 giving is still underway. If you feel led to include our church in your charitable giving during 2024, please return your pledge card or a note with your anticipated 2024 giving to the church office. This information will be helpful as we plan our ministries for the new year.

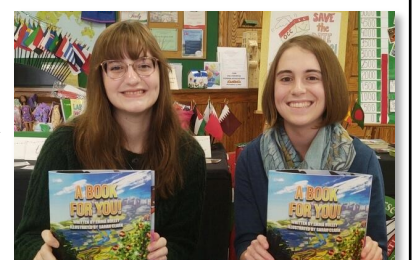
Thanks,

Debbie



Young Author

Operation Christmas Child ministry shares God's love through shoebox gifts and introduces God's story through written material. **Emma Holley**, our Taylor University student who assists in our children's ministry, was asked to write a book to tell of God and His love to put in the shoeboxes of younger children. What a wonderful opportunity for Emma to practice the craft of her major! What a wonderful gift to the children who receive these shoeboxes! Emma, (right) is shown here with the book illustrator, Sarah Clark.



December Special Offerings

1st Sunday Coin Collection, December 3rd, will go to the St. Martin Community Center.



Thumbs Up!

Rex Lane passed the Thumbs Up award to Sidenia Stace at the Council meeting on November 13th as she leaves the council, for all her years of service. Do you know someone who needs an encouraging Thumbs Up? Let Barb Pack know or send a note to the office. We will make sure this person is recognized.



Church Council Changes

As we near the end of 2023, the Church Council will see some changes. **The following will be leaving the Council:**

- Barb Pack – Council Chair
- Sidenia Stace – Lay Leader
- Kathy Boxell – Member-at-Large
- Denise Harshman – will not be Finance Rep, but will remain as chair of Finance

The congregation is grateful for the service of these faithful folks. Their work and love for this congregation is greatly appreciated.

Following is the 2024 Church Council Roster:

- Pastor
- Kraig Piper – Council Chair
- Steve Sharon – Lay Leader, Lay Member to Conference
- Cathy Lane – Church Treasurer and Mission Chair
- Rex Lane – Trustee Chair
- Nancy Worthy – Member-at-Large
- Sarah Evans – SPPRC Chair, Worship Chair
- Debbie Ivey – Member-at-Large and Finance Representative
- Sally Bancroft – Member-at-Large
- Rita Holloway – UWF President and Council/Charge Conference Sec’y
- Barb Salveter – Education Chair
- Ann Zobrosky – Member-at-Large

Kids Christmas Shoppe

December 9th from 11 to 1 pm we will have a Kid’s Christmas Shop where our neighborhood children can come and shop with an escort for their parents and family members. We will need volunteers to be Elf Helpers, gift wrappers, and register “check-out” help.

This event will be by donation and each child will receive “Santa Bucks” to spend on items.

There will be a waiting area with refreshments; hot cocoa, coffee, cookies and entertainment for the parents, and children will be escorted by “elf Helpers” to the Annex to shop.

Donations needed of gift items, wrapping paper, tags and bows. See Nancy Worthy for more information.



Bell Ringers!

December 16 is Salvation Army bell ringing from noon to four. One-hour shifts at Needlers Market in north Marion. From three to four we will be singing Christmas carols as well as ringing the bells. Join in and help the Salvation Army raise funds for those in need. Let Barb Pack (765-506-7672) or the church office know of your interest.



Mitten Tree

This year and in years past we have set up a mitten tree in the 7th Street entrance area. Please dig out the yarn or dig into your gift-buying budget and bring hats, gloves, mittens and scarves for the local children. We will collect them on the tree and then donate them to local schools to help keep our children warm this winter.



Rada Cutlery

The next Rada order will be turned in on Monday, December 4th. This should get back in time for you to give as Christmas gifts!

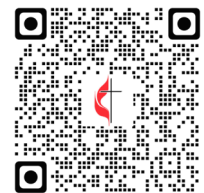
This catalog is full of terrific gifts for teachers, back to school, housewarming gifts, weddings, and the holidays! Please check out the catalogs around the church and in the office.



It’s so easy to order. Fill out the order form in the center of the catalog. Make checks payable to First United Methodist Church.

DECEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14</i></p>					1	2
						<p>10 am Lyric Club Brunch 11 am Concert, Sanctuary</p>
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<p>Worship Svc. 9:15 am Glenn Howell Advent Workshop 3 to 5 pm AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor</p>		<p>Supper Club 6 - 7:30 pm F.H.</p>	<p>Bell Choir 6 pm AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm</p>			<p>Kids Christmas Shop 11-1pm</p>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<p>Worship Svc. 9:15 am AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor</p>	<p>Administrative Council Mtg 6pm Parlor</p>	<p>Supper Club 6 - 7:30 pm F.H.</p>	<p>January FOCUS Submissions Deadline Bell Choir 6 pm AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm</p>			<p>Salvation Army Bell Ringers Needler's 12 - 4pm</p>
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<p>Worship Svc. 9:15 am Wes Farewell 2:00 pm AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor</p>		<p>Supper Club 6 - 7:30 pm F.H.</p>	<p>Bell Choir 6 pm AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm</p>			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<p>Worship Svc. 9:15 am Service 5 pm AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor</p>		<p>Supper Club 6 - 7:30 pm F.H.</p>	<p>Committee Chairs Noon Parlor AA 6pm FH Al-Anon & Alateen 6pm</p>			
31						
<p>Worship Svc. 9:15 am AA-Women's Mtg. 5:30 Parlor</p>	<p>Find more information at Marionumc.org and follow us on Facebook.</p>					



Scan the code for on-line giving.



On November 16th, Carolyn Lane, Kathy Boxell, and Susie Flynn graduated from the Parish Nurse Program sponsored by Marion Health. They have spent an intensive amount of time participating in the training program offered by the hospital and are now ready to kick off a Parish Nurse Program for our congregation. They are energized and full of ideas about what this could mean for our church. You will begin to see ideas coming from them about trainings and resources that will be very helpful for all of us. Watch for further updates. But for the moment, congratulate Carolyn, Kathy, and Susie for the time and energy they are willing to invest in this very significant program.

