

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

310 Oak Street, Irwin, PA 15642
724-863-6858

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER, JANUARY 2022/2023

From the Pastor :

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

How are you doing? You may remember that I said that I didn't want disaffiliation to become a distraction, well, it has. It is confusing, scary, aggravating, and divisive, all at the same time. Maybe this is too simplistic but it seems to me that people want to leave the denomination because of the disagreement over homosexuality and abortion. Folks have become tired of the bickering about those things and more. I think people want to go to a church that does not disagree about anything. Ha! I don't think it exists and I think it is good for us to debate different issues within the church. That debate teaches us how to defend our faith. Conflict exercises our "faith muscle" and as long as we love one another as Jesus loved us then it is a good thing.

Our Book of Discipline has not changed in many years. It is based on the Scriptures and I agree with its standards. So there is no reason to disaffiliate unless you are doing it for the money. We have an opportunity to break away from the denomination for 2% of the property value of the church and parsonage. After this year it may increase to 20%. So, if you are dissatisfied with the United Methodist denomination and want to leave (to go where exactly I am not sure) now may be a good time to do just that. There are a lot of things to be considered because it will not be a walk in the park. The real question we should be asking ourselves is, "What does God want me to do?" The answer to that question will require prayerful introspection, conversations with other Christians, and Bible study.

Clear as mud, right? Let's focus on other things such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. Let's think about how we can help people to have a better Christ-filled holiday this year. Let's think about such things and then let's do those things. *Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* Yes, that is not confusing and it certainly gives us direction for our lives. No doubt we have to address issues along the way such as disaffiliation, but it will be good for us to be focused on the things of God when we do. If you have questions please call and we will do all we can to find you the answers.

God loves you and so do I,

Pastor Bruce

Praise the Lord

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

"The First United Methodist Church of Irwin exists to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We are a community of believers, centered on Christ, united by God's love, and empowered by the Holy Spirit."

PROGRESSIVE NATIVITY ~ 2022/2023

Nothing touches our lives which hasn't passed through the hand of God first. Believe it or not, it's true. The same can be said of every second of every minute for millennia. The truth of God's involvement is not dependent on a person's perception. You see, we must not believe in God. We must believe God. Subtle phrase change. Massive difference in dynamic. Throughout the upcoming Christmas season we will witness how ordinary people living out their ordinary lives had an encounter with God in action. Did they realize it at the time? Or, was it reflected only in their remembrances? As is true for us, were they so intent on the commonplace that they failed to witness the extraordinary? Did they miss the Lord's presence because they were so focused on living their lives? Join us each week beginning November 27, as the Progressive Nativity unfolds bringing fresh insight and inspiration. Allow yourself to become immersed in the old, old story and discover anew the radical, life changing circumstances wrought by God's intentional reaching towards mankind.

Wendell's Vision Ministry 2022

We have filled many requests as we watched Fall arrive...was one of them yours? If not, we're still waiting to see what we can assist you with from your "To Do List". We will continue to honor any approved requests now and leading into the winter months. **We will not be available from mid-November until mid-January except for a dire emergency.** So, get those forms to the office soon.

Wendell's Vision is a ministry to provide assistance to home owners that can't otherwise do the task, whether physically or financially, or both. Wendell knew there was a need out there for his Christian brothers and sisters of Irwin First UMC. Now, we're here for you! We have a few outstanding requests that need to be completed as of this publication. So, if you've submitted a request, we will be in touch with you soon to schedule an evaluation visit and work time frame.

If you haven't remembered to pick a request form up you can do so in the June Coons Ministry Outreach Center at the *Wendell's Vision Ministry Station* or go online to the church website and print one out. We are continuing to pray for you in anticipation of the request. Let's work together to fulfill your wishes. No request is too small; however, we need to hear from you first. Remember you must be a regular attendee of the Saturday or Sunday worship service of Irwin First United Methodist Church to qualify.

Check out the church website for the latest photos of the "Before & After" recently posted. All of our volunteers are waiting to get the email or call about how they can be **assisting you**. If you want to join them in the quest to help others and continue this blessed ministry, be sure to fill out a volunteer form.

Coordinators, Patty & Jack Osterman

Thank You to all of you!!!!

We would like you to join us in giving the volunteers of Wendell's Vision a warm and well deserved Thank You. It's been said that "it takes a village" to make the best of any effort or project. That's certainly been proven in the folks who have given of themselves to others, through this ministry over the few years since its inception. While our list of volunteers has not grown much, we have some of the most devoted individuals we have ever worked with at First Irwin UMC. As coordinators of the ministry, we find this small army of Christians are selfless in the quest to answer our attendee's requests for assistance with tasks/projects around their homes. We also want to recognize the generous donations that have been made to the ministry funds by ongoing contributors, memorials for Wendell, requestees gifts and the time and talents of all the volunteers. May God continue to bless these efforts to serve Him and others as we honor the man whose vision it was...**Thanks Wendell.**

In Christian Love, Patty & Jack Osterman

rightnow MEDIA

BIBLE STUDIES

This is a good way to increase your knowledge of the Bible and grow closer to our Lord. To participate in any of these studies, you need to email the church office at office@irwinfirstumc.org with your request. The office will place your email address on the list of participants and give you instructions on how to log onto the account.

Sunday School News!

Sunday School started up again in September.

We have classes for all ages! There is a preschool class, elementary class, Junior and Senior High class, and 2 adult Sunday School classes. Sunday School starts at 9:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. between services. Hope to see you there!

Becky Platt

Sunday School Superintendent

NEWS FROM THE LOFT (THE CHOIR LOFT, THAT IS)

All members of the music department offer a big thank you for your support and for the delicious breakfast, which we received on Music Dedication Sunday. It is a pleasure to serve you – AND the Lord!

CHANCEL CHOIR and CATHEDRAL BELLS

New members are always welcome! We welcome singers in all voice parts, especially sopranos. When current members have to miss because of illness, vacations or other obligations, we are hurting for voices. You do not need to be at all rehearsals nor at all worship services. All of the music is available to musicians on our Sharepoint site. If you like to sing, and would enjoy leading the congregation in their musical praise, please come to choir rehearsal (weekly on Thursdays, 7:15 PM in the sanctuary). For bells, if you know your right hand from your left, and you can count to at least six, you are eligible to become a member of this choir! Reading music is a definite plus, but we will teach you what you need to know. Rehearsals are weekly on Thursdays at 6:15 in the sanctuary

NOVEMBER - REHEARSAL CHANGES In November, because of conflicting events in the church and community, we will rehearse on WEDNESDAY evenings (NOT our usual Thursday) at 6:15 (bells) and 7:15 (choir) (November 2, 9 and 16) in the sanctuary. No rehearsal on November 24 because of the Thanksgiving holiday. The next normal rehearsal will be on December 1. Bells will play at the 10:45 AM service on November 20.

DECEMBER – Choir will be singing at the 10:45 AM service on each Sunday in December, and at the Christmas Eve services. Bells will be playing at the 10:45 AM service on December 18. Some members of Bells will be playing at the Christmas Eve services. Rehearsals for both groups will be Thursdays, December 1, 8, 15, and 22 at 6:15 PM (Bells) and 7:15 PM (Choir)

in the sanctuary. There will be NO rehearsals on December 29.

JANUARY – Rehearsals will resume every Thursday beginning January 5 (6:15 bells, 7:15 choir). Choir will be singing at the 10:45 AM service on each Sunday in January. Bells will be playing at a later time in January.

TEMPLE CHIMES

New members are always welcome. If you are in grades 1 – 6 and would like to learn a leadership role in your church (and have fun in the process!) please join us at any rehearsal.

NOVEMBER - Until we get a few more children, we will be concentrating on learning to read music and ring chimes. Rehearsals are held in the sanctuary on Sundays, 12:15 – 1:00 PM. There is NO REHEARSAL on November 27.

DECEMBER – Rehearsals are usually on Sundays, but due to other church functions, the schedule may change. Watch your emails and bulletins for further information. There will be no rehearsal on December 25 and January 1.

JANUARY – Rehearsals will resume January 8, 15, 22 and 29 in the sanctuary.

The performance dates for this quarter will be announced via email. Text and bulletins.

IRWIN MALE CHORUS

The Irwin Male Chorus, under the direction of Forrest Moore, will present a concert of sacred and seasonal music in our sanctuary on Sunday, December 4 at 7:00 PM. The public is invited. Cookies are needed for the reception following the concert. A sign-up sheet is being passed during the worship services or you may contact Dianne Runser. Cookies may be brought to the kitchen on Sunday morning.

Dianne Runser may be contacted through a note in the church office, by phone (412-310-6121) or email (dianne.runser@irwinfirstumc.org), or by just coming to the organ bench on Sunday morning!





LONGEST NIGHT/BLUE CHRISTMAS

Wednesday, December 21, 2021 at 7:00PM

First United Methodist Church

310 Oak Street

Irwin, PA 15642

For those who want to remember their deceased loved ones with a church service on the longest darkness day of the year. Sponsored by

First United Methodist Church of Irwin & Ott Funeral Home

ALL AGES ARE WELCOME!

FROM THE N.O.W. COMMITTEE

We will NOT have **Hanging of the Greens** on November 20. Small groups will be gathering throughout the week to finish the decorations. Jobs include: 1) Erect and decorate a tree in the sanctuary and one on the stage in the gym; 2) Place and decorate the sanctuary window shelves; 3) Erect and decorate the sanctuary nativity scene; 4) Erect and decorate the parlor and narthex trees; 5) Hang wreath and greens on the sanctuary balcony; 6) Hang banners on sanctuary pillars and in the choir loft; 6) Place the advent wreath and candles; and 7) Hang the advent banners.

If you would like to help work with any of these small groups, please sign the clipboard which is passed during church on Sundays or contact Dianne Runser to be given contact information for the group you want to work with.

"Families" of all kinds are invited to participate in our Advent services by serving as **ADVENT WREATH CANDLE LIGHTERS AND READERS**. "Families" may be parents and children, grandparents and children, couples with no children, groups of friends, or any other combination of people. The reading will be short and simple. Please consider this a chance to prepare your heart for Christmas. To sign up for a Sunday service or Christmas Eve, please call, or text Dianne at 412-310-6121, or email her at dianne.runser@irwinfirstumc.org. You may also complete the form on the clipboard or talk to Dianne at the organ on Sunday.

It is Fall 2022 and time again for those Yummy, Sandy Hill Berry Half - Baked frozen berry pies and fresh pumpkin pies!

You will find an order form inside your bulletin. The deadline for orders will be Friday, November 11, 2022. Orders must be turned in no later than 2:00 p.m. Extra order forms can also be found in the June Coons Room.

All proceeds will be used for Irwin FUMC, "Raise the Roof Campaign".

Again this year's profits will be doubled twice: once by an anonymous giver of the congregation and again by the Capital Improvement Matching Fund held by the Finance Committee.

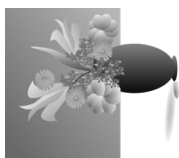
Any questions contact Alan Painter at 724-446-0224.

Thank you for the continued support! Happy Fall and Holiday Season!

ORDER FORMS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 9! MAKE SURE TO GET YOUR ORDER IN!!

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

310 Oak Street
 Irwin, PA 15642
 (724) 863-6858



ALTAR FLOWER ORDER FORM

We appreciate your participation and generosity in sharing the memory and/or honor of your loved ones during the worship of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Please fill out the form below and return it to: Alice Hubert, 616 Warden St, Irwin PA 15642 or the church office.

In **MEMORY** of _____

In **HONOR** of _____

Given by _____

Address _____

Phone No. _____

First Sunday desired _____

Second Sunday desired _____

Flower Choice (if any) _____

I will pick up flowers after the 10:45 a.m. service ____ yes ____ no

If you cannot return the green plastic vase after you have enjoyed your flowers, please add \$1.00 to cover the cost of the vase.

The price for live flowers is \$35.00. Please pay at the time you are ordering your flowers with a separate check made out to FUMC and marked "Flowers". You may place your order in the offering plate or mail to the church office.

We can accommodate two (2) flower orders each Sunday. No orders will be taken for Palm Sunday, Easter and Christmas.

Flowers may be picked up after the 10:45 a.m. worship service.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Above is the order form for the Altar Flowers if you wish to place an order please fill out a form and turn it into the church office. Additional forms can be found in the Narthex if needed. Any questions please feel free to give the office a call at 724-863-6858



When something new comes up, you will be notified by email, so check the news on our website:

www.irwinfirstumc.org

This is a good way to keep everyone updated on the latest information when it becomes available.



PRAYER GROUP: We have a Prayer Group that meets at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings. The group will meet on Zoom (Meeting ID#311 4389 930, Password 3U22u3). Everyone is welcome to participate.

2022 CHRISTMAS COOKIE TRAYS

As a fundraiser for the church, the NOW Committee would like to have a cookie sale during the Christmas season. We are currently looking for people who enjoy baking. We will take orders for cookie trays until December 4, 2022. Trays will be assembled on Saturday, December 17, so have your cookies at the church by that morning. Last year, this sale was a great success. We are fortunate to have so many bakers in our congregation!

If you are interested in helping out sign up sheets are located in the sanctuary.

CHURCH FINANCES as of September 2022

July Income	\$29,930.59
July Expenses	<u>\$18,023.85</u>
Month Ending	11,906.74
 August Income	 \$27,131.62
August Expenses	<u>\$24,792.13</u>
Month Ending	2,339.49
 September Income	 \$22,156.17
September Expenses	<u>\$31,725.17</u>
Month Ending	-9,569.00

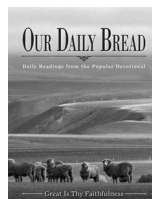
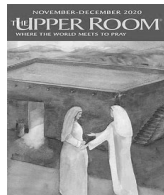
At the end of **September**, we are at a **Negative \$1,634.00**
(BUDGET VS ACTUAL)

Year to Date we are at a **Positive \$2,539.90 (INCOME VS EXPENSE)**

THE CHURCH AND ITS OFFICE RUNS TRANSPARENT, IF ANYONE HAS QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT FINANCES REACH OUT TO THE OFFICE MANAGER. YOU CAN REACH HER BY - STOPPING IN THE OFFICE DURING NORMAL OFFICE HOURS WHICH ARE MONDAY – FRIDAY FROM 10-2, BY CALLING HER AT 724-863-4977 OR BY EMAIL AT joyce.shaffer@irwinfirstumc.org.



THE SALVATION ARMY UNIT OF IRWIN: If you know anyone in need of our services please have them call 724-331-7832. Becky Platt is our Irwin Service Unit HSS.



DAILY BREAD and THE UPPER ROOM
November - December Daily Bread and Upper Room will be available in the "June Coon's Assembly Room". The "Daily Bread" is free and the "Upper Room" is a donation option. Both are located in the literature rack by the windows. If you haven't had the opportunity to use these prayer devotionals before, now is the perfect time.

Feed the Body Feed the Soul

Contemporary Saturday Evening Service 6 - 7PM
Enjoy a light dinner with music and devotions!

First United Methodist Church of Irwin

310 Oak Street, Irwin, PA
724-863-6858 • www.irwinfirstumc.org

OFFICE NEWS

OFFICE HOURS: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Monday-Friday

Office Staff available at:
Joyce Shaffer - joyce.shaffer@irwinfirstumc.org
Alyssa Bazala - alyssa.bazala@irwinfirstumc.org

Quarterly Newsletter

The schedule will be as follows:

Nov, Dec, Jan
Feb, Mar, April
May, June, July

August, September, October

MEMBERSHIP DIRECT EMAIL OR TEXT: If you would like to be included in an email message about church activities and news, please email the church office at office@irwinfirstumc.org with your email address. Your contact information WILL NOT BE SHARED anywhere outside the church.

CHURCH WEBSITE: www.irwinfirstumc.org

CHURCH FACEBOOK PAGE: Irwin First UMC

ON-LINE & RADIO - 10:45 SUNDAY SERVICES

Radio 87.9 FM
Facebook [Irwin First UMC](https://www.facebook.com/IrwinFirstUMC)
YouTube [Irwin First United Methodist Church](https://www.youtube.com/IrwinFirstUnitedMethodistChurch)
Zoom - Meeting ID# 633 303 454
Password 104289

RADA CUTLERY FUNDRAISER

The NOW Committee is sponsoring a RADA Cutlery fundraiser for camperships. RADA has a large selection of kitchen utensils, soup mixes, dip mixes, cookbooks, etc. Order for yourself or for gifts. Christmas is coming! Invite your friends and family to order also. Catalogs and order forms are on the NOW table in the June Coons Room. Please return your completed form and check to the church by November 20th. Checks should be made to First United Methodist Church. It would be helpful if you could return your catalog, as we have a limited number.

RADA pick-up day will be Sunday, December 11th at the church.

Questions? Contact Debbie Weaver 724-863-4236



Happy fall ya'all!! Greetings and blessings from the youth group! The next 3 months are some of the busiest for youth group, church and Christians as a whole. November brings us Light up Night. Youth group will participate in the parade. This year's theme is Angels in our Community. While our students walk the parade route with Pastor Bruce and his truck, Ron, I and other volunteers will give out free hot dogs, coffee and hot chocolate to the community. We will be collecting small gifts to give the community that night. Thanksgiving is a time to not only give our thanks to the Lord but to serve and feed our community. James 2:15-17 says *"Suppose a brother or sister does not have any clothes or daily food and one of you tells them 'Go in peace! Stay warm and eat heartily.' If you do not provide for their bodily needs, what good does it do? In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not prove itself with actions, is dead."* Our church does an amazing job following this particular teaching. We stock our blessing box with hygiene and personal items. We host a giveaway to clothe and supply household items. We feed our community with Saturday night dinners with our contemporary service, monthly community dinners, food bank distribution and gift cards for Thanksgiving and Easter. Though we advertise these ministries, those who serve do so with selflessness. Our youth group students serve and support all of these as we lead by example.

December brings Advent, one of the most important seasons in the Christian life. Our time to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. Youth group will continue to serve our community by helping hand out gifts on Sunday mornings. Our students truly enjoy this time and learn how hard it can be for people to accept a free gift. It is a lesson for our students where we can make the parallel of the free gift of God's love, grace and forgiveness. Our annual Lunch with Santa will be held on Dec 3rd from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. We have a very special surprise this year. Your students will be presenting "Tinsel-a Christmas Musical" during Lunch with Santa as well as Dec 9th during Irwin's Cookie Tour and during both service on Dec 11th. We will assist the NOW committee again with distribution of Angel Tree gifts on Dec 14th, which will also be our Christmas party. There will not be youth group on Dec 21st as this is the date of the Blue Christmas Service. Youth group will not meet on Dec 28th but will be presenting "Tinsel" on Dec 29th for Irwin's Senior Center at 11:30p.m.

The new year will bring a new confirmation class. Classes will begin on Jan 8th at 9:30 a.m. and end on April 2nd. Confirmation will be held on Easter Sunday, April 9th. All students, 6th grade and up who wish to be confirmed should reach out to Pastor Ron no later than Dec 15th to allow time to order curriculum and insure that we have enough books.

God's love and blessings to all,

Pastor Ron and Robbyn

Saturday Worship Reflections

One of the popular worship songs playing on KLOVE now is called “Honey In The Rock” by Brooke Ligertwood (and we’ve sung it a few times at Saturday night worship). Have you heard this song? If not, I encourage you to look it up on YouTube and listen to it. If so, have you thought about the lyrics?

Consider the first part of verse one:

*Praying for a miracle
Thirsty for the living well
Only You can satisfy*

Have you ever found yourself in an impossible situation, desperate for God to come through? Did you worry that He wouldn’t come through? Or maybe things didn’t turn out the way you prayed that they would. I have experienced situations like this in my own life and I’m sure you have too.

Here’s the chorus:

*There's honey in the rock
Water in the stone
Manna on the ground
No matter where I go
I don't need to worry now that I know
Everything I need You've got*

God has got everything we need, He is our provider. We may not be able to see how God will make a way for us, but God is not limited by the natural, He can do the extraordinary! Can you imagine being an Israelite who woke every morning to fresh manna on the ground? Could you have imagined that God would do something so miraculous to feed you?

Psalm 81:16 says, *“But you would be fed with the finest of wheat;
with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”*

The bridge:

*I keep looking, I keep finding
You keep giving, keep providing
I have all that I need
You are all that I need*

Let’s keep our eyes open for the ways that God is moving in our lives and providing for us. It’s happening all the time whether we recognize it or not. Let’s call to mind the ways He’s provided for us in the past and thank Him for his constant provision. And please join us on Saturday night sometime for worship! Hope to see you there!

Laura



Irwin FUMC Sand Hill Berry Pie Fundraiser

Orders and Donations are Due by Friday, November 11, 2022 by 2:00 PM

Pick up Pies, between Sunday Services, November 20, 2022 in the Church Gymnasium

(If assistance is needed, runners will be available for pick up)

Please make your selection of the following:

Double Crust Pies come half-baked (frozen for at home baking)

Available Flavors	8" Pie \$13.00	Mark Your Pie Selection(s)	Amount Donation Owed	Paid Cash or Check (make out to Irwin FUMC)
Cherry				
Blackberry				
Blueberry				
Raspberry/Cherry				
Bumbleberry <i>(5 berries- red raspberry, cherry, blueberry, blackberry, strawberry)</i>				
Three Berry <i>(Black raspberry, blueberry + black berry)</i>				
Available Flavor	8" Pie - \$14.00	Mark Your Pie Selection	Amount Donation Owed	Paid Cash or Check (make out to Irwin FUMC)
Red Raspberry				

Fresh Baked Pumpkin Pies Available (cannot be frozen)

Available Flavor	8" Pie \$13.00	Mark Your Pie Selection(s)	Amount Donation Owed	Paid Cash or Check (make out to Irwin FUMC)
Pumpkin				

Please Print:

Name: _____

Phone: _____ **Runner needed for pick up Yes ___ No___**

Cell/Text: _____ **Email** _____

***Please turn in to the Church by 11/11/2022 by 2:00 PM.
Contact Alan Painter with questions - 724-446-0224***

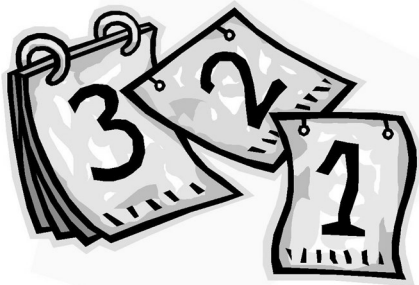
If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please let us know. You may call the church office at 724-863-6858 or email us office@irwinfirstumc.org

Dated Material – please deliver promptly

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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First United Methodist Church
310 Oak Street
Irwin, PA 15642



2022/2023

November, December, January

