

POPLAR LEAVES

Memorial United Methodist Church

December, 2023

2701 Poplar Street
Terre Haute, Indiana 47803
(812) 234-0776
office@umcMemorial.org

Sundays

Worship, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.
Prayz Worship, 11:15 a.m.

Office Hours

Tuesday-Thursday
9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Livestreamed Services

MemorialSunday.org

Calendar

MemorialEvents.org

Website

umcMemorial.org

Giving

GiveMemorial.org

Prayer Requests

PrayingMemorial@gmail.com

Memorial Staff

Ron Branson, pastor
Michael Walker, administrative assistant
and financial secretary
Linda Lutz, treasurer
Logan Williams, music director
Jinhee Kim, accompanist
Joe Cresgy, media director
Tobie Wrightsman, nursery attendant
Alfred VanGilder, building custodian
Christy Cresgy and Missy Wilcox,
preschool co-directors
Paula Metheny, Kids Hope USA
David M. Peter, certified lay minister
and lay leader



All are welcome

Reflections

Hello friends! As I begin to write this article Janette is downstairs baking deserts for our Thanksgiving celebration tomorrow afternoon. This time of year, when we count our blessings, I pray that one of those blessings for you is our Memorial UMC family.

Unfortunately, there are some United Methodists who, because their church home disaffiliated, feel disconnected this year and that is why I am encouraging us to consider becoming a "Lighthouse Church." As a UMC "Lighthouse" we are simply acknowledging that we are a United Methodist community who has been trained to welcome those who feel like they are adrift.

I have often shared that one of the reasons I became United Methodist is because a core belief is *everyone* is welcome—people who are progressive or conservative; people of all ages, races, and genders; people who are married, single, or widowed; people who are like you and not like you, people who are LGBTQ or straight; people who have been followers of Jesus all their life and people who are seeking answers.



For me, the axiom "Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors." *is* who we are!

Unfortunately, the fact that several UMC faith communities decided to separate and follow a generally more conservative call is an indication that we haven't all been as welcoming as the people at Memorial have been for many years, which brings us to the need for training.

Enclosed in this edition of *Poplar Leaves* is a 2-page document explaining what it looks like to "really" be a welcoming church. By the time you receive this I will have already talked about this list of "Hospitality Tips" along with additional information on what it takes to become one of the Lighthouse Churches and fly the "A Place For You" banner at our entrances.

Visit www.inumc.org/umc-a-place-for-you where you will find a map of where these faith communities are located, and you might notice that there are *none* in our District. I pray we can work together to become the first UMC "Lighthouse" in the West District.

Shalom, Shalom,

Pastor Ron



Hospitality is the practice of receiving a guest or stranger graciously. Most church guests will decide within a few minutes whether they will visit a second time. Usually, the way in which they are welcomed – the feeling they get from stepping into the church – will make up their minds before the service has even begun.

That's why hospitality is so important!

Those serving in a hospitality role must make attentiveness to worship guests a higher priority than visiting with church friends.

Important tips:

- Be prepared to answer the questions of church guests by monitoring internal communication, whether bulletin announcements, newsletters, a weekly Eblast, etc. A guest may request a specific ministry so it's important for you to know what your church is already making available.
- Provide arrival and departure times for those serving in hospitality ministry to insure they arrive early enough and are willing to remain for a sufficient time to carry out their welcoming ministry effectively.
- Introduce yourself to any persons whose name you do not know or those you don't recognize. If you're not sure about someone, simply say something like, "I'm not sure if we've met..."
- Familiarize yourself with the digital and print resources your church makes available for worship guests and resource guests with what matches their expressed interest/need.
- Introduce yourself to all whom you do not recognize. If they respond with their name, move to a question such as "Have you visited here before?" If they are new, give them a warm greeting and find out a bit about them if they seem comfortable engaging. Notice non-verbal cues that can indicate whether individuals want to engage in conversation or would prefer being welcomed and left alone.
- After introducing yourself, if the guest does NOT introduce themselves or appears reluctant to engage, simply welcome them and leave it at that. Those wounded by church may need to reengage slowly and pressing for more information is not respectful.
- Never call attention to a guest during worship or in any public way... unless they're a conference staff person!
- Share anything you learn about visitors with the ministry staff and leader of the hospitality ministry as appropriate.

Look around the sanctuary at the end of worship and, if there is someone you don't recognize who arrived late, **take time to greet them after the service.**

- (Sometimes visitors run late if they are unsure where to park or which door to enter. We don't want them ignored just because they came a little late.)
- If a family has young children, provide them with information about the Sunday morning protocol for infants and children. Be sure someone from the children's ministry is available in the entry area prior to worship to greet new families and answer any questions they may have.

Additional Details:

- At the start of worship, provide an opening welcome statement that provides essential information about your congregation and points guests toward helpful resources. (See example at bottom.) This welcome statement should also be printed in the program and on the worship slides if applicable (at beginning and end of worship) for those who may arrive late.
- Print information for guests (e.g. where childcare is located, where restrooms are located, how to get a hearing assistance device or a large print program) should appear near the front of the bulletin where it can be easily accessed by visitors.
- Make sure outdoor and indoor signage is clear and up to date. In particular, clearly mark exterior doors so guests know what door to enter. Consider adding maps of your building and campus to your website.

Ways every church attendee can welcome:

- Always wear your name tag so people understand they can ask you if they need assistance. If you don't know the answer, don't simply say "I don't know." Acknowledge you do not know but will find someone who does.
- If people need help finding something, walk with them. Churches can be tricky to navigate even with signage.
- Always sit toward the center of the pew/row. Visiting a church for the first time can produce a high level of anxiety and feeling "physically trapped" by individuals at both ends of the row can exacerbate that anxiety. Move for guests! Don't expect them to navigate around you!
- **Don't always sit in the same seat.** Moving to different areas of the worship center allows you to meet more people.
- Keep your Sunday morning "church talk" positive! It can be triggering to people who have come from a place of division to witness church folk disagreeing when they visit a church. Debate is healthy when it occurs in the appropriate context with the appropriate audience (e.g. at a Governing Board meeting), but not randomly on a Sunday morning at church.



Lay of the Land

Just when you think it's over

David Peter, Certified Lay Minister

Wait, DECEMBER? Where did this year go? I don't know about you, but this year has flown by. Well, parts have. Some are moving slower than a Galapagos Turtle. For some, this is the time of year that we look back, and measure what we have done. Often, we highlight the BIG things done, and overlook the smaller ones. Some would dwell on those things that were not finished, or just simply didn't work. Measures of failure? I wouldn't go there. But we are in one way or the other looking at the time. The Bible is filled with "time" from cover to cover. And this time of year, between Thanksgiving and Christmas seems to be a long continuum, where days blend into the other. Everything is in fast mode. More and more need to be done, yesterday. It quickly escalates into frustration, anger, despair. Wow! Let's find a way to get off this express train, and stay off the fast track.

I know what you're thinking. "Gee, David, if I were in your shoes, all would be better." Right? Well, don't be dazzled by the flashy and stylish bowties! I have experienced my own measure of medical issues that have made me refine and alter

my lifestyle to accommodate the changing medical life. I have shared somethings with the congregation as a whole and with some I have shared my hopes, my dreams, aspirations, and limitations. No time like the present to make a conscious effort to learn FROM the year. Remember that we are reminded, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, "A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven," (3:1, JPS). We each have our own time clock. It is the clock that we are bound by and to.

So, in a more intentional manner, I choose to see each day as a beginning and promise for more, not simply 24 hours. As this year is ushered out, let us give thanks, and remember that not only is this year ending, but our thanks should be increasing. After all, the Advent season is the greatest reminder to savor the times we are given. To welcome Jesus Christ, knowing that the time HE has with use is shortened.

By the time you read this, I will have returned from a plane trip to visit and spend Thanksgiving with family and relatives in Texas, and celebrated several birthdays, wedding anniversaries, but most of all cherish and be blessed by the time spent together, reacquainting with each other. Continuing the story. Because, just when you think it's over, this specific time comes to a close, and you patiently await the return.

Stop. Put the electronic devices away - might even turn them off! Listen for the voice of God and when you hear it, I believe that will mark an instance of time that will be a blessing for you. A simple gift. All we need to do is accept it.



Christmas Flowers

Order
Deadline
Extended
to Dec. 12

Poinsettias will adorn the Alter and Chancel areas starting December 16th. If you would like to purchase one in honor and/or memorial of someone, please contact the office or get a form from the welcome table. Completed order forms and payment may be mailed or dropped off to the office or left in the collection basket on Sunday morning. The cost is \$10.00 with a deadline of December 12.



ANGEL TREE GIVING

It's the most wonderful time of the year! It's time to sponsor a child at 14th and Chestnut. For years, families in our congregation have supported the center by selecting one child from our ANGEL TREE. 100% of your gift goes to provide meals, clothing, tutoring, worship, bible study, field trips & more for this child. HOW EASY – no shopping – no wrapping - & your gift continues to give all

year. IF YOU BELONG TO A BOOK OR CARD CLUB, consider selecting a child for your club to sponsor. Please select an envelope from the table in the narthex, FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS, & return before Christmas. If you prefer, you may send in your CHECK to the church office, MADE OUT TO 14th & CHESTNUT COMMUNITY CENTER. We will select a child for you. Questions? Contact Vicki Bailey, 812-242-4848. Thank You! DID YOU KNOW SEVERAL FROM 14th ST HAVE GONE ON TO COLLEGE???



The annual Kids Hope Christmas party will be happening soon and the children are getting excited. Many of our children are new to Kids Hope and haven't experienced an after-school party with all the fun stuff – gifts, games, crafts, pizza, music, and a special story. But the party, to be held this year on December 6, is a highlight for the children who have been a part of the ministry for a while.

It is such a joy to see their faces light up when they realize this party is just for them. You, the congregation at Memorial, are a big reason for these smiles. You support Kids Hope in so many ways, and never more than at Christmas time. It is so appreciated. Many wishes for a wonderful holiday season, and may God bless you!

Reminder: Mentors and friends, the Christmas party will be at 2:30 pm on Wednesday, December 6. The last day to mentor will be Friday, December 8, and Christmas Break will last through Tuesday, January 2.

Mentoring will resume January 3.

Would you like to help?

Check out the Kids Hope Wish Board in the narthex! There are all kinds of things we need to host our amazing Christmas Party on December 6 — gloves, hats, lip balm, books, socks, and other gifts. You do the shopping (you don't even need to wrap!) and we'll make sure it gets to the kids. Thanks for your support of our Kids Hope ministry!



MEMORIAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Saturday, December 16 at 6PM

Join us for a wonderful evening of Christmas and holiday music by Memorial UMC's music ministry! The Memorial UMC Chapel Bells, Joyful Noise, Chancel Choir and friends (along with string quartet and percussion), organist/pianist, Jinhee Kim, and children of the Memorial Preschool will perform a wide variety of music that includes many favorites, but also less familiar selections! There may even be some audience participation!

Mark your calendars, bring your friends, and share this experience with us!



PRESCHOOL NEWS

Merry Christmas from the Preschool. It is going to be a very busy month for the little ones. We will be "performing" for the United Women of Faith at their luncheon on December 7, our program on December 14, and the MUMC Christmas Concert and Cookies on December 16. Everyone has been busy practicing for these events. It is always fun watching the littles perform. You never know what might happen.

Along with all the performances the littles will be having fun doing all kinds of holiday activities as they learn about Christmas, including a birthday party for Jesus. Our Ugly Sweater or wear Red and Green Day will be held on December 7, if you would like to join us in the fun. We will end our month with the class Christmas parties on December 19, and start our winter break on December 20. The children will return to class in the new year on January 3.

Everyone at Memorial Preschool would like to wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

In Ministry Together
Christy Cresgy and Missy Wilcox



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

On Wednesday, December 21st we will celebrate our 4th Annual Blue Christmas. Blue? Yes, blue as in the blues. As in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. There is a growing attentiveness to the needs of people who are blue at Christmas and so our Worship time together will give us permission to grieve our losses but also reminds us that we can celebrate the birth of the Baby Jesus who came so that all will be restored. I hope you will join us.



Pam Crane, Prayer Coordinator

"Sick, hungry, thirsty, naked and alone." Sounds almost like a promo for a TV reality survival competition! But of course, it's Jesus' parable in Matt. 25:31-46. Sadly, there are many people experiencing these circumstances in our world who are not contestants in a television production. So as we're learning to improve hospitality and welcome guests at our church let us also focus on expanding our hospitality beyond the walls of our building. One example of this is the Angel Tree program that gives us the opportunity to sponsor children at the 14th and Chestnut Community Center. What a wonderful outreach ministry this is to be able to help feed and nurture children in the name of Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, we ask that You would help us to guard our hearts to not be overwhelmed and consumed by the enormity of the problems in this world. We thank You for the opportunities that we are given to make a difference in the lives of some children through The Angel Tree program. Enable us through the power of the Holy Spirit to show hospitality to our guests so that all will feel welcome and our ministries may explode. Give us open, willing, sacrificial and generous hearts to carry out the work that You have for us to do through Memorial UMC. We ask this in the holy name of Jesus, Amen.



ADVENT PICTURES NEEDED

In celebration of the advent season, we invite anyone to share a picture to use during the advent season. We ask that these pictures represent:

Hope Dec. 3rd
Peace Dec. 10th
Joy Dec. 17th
Love Dec. 24th

You may email your picture(s) to the Church office or bring it by (to be scanned and returned) during office hours.

The advent readers are:

December 3rd- The Klug Family
December 10th- The Ray Family
December 17th- The Johnson Family
December 24th (am) The Jena Family
December 24th (pm) Shirley Martin and
Michael Walker

Thank you so much for helping with worship during the holiday season. Paula Metheny will be in touch with you with all the readings.



Memorial continues to be one of the most successful Red Cross blood drive locations in Vigo County. The final 2023 drive will be on Friday, December 22 starting at 9am. To sign up please go to www.redcross.org for an appointment time.



A special thank you to all who have helped make our enhanced coffee bar a great success. Here is the schedule for yummy eats:

January- Worship Team
February- Education Team
March- United Women in Faith
April- Trustee Committee

We are always looking for volunteers that will help prepare the coffee on Sunday morning. If you are interested, let the office know and we will get you trained.



**FARRINGTON GROVE CHORALE
COMMUNITY SERVICE OF
LESSONS AND CAROLS**

Get into the Christmas Spirit with the Farrington Grove Chorale and support our chorale participants! A special opportunity is Sunday, December 10th at 7:00 pm, at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 215 N. 7th Street. A community service of lessons and carols that is patterned on a 19th century English worship service will be read by people from the city of Terre Haute, ISU, WTWO, VCSC School Board, legal, youth, medical and faith professions and the carols will be sung by the Chorale. Following the service, a reception will be hosted. Child care will be provided. There is no charge for admission and several Memorial Chancel Choir members participate.

You're also invited to attend the FGC's winter concert, which will be part of the city's Miracle on 7th Street celebration. The concert will feature some of the Lessons and Carols music, plus secular holiday favorites. The concert commences at 7:00 pm on Friday, December 1st, at First Congregational Church, 630 Ohio Blvd. Terre Haute, IN.

CHILDREN'S Sunday School

On Sunday, December 17th during the Sunday School hour, the children of the church are invited to go caroling to all the adult Sunday school classes. We will meet in the Children's Sunday school room to start our adventure. We will be practicing from 9:40-9:50am on December 3rd and 10th. There may be some surprises along the way!!

ANNOUNCEMENT SLIDES

A special thank you to Ted Wilson for making our announcement slides that are on the screen before the worship service. If your committee or team has an announcement you would like put on a slide, please let the office know by the end of day on Tuesday for the following Sunday.

A reminder that announcements are on Facebook, Memorial calendar site, Poplar Leaves, the welcome center, streaming in the narthex and on the back of your bulletin for the upcoming week. You may also call the office if you have questions or need additional information.

Would you like to have the bulletin and/or Poplar Leaves sent to your email? Please contact the office and we will get you on the email list.

To receive email prayer updates email
PrayingMemorial@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE



United
Women
in Faith

Sunday, January 14th we welcome Tracy Leslie to Memorial. Tracy is the Associate Director of Innovation, Engagement and Development for the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. She will be joining us to share about becoming an even more welcoming church as well as the process of becoming a Lighthouse congregation. **BRUNCH** will be served in the fellowship hall at 10:30 where Tracy will continue our conversation. Please RSVP by signing up in the narthex or calling the office. ALL are welcome.

THANK YOU

A huge thank you to Joanie and Tom Kendall and Paula and Steve Metheny for chairing the chili supper. Also, thank you to Sandy Sell for chairing the craft fair. With the help of all the volunteers, it was a very successful weekend. -Vicki, UWF President

A big thank you to the kind generosity of the members of Memorial. WE were able to provide 152 pairs of socks to the 14th and Chestnut Community Center



There will be NO man's breakfast in December.
Please attend the "Pancake Supper"
December 12, 4:30-6:30

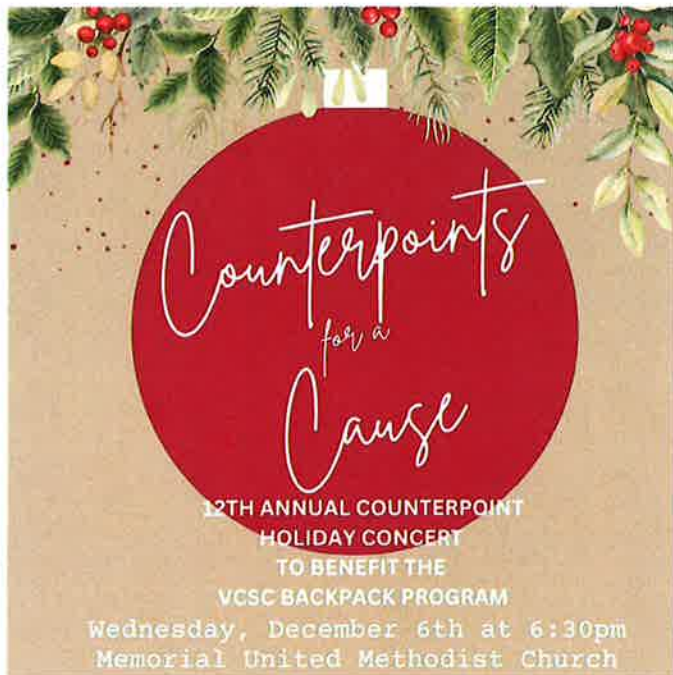
LINE DANCING WITH SUE will be taking the month of December off. Join Sue on Thursday, January 4 at 11am for an exciting hour of dancing. ALL are welcome!



December 24th
Worship at 9:30am and 11:15am
Sunday School at 10:30

Margaret Circle will not meet in December. Our next meeting will be at 10:00 am on Thursday, January 11th in the Chapel. We will be discussing Three from Galilee by Marjorie Holmes. If you have any questions, please contact Joanie Kendall at 812-298-4276 or joaniekendall@yahoo.com

Traditional candlelight service at 6pm



FFF will meet on Friday.
December 15 at 11:45.

The program will be Alvin and Francis
McFadden and their songfest.

The menu will be a Ham dinner.
You are asked to bring NOTHING. Just bring
yourself.

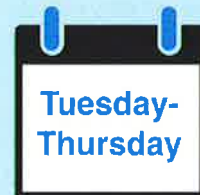
Sign up by Dec. 13 or call the office.



Life Line Screening is coming to MEMORIAL
on Wednesday, January 31st. To register for
an appointment please call 1-800-640-6307

Ways to Give:

- Place in the basket as you leave
- Mail to the church
- Give online at givememorial.org
- Automatic bank withdrawal



New Office Hours

DEADLINE for the January 2024 Poplar
Leaves is 3pm on Tuesday, December 16th.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
First Sunday of Advent 9:30am - First Worship 10:30am - SS Classes 11:15am - PrayZ Worship	5:30pm - Finance	4pm - Chair Yoga 6pm - Dinner Church: The	9:30am - Bible Study - 2:45pm - Kids Hope 6:30pm - Counterpoints 7pm - NA - Library	10am - UMW Soup 1pm - Yarn Ministry 6pm - Cub Scout Meeting 6:30pm - NAMI 7pm - Chancel Choir	Holiday Set Up	Hanging of the Greens
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2nd Mille Giving Second Sunday of Advent 9:30am - First Worship 10:30am - SS Classes 11:15am - PrayZ Worship 1:30pm - Newcomers	5:30pm - Communication 5:30pm - Member Care 6:30pm - S/PPRC 7pm - Bowling League	10am - Sewing Stiches 4pm - Chair Yoga 4:30pm - UMM Pancake 7pm - Taizé Prayer	9:30am - Preschool 6pm - Chapel Bells 7pm - NA - Library	11am - Preschool 1pm - Yarn Group 5:30pm - Mission Team 6pm - Cub Scout Meeting 7pm - Chancel Choir	Poinsetta Delivery 11:45am - Triple F	6pm - Christmas Concert
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Third Sunday of Advent 9:30am - First Worship 10:30am - SS Classes 11:15am - PrayZ Worship	7:30pm - Trustee	Poplar Leaves Due 4pm - Chair Yoga 6pm - Dinner Church: The	Pre School Break 9:30am - Bible Study 6pm - Chapel Bells 7pm - NA - Library	1pm - Yarn Ministry 6pm - Blue Christmas 6pm - Cub Scout Meeting 7pm - Chancel Choir	9pm - Blood Drive 9am - Fold Poplar Leaves	23
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Pre School Break Christmas Eve Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:30am - First Worship 10:30am - SS Classes 11:15am - PrayZ Worship	Christmas Day	Office Closed 4pm - Chair Yoga	6pm - Chapel Bells 7pm - NA - Library	1pm - Yarn Group 6pm - Cub Scout Meeting 7pm - Chancel Choir	29	30
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Pre School Break New Year's Eve 9:30am - First Worship 10:30am - SS Classes 11:15am - PrayZ Worship 11pm - 5th Sunday	1	1	1	1	1	1

