



The Heart *Of the* Matter

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
SOUTHPORT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
FEBRUARY 2021

State of the Church

Dear Friends,

When is the church going to re-open for in person worship and other activities? How much longer will this pandemic keep us from being the church we once knew? And how is the church doing in general anyway? How are we holding up financially? Have we been able to maintain our mission and service programs to help those in need? What does the future look like? What are our plans?

We try to keep you informed, but you may have these and other questions about how things are going at the church. If you do, I invite you to tune in for a special message that I am going to give later this month. Just as the President gives a “State of the Union” address each year, I would like to present an overview of the church as I see it in what I am calling the “State of the Church,” on February 23.

February, I think, is my least favorite month. It’s cold and unpredictable – I remember some of the worst snowfalls during that month.

But February also has Valentine’s Day – Brenda and I have been to some special places on that day over the years. And February is the birth month of my favorite President, Abraham Lincoln. So, some good things do occur during the month.

February is also, usually, the month when Lent begins, that 40-day journey to Easter. That’s the case this year. Lent is a good time to take stock of your life, reflect, get an overview of where things stand and whether you’re going in the right direction. The church will offer opportunities to help us each do that during Lent through worship and newly-designed Bible studies on Thursday evenings.

Reflecting, and getting an overview of our direction, is also important for a church to do from time-to-time. And we’ll begin that process with our “State of the Church” message. It is scheduled, as I say, for Tuesday, February 23, so I hope you’ll mark that date now and listen in.

May this sometimes unpredictable month, and the reflective nature of Lent as it begins, offer to us the Grace and Hope only God can give.

Pastor Duane

LENT

Dear Theo (at Southport UMC): Have you heard of Jesus? I have done some research just for you so that you will know that this Jesus is the Messiah. Let me tell you about His life, from cradle to cross.

Luke, the author of the gospel of Luke, conducted research about the life of Jesus to help the faith of his friend Theophilus. We are the recipients of that investigation through the books of Luke and Acts in the New Testament.

This Lent, as a congregation, we want to encourage you to do your own research. We want to encourage you to read the book of Luke. Let's do it together as a church.

Our Thursday evening worship services, during Lent, will be a little different than normal. The short messages will be based on key passages from the life of Jesus as documented by Luke. We will also have the opportunity for some discussion during our time together. All this will occur within a typical worship service format with announcements, prayer, and music.

Join us on the Thursdays of Lent starting February 18 to discover who Jesus is in the eyes of Luke and let that grow the knowledge of Christ within you, "4 so you can be certain of the truth of everything you were taught." (Luke 1:4, NLT)

Like everything these days, we don't know exactly what the future holds. So, as of now, we don't know if we will be doing this in-person, at least at the start of Lent. But whether we are in-person or not, we will have a Zoom component that will allow those at home to participate with those present for the worship/study.

Stay tuned for more details.

Blessings,
Pastor Doug



When: February 17

Drive-through ash service &
gift bag hand out with communion

Times: 1-2 p.m. & 6-7 p.m.

Ash Wednesday's recorded service will be available
online on day of. More info coming soon!

Creation Care News

Renewable Energy Day!

Our biggest advocacy event of the year, Renewable Energy Day, will be February 5 and consist of faith leaders, lawmakers, Hoosier businesses related to renewable energy, environmental justice advocates, and other renewable energy proponents rallying support for clean energy policies!

We need YOUR VOICE to promote clean energy policies to your state representatives and senator.

If you missed our recent training in preparation, you can watch it at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec81cApzMsU&eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=b1de305b-277c-423c-8b6e-e4990f99ef9a>

And, check out the Renewable Energy Day Lobby Guide for additional information on how to contact your legislators, important talking points, and how to create your own event on the day! Link Below.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lqMvpam44ah-nMZ1ILMlrFZm8cB2p3sye-IMpehmRjs/edit?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=b1de305b-277c-423c-8b6e-e4990f99ef9a>

Register at: solarunitedneighbors.org

Mary and Riley Lynch Scholarship:

You may or may not know that in the past, Southport United Methodist Church has been able to offer a small scholarship to assist with college expenses. The scholarship was made possible by some past members of SUMC: Mary & Riley Lynch.

Unfortunately, there are not enough funds at this time to offer the scholarship to seniors graduating in the 2020 – 2021 school year, entering college in the fall.

We hope that the scholarship opportunity will be available again for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

NOTE: THOSE THAT COULD HAVE APPLIED THIS YEAR WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY THE NEXT TIME IT IS OFFERED. NO ONE WILL MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR COLLEGE.

Finance

I had a moment about March or April last year that I thought ahead to writing this article, what was I going to say to show our finances for the year of 2020. I imagined it would be rather bleak. I expected it to be an incredibly challenging year for us financially. However, the article I am about to write is vastly different than the one I had imagined.

Our giving remained strong in 2020. We had a small drop of less than 2% for general giving, that was still higher than what we had budgeted for the year.

We saw an increase in giving to our designated funds of nearly 10%. These funds include faith promises, pastor's benevolence, pastors ministry, and our debt reduction fund. Much of the money given to these funds is used to impact our community and help individuals in need.

So, our overall giving increased from the previous year during a pandemic! I cannot tell you how much this means. How thankful and blessed I feel to be a part of such a generous faith community.

Imagination Station, our preschool and childcare, faced and continues to face many challenges. We've seen keeping Imagination Station open and operating to be a priority as it helps make sure people can go to work. In fact, we take care of several children of teachers, police officers, and medical workers, so we want to do all we can to make sure they can continue to do the essential work that they do. However, even with all the care and precautions we have taken we have still had to close parts or all of the facility at times. We also saw a decrease in enrollment due to parents losing jobs, being off work, or choosing to keep their kids home while they work from home (I don't recommend this one if avoidable, Leni, my 5 year old, has been pretending to be a lion and periodically pouncing at me as I write this). For these reasons we have seen a decrease in income for Imagination Station. Thankfully this decrease has been somewhat offset by grants. That being said, thanks to those grants and being very careful with expenses, Imagination Station managed to end the year in a strong manner financially.

Your strong giving combined with prudent management from both the school and church means that Southport United Methodist Church is stronger financially at the beginning of 2021 than it was at the beginning of 2020.

We know that challenging times may still be coming, so we took this opportunity to fortify our finances for the future. We transferred \$24,000 to our church Improvement Fund. This will help us be prepared for future maintenance or upgrade needs of the church while minimizing the impact to our operating budget when this happens.

Another thing I feel blessed for right now is that to this point we have not had to eliminate any employees. We have shifted some hours around for our teachers and caregivers due to decreased attendance at Imagination Station, but we have not had to let anyone go. Furthermore, we have paid our employees even when they were not working because of covid restrictions. There was an additional upside to this and that is we received a \$33,894 refund of federal payroll tax for paying our employees while we were required by the state and county to be closed. We were able to put every penny of that in our emergency funds.

Rest assured that even with the efforts noted above to strengthen our financial position and to make sure we can weather challenging times we still made a difference to our community. We still fed hundreds if not thousands of people through the efforts of God's Will breakfast, Feed A Need, Ronald McDonald's House ministry, and the Harvest Table. We still paid many utility bills and rent payments for those who needed our help through Pastor's Benevolence. We still financially supported efforts to house the homeless through Interfaith Hospitality. We still provided Christmas gifts and necessities for many families and children through Christmas Jubilee. Over \$36,000 went directly to these efforts and others.

It is important to note that sturdying up our emergency fund and church improvement fund make it possible for us to put more resources to ministry, missions, outreach, and goodwill for those in need now and for years to come.

We had a lot of challenges in 2020 and many difficult decisions to make, but although we worried (at least I did) about finances your generosity means it was all needless. Thank you for giving so generously of your time, talent, and financial resources.

Church	2019 Actual	2020 YTD Year End
Income		
Offerings	\$639,002	\$627,106
Other	\$4,780	\$6,894
Imagination Station "Tithe/offering"	\$60,997	\$36,220
Church Expenses		
Conf. & Dist. Support	(\$72,003)	(\$74,026)
Administration	(\$187,978)	(\$189,476)
Maintenance & Utilities	(\$127,451)	(\$116,580)
Connect, Grow, Serve	(\$301,301)	(\$262,526)
Youth & Child Ministry	(\$19,212)	(\$14,266)
Net	(\$3,166)	\$13,346
Imagination Station		
Income	\$409,197.90	\$350,653
Expense	(\$363,466)	(\$296,707.93)
"Tithe/offering" to Church	(\$60,997)	(\$36,220)
Net	(\$15,265)	\$17,665
All Together		
Total Incomes	\$1,052,980	\$984,653
Total Expenses	(\$1,071,411)	(\$953,642)
Net	(\$18,431)	\$31,011

Giving

WARMS THE HEART

DONATE BLOOD

Southport United Methodist Church partners with Versiti Blood Center of Indiana to save community lives.

Versiti is a fusion of blood donation, scientific curiosity and precision medicine which recognizes that the gifts of blood and life are precious.

Please come out to support our drive on **Saturday February 20th, from 9:30am - 1:00pm at Southport United Methodist Church.**

We look forward to seeing you there!
Schedule your donation appointment HERE:
<http://bit.ly/SouthportUMC-BloodDrive-2-20-21>

As a member of the Versiti community, our donations are of crucial importance for local Indiana hospitals. Patients need help all year long, not just during times of high need. Blood donors can give up to six times a year – every 56 days – but most only give once per year. Everyone who pitches in, from volunteers to donors, can feel good about helping patients who depend on receiving that blood. We can do a lot of good and have a huge impact.

Please remember blood donation in the year ahead as a gesture that helps to make the world a better place, and that keeps us stronger together.

Southport United Methodist Church
Saturday, 02/20/2021 (09:30 am - 01:00 pm)
1947 E. Southport Road
Bloodmobile
Indianapolis, IN 46227



Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans like Charles Drew, MD, a blood banking pioneer whose innovations saved numerous lives during World War II and in the wards of military and civilian hospitals - not to mention the countless lives saved since .

LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME

kids

Matthew 19:14

Hello from Imagination Station! The Preschoolers are preparing for their Valentines Day parties in a couple weeks! February will be Eric Carle themed with a lot of fun learning activities. We are looking forward to this fun month while waiting patiently for spring to bring us warmer fresh air and playground time!

YOUTH

Youth News:

Praise report: Welcome back Avianna, we missed you!

Sunday school remains on Zoom on Sunday's at 1pm. SUMY will be on Zoom once a month from 2-3 pm. February's SUMY will be 2/7/21 and we will have a Zoom tea party! Dresses, hats and ties welcomed :) Porch drops will be made on Saturday, 2/6/21 with tea party kits. Stay warm !

Blessings,
Lesa

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

As Isaiah says, maybe we should forget 2020. However, before we do, let's review some of the things that we accomplished in 2020, it wasn't all bad.

Four blood drives enabled **55 donors** to potentially save **174 Indiana** lives.

We served three **community meals**.

A new ministry was created, **Feed A Need (F.A.N.)**, and served **56 sack meals and 72 cans of dog food** to a homeless camp.

God's Will Breakfast doubled up their efforts and served even more sack meals than normal.

Even though **Interfaith Hospitality Network** was not using host churches. Homeless families were housed in apartments and hotel rooms with kitchenettes and a new **Diversion** program was developed and supported by SUMC to help families avoid shelters all together.

Jubilee Christmas was able to provide a Merry Christmas to **14 Homecroft families which included 42 children**.

Between the two **Ronald McDonald House** meal programs, over **400 meals** were donated. Again, things looked different, however, fresh meals from restaurants and frozen meals were delivered to RMH so the families were still able to feel the love God and our volunteers have for them.

Harvest table not only fed members of the congregation and the community but approximately **520 lbs.** of fresh produce was donated to **Hunger, Inc.** Families who might not have had access to fresh vegetables were able to supplement their meals with seasonal vegetables.

We have no idea what 2021 will bring. As you can see, even with a pandemic happening around us, SUMC is still very active and willing to do what is necessary to serve the needs of God's people.

All the above mentioned ministries are supported by **Faith Promise**. **Faith Promise** is funded by the generosity of all of **YOU**. Thank you all so very much for opening your hearts so that so many others can benefit. Here is what is scheduled so far for 2021:

Blood Drive (Dates for 2021 are Feb. 20, April 24, July 31 & Nov. 13)

Community Meals (TBA)

God's Will Breakfast (continues)

Perry Township Religious Education (continues)

Interfaith Hospitality Network (October 10-17, 2021)

Jubilee Christmas (July and December)

Kairos Prison Ministries (TBA)

Ronald McDonald House (TBA)

Feed A Need (providing 50 sack meals the second Saturday of every month)

Mission Trip (TBA)

If you are not sure how you would like to help but you feel called to get more involved, complete an **equipping ministry and ministry discovery survey**. These will reveal what talents and interests you have and how they can be used to glorify God. If any of these opportunities sound interesting to you, contact Glenda Williams at the church office (317)784-9508 or email her at glenda@sumc.org. We hope you continue to support **Faith**

Promise.

Women's News

Some United Methodist Women's areas to check out from unitedmethodistwomen.org

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/united-methodist-women-mission-priorities-2020-2024>

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/join-the-thursdays-in-black-campaign>

FEED A NEED

Our ministry in which we are feeding the homeless downtown is organizing for our next drop off of food on February 13. We will be providing a meal for at least 50 people. If you are interested in helping with this ministry, please let Glenda Williams at the church know. Thanks to all who are supporting this FAN ministry in which we are fanning the flame of discipleship by serving as a church.



Dates to Remember

February 17: Ash Wednesday / Drive Through Ash Service . 1-2 p.m. & 6-7 p.m. (look out for more details soon!)

February 18: New Teaching Service begins at 6:30 p.m. It will include music, offering, communion at 1st of the month, and interaction with teaching and a contemporary feel.

Information on our plans to re-open for in-person service will be coming soon. Please keep up with updates with our weekly emails, Facebook posts, and at sumc.org!

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Duane Thompson

Connie Whisner

Jim Cooney

Sherry Davis

Karen Decatur

Joy Eder

Suzy Heilman

John Klipsch

Phil Sell

Brad Wiseman



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Email: office@sumc.org

Website: www.sumc.org

SERVICE TIMES

Sunday
9:00 a.m.—Online

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.