



# January Newsletter



For the past few days, I've been kind of eavesdropping in as people talk about 2024 and what it may bring. For the most part, much of what I've heard has been anything but optimistic. People are concerned about world events – the war in Ukraine, the fighting in Gaza and other parts of Israel, the uncertainty as to what certain nations might do, such as Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. People are concerned about events in our nation – an upcoming election, further division, protests, social issues, and our economy. People are concerned about what's happening in Indianapolis – crime, increasing homelessness, and just the sense that things are getting worse instead of better. We're concerned about our church and what might happen in 2024 to our denomination. The bottom line is that there is a lot of pessimism and depression. But if what you've read so far has added to your sense of impending doom, then it's time to hear and grab hold of what the Bible has to say:

- Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous hand.
- Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
- I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

*Continued on next page...*

- Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

While others around us may be depressed or pessimistic about the future, the church – and its people – should have an outlook of joy and a sense of optimism. It's not that we turn a blind eye to what's going on in the world around us; it's just that our faith gives us courage and hope. Courage is neither ignorance of reality or the absence of fear in the face of danger. As Scott Peck points out in *Abounding Grace*, genuine courage is “the capacity to go ahead in spite of your fear.”

The Bible, through its numerous passages where we are told to “be courageous” and “fear not,” reminds us that we should never allow fears or doubts to keep us from moving forward. We should draw courage from knowing that God is with us and is encouraging us to be the church of Christ. Our job is to keep loving, learning, and giving, and then trusting in God to take what we do and take it beyond all that we could ask, think, or imagine. You may not think of yourself as courageous. But the fact is God has given you a far greater capacity for courage than you realize. So, as individuals and as a church, let's begin 2024 with optimism, hope, and joy. Know that God can make something good out of any circumstance. Know God is with you and be strong and courageous. Let's continue to be the church that God has called us to be, moving forward with purpose and without fear!

Blessings, Pastor Denise



## ANGEL TREE 2023

Thank you to everyone that contributed to the ICAN Angel Tree.

We collected:

- 38 toys/coloring books/crayons
- 61 personal hygiene items
- 56 pairs of mens/womans/childrens underwear
- 59 hats/gloves
- 32 food items
- 4 winter coats
- 201 pairs of mens/womans/childrens socks
- \$295 in cash to be used for ICAN programs
- \$40 fast food gift cards
- \$50 Walmart gift cards
- \$170 Aldi gift cards







### **Breakthrough Prayer: Where Do We Go from Here?**

You've been praying the prayer ... we've been praying the prayer as a church when we meet in small groups and in the worship service:

“God, we lift our church to you in prayer. We don't know what to do ... Reveal to us where your Spirit is leading us as a church ... Give us faith to listen and courage to step through the doors you open that will lead us beyond all that we could think, ask, or imagine. Lead and we will follow. May your will be done.”

Now what? We believe God answers prayer but accept that answers come in God's time and not our own. When will God answer? How will God answer? God's answer to our breakthrough prayer is not limited to the pastor and, in fact, may not come to the pastor. God's answer may come in a whisper, a thought, or a nudge to you.

If you have been praying and have felt something on your heart or in your mind, don't ignore it. Share it! In the hallway by the prayer wall, a small area has been set aside for breakthrough prayer. There are index cards and a suggestion box along with several reminders of the power of prayer. Write your thought on an index card and put it in the box. You can write your name on it or choose to remain anonymous. Either way, your idea can be shared and we can pray over it to see if that may be where God is leading us. Help us listen for God's answer to our prayer.

## ICAN FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

A time to reflect and thank all of those who have volunteered, donated, raised funds to help purchase food and helped in other ways. We are fortunate to be a part of this community since the 1980s, yet wish that we weren't necessary.

We served over 1500 visitors this year and continue our outreach supporting neighborhood food boxes, Gaia pantry homeless bag project, ICAN Assistance Center and the Neighborhood Food Collective.

In the new year, we will begin using reusable grocery bags to reduce single use plastic waste. Our hours are every Thursday 1-3p. 111 S. Downey Ave.

In order to maintain current weekly operations, we still need 3 Director of the Days and 2 bread pickup and delivery helpers. We will re-evaluate the situation in February.

We are also accepting donated hats, gloves/mittens, scarves, socks.

Thank you for all the support and may 2024 bring relief to those in need and good health and happiness to all.

ICAN Food Pantry

Happy New Year!

Peace

## REUSABLE GROCERY BAGS

To prevent further harm from plastics, the ICAN Food Pantry will begin using only reusable bags beginning January 1st. The pantry will issue each person two bags at their first visit to bring back with them each time they visit.

**The pantry is asking for donations of reusable grocery bags to give to their clients. Please leave any donations in the ICAN Pantry tub in the main hallway.**

*Thank you for your donations!*





### **Looking for Something to Do that Will Help Others?**

Thursdays are church volunteer days and WE NEED YOU!

Come any Thursday between the hours of 11 am and 1 pm or 5 pm and 7 pm and volunteer your time.

What is there to do?

- Sort through donated clothing and organize it for us to give to others.

- Inventory items on hand.

- Make up hygiene kits.

- Take food items, hygiene kits, or other items to the blessing box.

- Help us keep the downstairs kitchen clean.

There are jobs for anyone – sit down, stand up, move about, and so on. Let us know what you can and can't do and we will find a task for you!

No need to call ahead, just show up at the church. Stay as long as you can, leave when you need to leave. The more people we have, the more fun we have. This is a weekly ongoing opportunity!



# BAD BOYS of the Bible

## Monday Evening Bible Study

Mondays at 6 pm you are invited to a small group study in the parlor focusing on the “bad girls and bad boys” of the Bible. These are stories you may have never read or heard in a sermon or, if you did read them, you didn’t know what to make of them. But they are in the Bible for a reason!

Bad girl, bad boy, “Whatcha gonna do?” Join us and find out what they did and why it matters to us today.

This is a study that is open to questions and often gets side-tracked or even derailed, but that’s okay. Can’t come every week? That’s ok. These are “stand-alone” lessons (probably taking about 2 weeks per Bible character) so if you miss a week or two or more you can pick right up where you left off.

Where: The parlor

When: Ongoing

Cost: None – there will be free handouts available.

Everyone is invited!

Not sure if you will like it? Come and sit in on one or two and then decide.

**Reading the Bible: Got Questions?  
Small Group Study Sundays at 9:15 am**

**The Bible is the best-selling book of all time  
and yet many people who own a Bible have never read it.**

**Many who start reading it soon stop.**

**They stopped when they felt it had no relevance to their lives.**

**They stopped when they didn't understand what it meant.**

**They stopped when they didn't like what it had to say.**

**The Bible is supposed to be hard and we are supposed to struggle with it.**

**Join us Sunday mornings at 9:15 am in the parlor as we look at the Bible.**

**Whether you've never read it or read it 100 times, you will learn something new. The Bible  
is like that.**

**Bring your questions. All are welcome.**



Why do we read the  
Bible?

How do we read the  
Bible?

Who wrote the Bible?

When was the Bible  
written?

Which translation of  
the Bible is the best?

Who decided what is  
in our Bible?





Now there are two ways to start your weekday off right with a short meditation including Scripture, reflections, a question to ponder, and/or a prayer for the day. It will take less than five minutes of your time but help you stay focused on your faith.

1. Meditate at Eight on our church Facebook page. Go on Facebook and look for Irvington United Methodist Church. Every weekday morning, Monday through Friday, a short meditation/devotional will post. The daily post takes just a few minutes to read. Too busy to read at 8 am? The post stays up on the Facebook page and can be read later in the day. Miss a day? The day before ... and the day before ... and the day before is still there.

Want to help us out? Share Meditate at Eight on your Facebook page. It's the Facebook way of telling your family and friends and inviting them to check it out. There's a share link to the bottom right of each daily mediation. Help us expand our reach!

2. Did you know our church also has a YouTube channel. Go to YouTube and look for "Shining the Light with IUMC." A picture of our rose window (see above) is with our name, so you'll know you're in the right place. In addition to sermons, you can listen to the daily meditation on your phone or computer. While you're there, hit the subscribe button ... it costs you nothing and will help us reach more people.

Make Meditate at Eight a daily habit ... whether you join us at 8 am, noon, or 8 pm.



## Chair Exercise Class!

Feel the need to get moving, but not sure  
where or how to start?

Want to get out of the house, see old friends,  
and hopefully meet new friends?

Chair exercise class for age 50+ adults (although open to younger adults facing mobility problems).

**When:** Wednesday evenings, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

**Where:** IUMC Fellowship Hall (basement)

**What:** A 30-minute chair exercise class focusing on improving range of motion, core strength, and raising stamina! This class is tailored to those who struggle to get around or deal with life's daily aches and pains. It will be led by a personal trainer.

**Cost:** While donations are appreciated, they are not required or expected. We want ALL to be welcome!

**And...** Because we are Methodists, there will be music, laughter, a brief meditation, and food!

Our desire is also to offer food, clothing, and hygiene kits to anyone who comes who is in need. This is open to the church and to our Irvington community.

While this is a low-impact exercise program, if you have any question about your ability to participate, please consult with your physician. If you want more details about the program before joining, please see Pastor Denise.

***See you there!***

### **SUNDAYS**

9:15 A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:30 A.M. WORSHIP

Irvington United Methodist Church

30 N Audubon Road

Indianapolis IN 46219

### **Our Staff**

Denise Robinson, **Pastor**

Gregory Baranovsky, **Music Director/Organist**

Kim Fulton, **Office Manager/Financial Secretary**

Lori Steuer, **Preschool Director**

Greg Boyce, **Custodian**

We are on the Web at:

**[www.irvingtonumc.org](http://www.irvingtonumc.org)**

Our email address and telephone number are:

**[info@irvingtonumc.org](mailto:info@irvingtonumc.org)**

**(317) 356-7231**

**Visit us on Facebook**



### **Mondays at 1:00 pm in the Parlor & on Zoom**

We are studying the Book of Hebrews. Bring your Bible and join us. Handouts are available each week and you can join in any time. It doesn't matter if you've studied these books before or struggle finding them in your Bible. All are welcome!

Meeting ID: 813 7695 8874

Passcode: 216949

**HAPPY**  
**2024**  
**NEW YEAR**