



# FIRST NEWS

**First United  
Methodist  
Church  
February 2025**

Dear Church Family,

During our Charge Conferences this past year, we were told about the reorganization of our Districts into five regional areas, and also that this new organization would include some *rethinking* of how the local churches and the leadership of the Annual Conference might work together. Below you will find an edited version of the changes that are coming. If you would like to read the full article, please visit the Conference Website at: <https://www.inumc.org/2025/01/13/all-in-and-on-the-move-redistricting-a-message-from-bishop-malone/>

The Bishop and Cabinet gathered in January to continue to do the redistricting work of reimagining the Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church. During the Charge Conferences in 2024, the District Superintendents gathered responses from participants to inform them in this process. The Bishop and Cabinet took into careful consideration each response. They informed the decisions and work in relationship to the foundational values for the missional purpose of districts, the naming of the districts, and the formation of the district structure and leadership.

The local church is the most significant arena for disciple-making, and we are committed to equipping and resourcing the local church to increase their capacity for making disciples. The local church’s mission field, the local church’s mission, how a local church worships, and how a local church disciples will not change with the redistricting.

The values that were foundational in forming the new districts include: providing greater alignment of resources to the local church, creating systems to increase connection and collaboration, ensuring there will be intentional bi-directional communication, and having a more equitable balance of responsibilities for the superintendents.

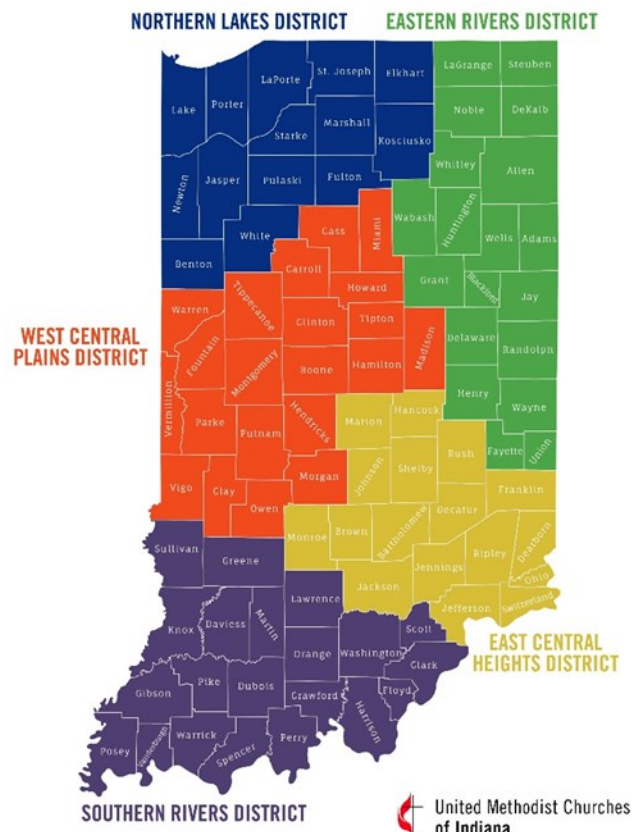
## NEW DISTRICT NAMES

Effective July 1, 2025, the new district names will be:

1. Southern Rivers District
2. West Central Plains District
3. Northern Lakes District
4. Eastern Rivers District

East Central Heights District

Plymouth First UMC will be in the Northern Lakes District, and we will return our current District Superintendent, Rev. Marti Lundy.



## **DISTRICT PURPOSE/STRUCTURE/STAFFING**

Our working definition and purpose of the district is:

- An extension of our collective witness as the Indiana Conference,
- A connection between the local church and the resources of the Conference,
- To build and foster relationships,
- To support and resource clergy, lay leadership, and congregations,
- To encourage and cultivate “the call” of all persons,

To serve as a vehicle of mission.

The structure for each new district will have a District Missional Strategy Team (DMS Team), comprised of twelve (12) persons, which will include the District Lay Leader, the Superintendency Chairperson, the Church Building and Location Chairperson, and an Emerging Leader. This team replaces the former Operational Team and will operate similarly to the “one board model.” This team will come alongside the district superintendent to provide district governance, engage ministry partnerships, provide connection within the district, care for and support of the district superintendent, and continue to foster the vision of the Indiana Conference and further the mission of The United Methodist Church. Each district will continue to have a District Committee on Ministry (dCOM), a Disaster Response Team, and United Women in Faith.

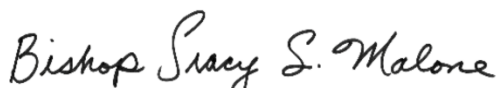
There will be great intention to recruit persons from across the district, with emphasis on inclusion and diversity. The paid staffing of the new districts will be served by no more than three, 1/4-time, Associate District Superintendents; and one District Administrative Assistant. There will be a process for discernment and these persons will be named in future updates.

## **OUR CONNECTION**

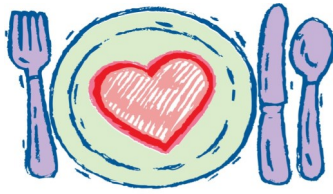
The new districts will create a connecting system to provide opportunities for learning, nurturing, and connection. This ecosystem of connection will be called “Life Together.” We will be ALL IN to do life together, share life together, and be the church together as we make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. More information about this new ecosystem will be forthcoming.

There are ongoing conversations and work being done to ensure better collaboration between the district and Conference programming. This will help to reduce redundancy, provide greater access, and make available relevant resources to the local church.

We are ALL IN and on the move, multiplying love, cultivating joy, and inspiring hope, as we live into this new year and in great anticipation of our shared “Life Together.”



Bishop Tracy S. Malone



### COMMUNITY MEAL

The February 26 meal will once again be carry out only. You may pick up your meal(s) by entering the south entrance door of the church building and follow the signs. Thanks for understanding the change as the renovation on the fellowship hall kitchen continues. The menu for February is Sloppy Joes, Fruit Cups, Chips and Pudding Cups. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, February 26 from 5:00-6:30 p.m

### UNITED METHODIST MEN

The United Methodist Men will be meeting Saturday, February 8, at 8:00 A.M. for breakfast. Doug Gerke will be talking about what is going on in the financial world. Mike Woolfington will be in charge of the breakfast. The meeting will be in the lower level of the sanctuary building. There will be a sign-up sheet in the back of the church on February 2. You can sign-up by contacting Dave Hogsett at either 574-936-6926 or davidh15503@embarqmail.com.



Chastity Keller, the Executive Director of CASA of Marshall County, Court Appointed Special Advocates For Children, will have the program for March. For the April meeting Allen Shockney will be reflecting on the 50 (actually 51) year history of the Blueberry Stomp.

Mike Woolfington will be sharing his involvement in the Blueberry Festival.

Mike Woolfington is looking for persons to help with his SAWS program. They build accessibility ramps.

Contact Mike at 574-780-9447 if you are interested.

### Report on Kitchen Remodeling

Clay's Flooring & Interiors, Inc. from Rochester began the Kitchen Remodeling on January 6. The project is anticipated to last 8 to 10 weeks. The Fellowship Hall will be used as a "staging area" so it will be closed to activities during that time.

Under-floor plumbing is complete; walls on the west and south have been framed; and the electric & plumbing have been roughed in. Drywall and new flooring are also complete. Plumbing fixtures and cabinetry are onsite.

#### PROJECTED SCHEDULE:

Week of February 3 – no activity

Week of February 10 - Painting

Week of February 17 – Set Cabinets; Measure for countertops and backsplashes

Week of February 24 – Cove base and carpet transitions



South Wall

Week of March 3 – Set countertops and backsplashes



West Wall

There is a display in the Memorial Room showing the work that is being undertaken and there are some samples of materials.



## DID YOU KNOW?

The funds received from the 2019-2022 Rebuilding First Church Capital Campaign have been used to complete the following projects:

- ⇒ New light fixtures and ceiling fans in the sanctuary
- ⇒ Plaster repair of the cracks in the sanctuary
- ⇒ Repairs to walls of the Michigan Street entryway in the church due to previous water damage
- ⇒ Outside repairs on northwest side of the building
- ⇒ New LED sign
- ⇒ Replacement of 1 furnace in the church building
- ⇒ New stairs and railings, Michigan Street Entry
- ⇒ New carpet in the Sanctuary
- ⇒ Insulation of duct work above the dome
- ⇒ New entry doors on both entrances of the education building
- ⇒ New flooring in the Fellowship Hall Bathrooms and lower level landings
- ⇒ New coating on education building entryways.
- ⇒ New stair treads on both staircases of the education building, from the lower level to the 2nd floor.
- ⇒ Kitchen renovation currently in process



# Missions



The January Volunteers

We had some new people join us as well as some of our friends from La

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITES

Future dates scheduled to volunteer at

### **Cultivate Food Rescue:**

Monday, February 17; Monday, March 10; Monday, April 21; and Monday, May 12

We leave from the church parking lot at 5:15 p.m., car pool to South Bend where we work from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., returning to the church parking lot about 8:45. Lauren Rich and

Diane Hogsett are our coordinators. Sign-up sheets will be at the Welcome Center.

This is a fun, easy way to serve others! No experience or skill is necessary; sit-down jobs are available.



### **Dustin's Place – Serving Dinner on Monday, March 10**

Members of Missions Commission will be serving dinner to the participants at *Dustin's Place* (Grief Support).

### **2025 - Midwest Mission** May 4 - 9

We've already made our reservations for 2025. You can join in the fun! See Carol Beiter.

## **THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO VOLUNTEERED IN 2024:**

- Dinner for Dustin's Place – Served 55 people
- Cultivate Food Rescue – 7 times; 77 people volunteered; over 6,000 meals prepared.
- Midwest Mission – 7 people; 4.5 days worked
- Mission Guatemala – 3 people; 5 days worked

*Henderson Settlement Trip had to be canceled in 2024.*

God is Love

[God is love.](#) He shows us His love in so many ways. He shows it to us in creation, as we have food to eat, air to breathe. He shows us His love also through Jesus.

It was in Jesus, that God really demonstrated His love. God gave the best He had to have a relationship with us.

So let the knowledge of God's love flow into every area of your life. As you begin to think about it, it makes it easier to love others. We realize that even though we didn't deserve it, God loved us. And that knowledge helps us to love others who don't deserve it!

<https://studentdevos.com/daily-bible-verse-and-devotion-1-john-47/>

**God is LOVE.**  
1 JOHN 4:16





HAPPY FEBRUARY  
FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

**SMALL GROUPS**

**Bad Girls** will be ending the study of Jesus' ministry with a new book to begin this spring. This group of Girls meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month 11:00, followed by lunch out!!

**The Lunch Bunch** gathers on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month. Plan to join this thriving group as we dine in restaurants in and around Plymouth. In January we dined at Hacienda, and on February 22, we will eat at the Break Room in Argos. Meet in the church parking lot to carpool at 11:00 a.m. and RSVP to Carol Beiter.

**Blessed Bookies** gather on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 5:30 in the Education Building. On February 24 the Bookies will examine "The Frozen River" by Ariel Lawson, and in March the study will focus on "Count The Ways".

**Knit Two, Pray Three** This group of talented knitters gathers on the first Tuesday of the month in the Education building. These knitters are part of the Shawl Ministry designed to support our church and community family. See Carol Beiter or Lynn Gee for further details.

**Knights of Columbus Breakfast** This breakfast usually occurs on the third Sunday of the month, but check the website ([plymouthcolumbusclub.com](http://plymouthcolumbusclub.com)) for any cancellations. Plan to eat breakfast around 8:30 and be back for worship at 9:30!!

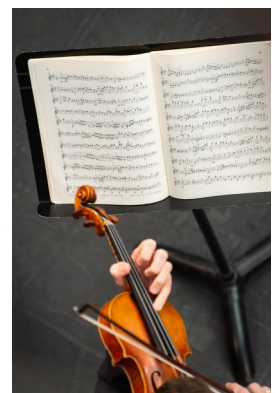


**COOKIE SUNDAY IS UP AND RUNNING!!**

**COOKIE BAKERS ARE NEEDED FOR 2025**

**Sign up in the Narthex of the sanctuary!!!**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!** The Marshall County Orchestra will present a chamber music program on Saturday, March 29, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.. This event will be a free will offering with the donations going to the United Sound program at PHS which offers special needs students an opportunity to participate. What a wonderful opportunity to enjoy our sanctuary and the musical talents in our community.





Many thanks to all of those who assisted with the South Bend Symphony Brass Quintet concert....there were 82 in attendance in spite of the cold and snow! Cookies were enjoyed by all and the rafters rang with harmonious holiday melodies. Thank you to the Finlays for making this a reality! It just may be possible that we will have a repeat performance this spring....stay tuned for further details!!

Pastor Lauren has some noteworthy ideas for FUMC participation in the Fresh Expressions worship and spirituality programs,..Stay tuned for further details on upcoming events and how you can participate in this meaningful worship and outreach.

The Outreach and Support Committee continues its mission to nurture the FUMC family while seeking community involvement in our church.

*Outreach and Support Committee: Susan Wautelet, Carol Beiter, Grace Blanding, Mary Ecker, Betty Kay Eley, Lynn Gee, Sarah Smith, Genie Tobias, and Pastor Lauren Hall.*

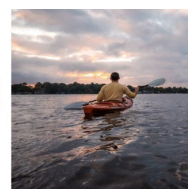
Happy St. Valentine's Day! It's February, the "Love Month". However, you have shown God's love to those in need throughout the year. In 2024, you gave \$15,885 to agencies such as Link to Hope, Neighborhood Center, Bread of Life, Ancilla Sister's Food Project for the hotels, David's Courage, St. Thomas Non-Food Pantry, and our church's community meal. This amount doesn't cover the 195 gifts of clothing that you purchased for 65 children for the Christmas Clothesline. So much love and generosity. God bless you as you continue to do His work right here in Plymouth by continuing your support to the Social Concerns Committee.



Grace College is pleased to announce the inaugural [Winona Christian Writers Conference](#), July 17-19, 2025, on Grace campus in Winona Lake, IN. This three-day creative writing conference for adults features four workshop tracks (Creative Nonfiction, Fiction, Poetry, and Writing for Young Readers) led by award-winning authors such as Gary Schmidt and George David Clark. The \$350 registration fee also includes a keynote banquet with Christian scholar [Jessica Hooten Wilson](#), 1-on-1 manuscript consultations, craft talks, cultural activities, meals, and more. Adults of all walks of life and all levels of writing experience are welcome. Email [wcbc@grace.edu](mailto:wcbc@grace.edu) (or contact Lauren Rich, [richlg@grace.edu](mailto:richlg@grace.edu)) for more information.



**WINONA  
CHRISTIAN  
WRITERS  
CONFERENCE**



**Tell your story. Hone your craft. Find your audience.**

Join us for a three-day creative writing conference **July 17-19** at **Grace College** in beautiful Winona Lake, Indiana  
**\$350 registration**

Choose one of four workshop tracks (fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction/memoir, writing for young readers). Registration incl. manuscript consultation, keynote by Jessica Hooten Wilson, most meals, and other activities.



**GRACE  
COLLEGE**

[wcbc@grace.edu](mailto:wcbc@grace.edu)  
Insta @wcbwritersconference

### Sunday, February 16



The Plymouth Church of the Brethren has invited us to join them for their annual ice skating outing. We will gather in the Church of the Brethren parking lot at 3:00 pm, travel to Howard Park, skate, walk to Barnaby's for Pizza, and then head home, probably arriving in Plymouth around 7:30 pm.

All church youth 5<sup>th</sup> grade and older are welcome to join us (if younger siblings are interested, contact Pastor Lauren or Barbara Pickut). Parents are welcome too, especially to help as drivers. We will need an RSVP in order to arrange transportation.

There will be no cost for this activity.



### Better Way Youth Trip

**When: Saturday, July 12th to Thursday, July 17th**

**Where: Washington DC.**

**Cost: \$300**

All or part of this fee can be covered by Youth Funds if requested.

Please contact Pastor Lauren for information

**Registration Deadline 5/19/25**

The Better Way youth trip is open to current 8th through 12th grade youth and is a multicultural immersion experience sponsored by the North District of the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.

What will we be doing (subject to change):

- Interactive seminar at the UMC Board of Church and Society on Capitol Hill (Mon-Tues) around the topic of "Gun violence-what can we do?" through the lens of our UMC Social Principles/Theology.
- Worship, group building and debriefing will happen at Friends Place and UMC related Wesley Seminary in the Georgetown area of DC
- Tour the Shanksville, PA Flight 93 Memorial on the way to Washington DC

Wednesday tour of the major sites in Washington DC

Transportation is being provided by Cardinal Bus

Adult chaperones are vetted and trained by the North District

Co-directors: Rev. Brittney Stephan ([brittney.stephan@inumc.org](mailto:brittney.stephan@inumc.org)) and Rev. Dr. Kent A. Lundy ([kentalundy@hotmail.com](mailto:kentalundy@hotmail.com)) Contact either of us with questions.

### "All Together" High School Camp

**June 29 – July 4, 2025**

Camp Scholarships are available. Contact Pastor Lauren for more information.

**Info:** Rev. Dr. Marti & Kent Lundy (our District Superintendent and her husband) will co-direct a week of Senior High camp at Epworth Forest from June 29th – July 4th, 2025.

For more information go to:

<https://www.inumc.org/2024/07/31/all-together-senior-high-camp/>

If you have middle school aged youth and want to send them to church camp, Pastor Kayla Grehl from Trinity UMC is directing the week of June 15-20 at Camp Adventure. There are many dates available for Elementary aged children at both Camp Lakewood and Pine Creek. Find out more information at: [https://](https://impact2818.org)

[impact2818.org](https://impact2818.org)







Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 James Cochern	4 Janet Smith	5 Debbie Wise	6	7	8 Don & Marsha Wilson (A)
9 James & Chris Cochern (A)	10 Marilyn Biggs	11	12	13	14 Stacey & Paul Patrick (A)	15
16	17 Marilee Douglass	18 Dean Byers	19	20 Sue Stinson	21	22
23 Timothy Smith	24 Cris Causey	25	26 Paul Cleeter Emma Konefsky	27	28 Pam Michel Marsha Wilson	

### FEBRUARY WORSHIP SERVICE PARTICIPANTS

	02/02	02/09	02/16	02/23	
<b>LITURGIST</b>	Cathy Clough	Susie Kreighbaum	Jim Causey	Sam Goebel	
<b>USHERS</b>	Pam Michel, Jane & Mike Woolfington	Pam Michel, Jim Causey	Pam Michel, Brandon Rich	Pam Michel, Carol Beiter, Linda Hagan	
<b>NURSERY</b>	Mary Kaufman	Sarah Smith	Sarah Smith	Carol Beiter	



# FEBRUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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2 4th Sunday after the Epiphany	3	4 10:00 am-12:00 pm Knit 2, Pray 3 7:00 pm Missions Commission	5 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Practice	6 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study	7	8 8:00 am Men's Breakfast
9 5th Sunday after the Epiphany	10 6:30 pm Social Concerns Committee	11 11:00 am Bad Girls Bible Study	12 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Practice	13 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study	14 	15
16 6th Sunday after Epiphany 8:30 am Knights of Columbus Breakfast 2:00 pm Worship at Pilgrim Manor 3:00 pm Youth Ice Skating	17 5:45 group going to Cultivate Food Rescue 6:00 pm Outreach Committee-Youth and Ed joining	18	19 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Practice	20 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study 5:30 pm Mother's Club at the Lapaz Diner	21 11:30 Lunch Bunch dining at the Break Room in Argos	22
23 7th Sunday after the Epiphany Blondena V. Kaiser Award Cookie Sunday!	24 5:30 pm Blessed Bookies 6:00 pm Finance Committee Meeting 7:30 pm Youth & Ed	25	26 5-6:30 pm Community Meal 7:00 pm Chancel Choir Practice	27 6:00 am Early Birds (ZOOM) 12:00 pm Joy Breaks 12:30 pm Women's Bible Study	28	