



May Newsletter

This has been a challenging season for our family, yet we are deeply grateful for the outpouring of support and love we have received from this congregation. The advocacy efforts on our behalf have generated significant attention — I have personally spoken with the office of one of our legislators, and they shared just how many calls they have received in our support. In this, I am encouraged and reminded of how powerfully the love of God flows through us as the body of Christ. When one of us hurts, we all hurt — and we rise together to come alongside one another, offering healing, comfort, and strength.

Through this experience, I have been reminded that God is present even in our pain and suffering. He leads and guides us through every valley, and He calls us to be strong and courageous — even when circumstances seem hopeless. I am reminded of the story of the Israelites as they fled Egypt, finding themselves caught between Pharaoh's army and the Red Sea. In that moment of impossible odds, God showed up and led His people to safety. He is still that same God today.

We thank God for the faith He cultivates in us during difficult times. As we build one another up in community, we are strengthened together. Our theme for this year is especially relevant as we consider what it means to be strong and courageous in these moments. May God grant us the joy that comes from Him — and from Him alone.

I am also grateful to share that my academic journey is nearly complete. I will be graduating this May, with my degree conferred in August as I finish the remaining requirements. I am deeply thankful for this congregation, which has stood with me and supported me throughout the pursuit of my Marriage and Family Therapy degree. Your grace and patience have meant more than words can express.

As we look ahead to summer, we are prayerfully planning a number of exciting community gatherings — including the Strawberry Festival and our 100th Year Celebration. We believe these events will bring us together in meaningful ways. We are also working toward a successful application for the Sacred Places Grant, trusting that God will use the work we do here to bless and benefit our wider community.

As we enter this holiday season, may we experience the fullness of God's goodness. May we enjoy time with family and friends, and may we rest in the assurance that God is with us — strengthening us each and every day.

Blessings and gratitude,

Pastor Sunil

ICAN NEWS

Kari Burns is stepping down as ICAN executive director. We are grateful for her leadership and talents she brought to the job. She has laid the foundation for a deeper community engagement within the Irvington community. We wish her the best for the future.

ICANs Impact in the Community

Last year ICAN made significant strides in program development, formally defining its Basic Needs Programs — including the Neighbors in Need Program, Women and Girls' Basic Needs Program, and a newly launched Senior Essentials Program. ICAN also expanded its food security efforts under the No Hungry Neighbors Food Security Program and established the ICAN Pantry Partner Network to coordinate food distribution with partner pantries across Indianapolis.

ICAN served 1,369 family units at its Food Pantry (Downey Christian Church) and 759 individuals at its Assistance Center (IUMC), with 248 first-time visits recorded. Resources distributed included 1,351 bus passes, 545 hygiene kits, 153 feminine kits, and 108 senior kits. Demographically, clients were predominantly between ages 45–64, with nearly half unemployed. About 16% were experiencing homelessness or staying in temporary shelter.

In-kind donations were substantial, including over 5,600 lbs of fresh produce from Second Helpings, 673 hygiene kits from Indy Hygiene Hub, and 200 handmade quilts for unhoused neighbors.

Financially ICAN relies heavily on in-kind contributions, individual donors, and fundraising to bridge the gap. Eight new strategic partnerships were formed and ICAN hopes to extend this in the future. We appreciate all your support to ICAN as they are moving to a new space in our building.

Together For Good: Join Us!

Neighbor: One living near another. A fellow human being. Anyone, regardless of race, religion, or social status, whom you have the opportunity to show compassion.

It's challenging to be a person of faith in our current world, for there are so many opinions, misinformation and confusion. The chaos can be overwhelming. It is hard to know what to do or where to stand. It is natural to feel helpless.

Yet, God calls us to put our faith into ACTION, to dig deep to find our spiritual compass and see all human beings as valued. He beckons us to create a life that actively cares for everything and everyone in our world.

The members of 'Draughting Theology' (an IUMC small group) have been doing just that – trying to move past the current political sway and look for positive ways to make a tangible difference.

Some of the things we have discussed:

- How do we begin to treat all humans with kindness, respect and dignity, no matter their circumstances?
- How can we stand up for those without a voice?
- Where can we offer supportive hands to those who need help to move forward?
- What if our guiding concepts were inclusivity, integrity, equity, social justice and compassion?

How do we embrace words 'faith', 'empowerment' and 'action' in all we do?

So, Draughting Theology is formally moving in a new direction that actively lifts up our neighbors! We have a new name: **Together For Good**. Together, we will **educate** ourselves in the needs of our community and **connect** with available resources. Together, we'll explore ways to **create positive change**. And, because each member may have a different area of focus, we will **support each person** to nurture a loving and inclusive community.

Want to join **Together For Good**? We will meet the 1st Tuesday of each month at the church, from 6:30pm – 7:45pm at IUMC. Our meeting will include getting acquainted, connecting like interests, sharing information and ideas, and organizing efforts. Together For Good is open to all! Invite your family members, friends and neighbors to join in.

Our FIRST MEETING: Tuesday May 5, 2026, 6:30pm, in the church parlor.

May Small Groups

Dinner, Devotion and Discussion Mark your calendars for the *2nd Sunday of each month for 3D* - Dinner, Devotion and Discussion. We'll gather in the parlor around 11:45am for an hour of fellowship and sharing. The entree and drinks will be provided - bring something to share if you like, but not required. All are invited, including children. Bring yourself, your family, and your friends. No reservations needed, just come. *(No meeting on May 10th due to Mother's Day.)* Hope to see you on June 14th!

Cooking Class Thursday, May 14th @ 5:30 PM in fellowship hall. Please bring a \$10 cash donation to each class to help offset the food cost. Class will meet the second Thursday of each month. **Reserve your spot so that Lois knows how much food to buy by emailing the church office @ info@irvingtonumc.org or letting Kim know by phone or Lois in person.** *Five people must sign up by Monday @ noon for the class to be held.*

Constitution Discussion Class Second Tuesday each month (May 12th) at 6pm, constitution education/discussion group. Karen Auble leads this group. We will meet in the parlor for this small group.

Miss Linda's Sewing Class is Now 2 Classes a Month! First and third Thursdays of each month, next class is scheduled for Thursday, May 7th @ 5:00 PM. We will meet in the Choir Room on the second floor.

Breakfast Club Every other Monday Morning at 8:00 am, the club meets at Blueberry Hill Pancake House on East Washington Street for breakfast and fellowship. Breakfast dates for May are the 11th and 25th. All are welcome!

Chair Exercise Class Chair exercise class for age 50+ adults (although open to younger adults facing mobility problems). Wednesday evenings, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Monday Bible Study

Pastor Sunil is offering a Bible Study on **Mondays** at 1 PM. The study will be in the parlor and on Zoom. We will be starting the book of Daniel this month. All are welcome to join!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/6088142449?pwd=hw0WI58kaC6LjVbbnuxq0zrXl4bCjU.1>

Meeting ID: 608 814 2449 Passcode: 922133

If you have other ideas or would like to host a class meeting in your home, please contact pastor Sunil or the church office. We would like for people to gather during as many times they would like in the month in their own homes to build accountability and community.



Disaster Support, A Mission of Caring

An F5 Tornado in Sullivan, flooding in Henderson KY, hurricane damage in South Carolina, large storms in Oklahoma: any disaster leaves an aftermath of destruction, along with insurmountable challenges. Cleaning up after a disaster takes a whole community.

UMCOR – the United Methodist Committee on Relief – provides organized efforts to help our neighbors after a disaster. One part of their program is **ERT, Early Response Teams**.

ERTs are volunteers, like you, who have offered their hands in service. ERTs help families take steps to prevent further damage to property by tarping roofs, mucking out basements, sorting through debris, cleaning, spraying mold, etc. Even more, ERTs provide a caring Christian presence, offering hope when life is overwhelming. While it is disaster relief, it is also a ministry of healing: ERTs enter into their story, provide a gentle shoulder and an attentive ear. Compassion is the primary tool in the ERT toolbox.

A typical team is 4-8 people, all with different strengths and gifts. Work to be done fits all levels of skills and stamina. A typical deployment is 5 days: 3 workdays, 2 travel days, but you can serve any amount of days in that timeframe that works for you. To join a team, volunteers must complete a certification course and pass a background check, then be ready and willing to go when disaster happens.

THE NEXT ERT BASIC TRAINING FOR INDIANA WILL BE:

Saturday, May 16, 2026, 8:30am – 5:00pm
Fishers UMC, 9691 E 116th St, Fishers, IN 46037
Lunch, snacks and all materials will be provided
For more information and to register, contact:

Ron Heustis at rlheustis@gmail.com or register online at [ERT Class Registration](#)

Registration deadline: May 9, 2026

Spiritual Shopping?

Most of us find grocery-shopping a challenge – the traffic, the parking lot, the crowded aisles, the long check-out lines. Even electronic shopping has its own version of stress. It is easy to come home from a shopping trip with a cart full of fatigue, impatience, and (sometimes) disappointment. But what if grocery shopping could be different? What if it could be a spiritual experience, a time of prayer, a moment of thanksgiving?

Our church has joined in the mission of feeding our neighbors through the Big Red Box Project and the ICAN Food Pantry. It is a humble and at times overwhelming task, for there are so many who go hungry. Yet, God calls us to feed His sheep. He also calls us to draw nearer to Him, grow in His spirit. The act of grocery shopping can help with both.

- As you make your shopping list, pray to open your heart to those in need.
- In the parking lot, offer thanksgiving for the opportunity to share what you have.
- As you walk the aisles, pray without ceasing and let God guide you in finding just the right thing.
- When your eye is drawn to an item like a can of soup, a package of cheese crackers, a box of protein bars, pause: is it nourishing? Is it easy to open? Will it offer hope?
- Bless the item as you place it in your cart.
- At home, place your items in a special place so they are ready for the next trip to the church.

It takes practice to hardwire the act of spiritual shopping. It may help to create prompts: a key word at the bottom of your shopping list, a string around your finger, a special bag to take to the store. Ask God to help you become a spiritual shopper.

Your tangible gifts, like your spiritual gifts, are meant to be shared. Both the Big Red Box and the ICAN Food Pantry will share resources with those in need. It is up to us to help them with this great effort. Pick up at least one item every time you shop. It doesn't have to be expensive or extravagant; every piece donated makes a difference.

Need ideas about what to buy? Look for the list of helpful items on the Welcome Center.



Honest Conversations About God, Jesus, and the Church

For some time, we have been thinking about launching some kind of non-traditional service on Thursday evenings here at IUMC. Part of the process has been wondering what might work best in Irvington and how to begin. Beginning is the hardest step!

Would you be willing to be part of a launch team with Pastor Sunil? This is new for him also, by the way!

This would mean being part of a discussion group, letting the pastor practice on you (that should be interesting!), and then committing to being at some of the evening services for a minimum of six months (while not giving up on Sunday mornings, FYI). You wouldn't be expected to commit to every Thursday night but we need a group of people to greet and sit with those who come from the community and perhaps offer a cup of coffee.

This is a work in progress, but the pastor can't do this alone. This service is going to require the assistance and commitment of around 10 people from the service for there to be a launch. Can you be a part? Will be a part? Pray about it and if so, hand in this form to Pastor Sunil or let him know. This could be exciting and fun ... and faith enriching!

Yes, count me in!

Name

Money Counters Needed

We are looking for volunteers to help count money and take the weekly deposit to the bank once a month on Monday mornings.

Training will be provided.

Please call the church office if interested.

Pretty Good Stuff Sale

We start collecting donations at the **end of May**. People wishing to donate can call Don's cell phone and leave a message regarding drop off on Saturday, you can also bring donations on Sunday. The proceeds will go to the Red Box and UMCOR. The sale is Saturday, August 29th.

***Indianapolis Monthly* recognized Erica Williams as a 2026 "Top Lawyer" in Real Estate. Congratulations Erica!**



Our Prayer Ministry: Prayer Wall

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:

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.



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. Daily Meditation 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. 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 the IUMC Daily Meditation 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 Daily Meditation a daily habit ... whether you join us at 8 am, noon, or 8 pm.

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

Sunil Kotian, **Senior Pastor**

Kim Fulton, **Office Manager**

Lori Steuer, **Preschool Director**

Micki Gowdy, **Church Financer Manager**

We are on the Web at:

www.irvingtonumc.org

Our email address and telephone number are:

info@irvingtonumc.org

(317) 356-7231

Visit us on Facebook

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.

