

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

# Good News

**DECEMBER 2025  
JANUARY 2026**



*Smithville*  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**TO LOVE  
CHRIST  
TO SERVE  
CHRIST  
TO SHARE  
CHRIST  
NO MATTER  
WHAT IT  
TAKES**



**SMITHVILLE UMC**

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*from the desk of Pastor James*



Dear Smithville UMC,

As we enter December, we continue our exploration of how we can understand our humanity within the framework of five concepts of health: Physical, Volitional, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual. As human beings we experience all five of these, and we are all strong in some and weak in others. While we break them down to help us understand and work on them individually, we must always remember that they are connected in us and one will always affect the others. In the month of December, we will look at Spiritual health.

Spiritual health is the one we as the church focus on and are most aware of a lot of the time. However, even in the church, it tends to be the most forgotten or overlooked. There are multiple reasons why spiritual health is overlooked, but there are two reasons I wish to focus on. The first is the church (general over centuries) has tried to limit God's connection with us. The second, we as humans tend to value production over connection, especially connection with God. These are two big ideas that could use their own articles, but I will try to cover them briefly.

One primary obstacle that gets in the way of our spiritual health is, as the "Church," historically, we have made a habit of deciding which ways to connect with God are correct and incorrect. "The Church" tended to say you had to kneel three times a day, say this certain prayer out loud, then be in silence for 3 minutes. Only certain music was considered holy, and nature was pagan. The truth is, as we explore scripture, we realize that that is a human limitation. Our God created the heavens and the earth, God created all of nature.

If being in nature, taking a hike, praying in the forest helps you connect with God that is good. God inspires all sorts of music. We can feel the Holy Spirit moving in organs and piano, we can feel the Spirit moving in guitar and violin. Some people connect with Jesus better when they sing one or two verses on repeat like the monks of old would chant growing closer spiritually. Some connect better when they sing hymns with multiple verses that call them to think and reflect. God has created so many ways for us as humans to connect with the Lord, and we as humans have created so many barriers for ourselves and others.

The other obstacle that gets in our way of spiritual health is we, as humans, tend to prioritize production over connection, especially connection with God. What I mean by this is where we place our value. How do we value others? First, we tend to place our own personal value in how much we can produce. This is how well we do at work, how much we can get done, how much money we can make, or how "successful" we are. Second, we tend to judge/value others by these standards of their production. However, when we read scripture, we see that Jesus calls us to value our neighbor, to value others, not by their production and what they can do, but by who they are. Jesus calls us to love them because they are human beings who are inherently worthy of being loved. We then take these ideas and apply them to God and since we don't normally "see" or "realize" God's production in our lives or our production to God, we don't value our relationship with God.

Christmas is a busy season, so I ask us, can we choose one of these two aspects to pray on this month? How do you connect with God? Or how do you value relationships? Which one are you called to work on this month? How can you work on it this month? How can you grow your spiritual health this Christmas? As we are called to celebrate the birth of our Savior, how can we grow closer to Christ?

*from the desk of Pastor Aimee*



One of the things I love about my morning drive to church, is that it gives me time to listen to the radio and drink a cup of coffee (2 of my favorite things!). I always listen to Air1 in my car and in the morning the D.J.s (Dan and Michelle) are great! They are funny and to be honest, they are so “real.” They are a married couple so for me they are relatable and they are always laughing with each other...which is contagious! So, the other morning on the way to church they were talking about the first impression that Dan made on his future in laws. He shared that while meeting them for breakfast in downtown Chicago he happened to find an AMAZING parking spot right across from the restaurant where they were eating. To give you a bit of back story, Dan was not from Chicago, not familiar with the area, and not at all clear on how parking in downtown Chicago worked. He parked his car and had a nice breakfast with Michelle’s folks. All went perfectly UNTIL they all came out of the restaurant and Dan could not find his car. He knew where he parked it but it was clearly not there. His to-be-in-laws pointed out to him, that he had parked, unwittingly, in a tow zone and his car had been taken to the impound lot. So, they all walked together to the impound lot where, sure enough, Dan’s car had been towed to. So much for a shining first impression!!! But what a memorable mark he made!

I laughed so hard listening to Dan’s story because we have likely all been there! We have all wanted to make a great impression on someone and missed the mark! Maybe we fell off a chair during a game with the youth group we were meeting for the first time (yes...it happened to me...it was hilarious...and no they never let me forget it). Perhaps you got pulled over for speeding in front of your girlfriend’s church on the first Sunday she was “introducing” you to her church family (yes...that happened to Scott on the first Sunday he came to church at SUMC...and no I never let him forget it...lol).

Whatever your story, we all have one. A time when we wanted so badly to make an incredibly good impression and we blew it. What people remember about first meeting us may not be that we are well-spoken or intellectual ... it may instead be the look on our face when we ended up on the floor. But what is more important than that first impression is what happens next...our recovery!

I was thinking about Mary’s reaction to the angel Gabriel when he came to tell her God had chosen her to be the mother of the Savior. At first, she was afraid (why else would he have said “fear not!”) and maybe Gabriel thought...” why would God pick this scared young girl to be the Messiah’s mom? Why wouldn’t God pick a warrior woman that was fearless and older and wiser?” But let’s look at what Mary did next to recover...after a moment of fear and doubt and questions, she gave herself totally to the will of God and completely surrendered to letting God use her however He saw fit. What a comeback!

And what about Peter’s first shot at being the leader of the disciples after Jesus was crucified. I would not call locking yourself behind closed doors and hiding away great characteristics of the new head of Christ’s church! But it is what comes after that shows Peter’s real moxy ... when he preached the truth of who Jesus was to a crowd and over 3,000 people believed in Jesus that day...now that is something to put on your resume!

And don’t forget Saul...he was chasing down God’s people, throwing them in jail and having them killed for following Jesus...and yet after encountering the risen Jesus, he became a great Christian apostle and the author of most of the letters in the New Testament.

*cont. page 5*

# Offering and Attendance

## Sunday, November 2, 2025—Offering

Loose Collection ..... -0-  
 General Fund..... 4,821.00  
**\$4,821.00**

### Items Not in General Budget:

Building Fund ..... 405.00  
 Apportionments..... 35.00  
 Sign Campaign..... 50.00  
**\$5,311.00**

In-person Worship Service 43  
 ONLINE Worship Service views 217

## Sunday, November 9, 2025 -Offering

Loose Collection ..... 25.00  
 General Fund..... 2,800.00  
**\$2,825.00**

Sign Campaign..... 180.00  
 Rental ..... 200.00  
 Poinsettias ..... 26.00  
 Building Fund..... 350.00  
**\$3,581.00**

In-person Worship Service 49  
 ONLINE Worship Service views 294

## Sunday, November 16, 2025—Offering

Loose Collection ..... -0-  
 General Fund..... 1,840.00  
**\$1,840.00**

### Items Not in General Budget:

COTC parsonage rent..... 500.00  
 Advent books..... 15.00  
 Study book..... 18.50  
 Poinsettias..... 52.00  
 Building Fund..... 125.00  
 Sign Campaign..... 620.00  
**\$3,170.50**

In-person Worship Service 44  
 ONLINE Worship Service views 197

## Sunday, November 23 -Offering

Loose Collection ..... 50.00  
 General Fund..... 3,185.00  
**\$3,235.00**

Rent and shades..... 4182.16  
 Pastoral support..... 389.04  
 Pastor payroll..... 762.50  
 Advent book..... 10.00  
 Poinsettias..... 79.00  
 Building Fund..... 125.00  
**\$8,782.70**

In-person Worship Service 43  
 ONLINE Worship Service views 174

## Sunday, November 30 -Offering

Loose Collection ..... 0  
 General Fund..... 1,755.00  
**\$1,755.00**

Parsonage utilities..... 389.04  
 Gym rental..... 40.00  
 Sign ..... 50.00  
 Poinsettias..... 117.00  
 Building Fund..... 225.00  
**\$2,576.04**

In-person Worship Service 43  
 ONLINE Worship Service views

## Smithville United Methodist Church Finances at a Glance Oct 2025

	Monthly Beginning Balance	Monthly Income	Rentals	Monthly Expenses	Monthly Ending Balance
General Fund	\$ 35,842.29	\$ 12,642.42	\$ 4,980.00	\$ 17,094.58	\$ 36,370.13
9 Paid \$15,418.53 behind 1 Apportionment of \$1713.17					
Designated Accounts	\$ 30,926.49	\$ 920.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 31,846.49
Building Fund	\$ 33,335.03	\$ 1,225.00	\$ -	\$ 12,561.66	\$ 21,998.37

### Yearly Financial Summary

	Actual YTD YTD Monthly Income Needed for Budget	Usable Income - including rental	Actual YTD Expenses
2025 Budget \$196,057.00	\$ 16,338.08	\$ 180,692.99	\$ 197,798.47

Investments	Last Month	Net Change	Current Month
General Reserve Fund	\$ 25,416.69	\$ 231.08	\$ 25,647.77
Mission	\$ 17,257.80	\$ 156.90	\$ 17,414.70
Education Grant	\$ 119,669.68	\$ 1,088.03	\$ 120,757.71
Total Investments	\$ 162,344.17	\$ 1,476.01	\$ 163,820.18



### A Christmas Prayer

O God, our loving Father,  
help us rightly to remember  
the birth of Jesus,  
that we may share in  
the song of the angels,  
the gladness of the shepherds,  
and the worship of the wise men.

May Christmas morning  
make us happy  
to be Thy children  
and Christmas evening  
bring us to our beds  
with grateful thoughts,  
forgiving and forgiven,  
for Jesus' sake,  
Amen.

- Robert Louis Stevenson

It is such a good thing that God does not judge us solely on the first impressions we make. He looks past our flaws and failures and sees His beloved children...full of potential, love and capable of courageous acts of faith. He breathes His life and His Spirit into us and leads us down paths we never could have dreamed of for ourselves...and that same Spirit changes us into bearers of hope, love, and faith that He can use to grow His kingdom.

Dan and Michelle finished up their story and said that Michelle's parents just adore Dan. They got married and have children and a great career together. They are building a life together that her parents are proud of. It is a really good thing that they did not go off of their first impression of Dan, or they would have missed out on a wonderful son-in-law. It is an even better thing that God doesn't give up on us ... even after our millionth mess up! Now the trick, is to not give up on yourself...God has some amazing chapters left to write in your life! May you enjoy living out every word He writes of your story.

## Month's Events

### Talk To Us

330-669-2371  
smithvilleum@gmail.com

243 N Milton Street  
PO Box 375  
Smithville, Ohio 44677

[www.sumc-ohio.org](http://www.sumc-ohio.org)

#### Cookie Crawl

Saturday, December 6, 11 AM

#### Advent Bruch

Sunday, December 7, 10:15 AM

#### Hygiene Closet

Sunday, December 21, 4 PM



#### Christmas Eve

Music of the Season at 4:30 PM  
Candlelight Service 5:00 PM

# SERMON CORNER

**December 7 (Pastor Aimee)**

Second Sunday of Advent

“To Love like Christ”

Isaiah 11:1-10 and 1 John 3:11-24

**December 14 (Pastor James)**

Third Sunday of Advent

“Joyful, Joyful”

Isaiah 35:1-10 and Isaiah 40:25-31

**December 21 (Pastor James)**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

“Peace on Earth”

Isaiah 42:1-9 and Isaiah 9:6-7

**December 24 (Pastor James)**

Christmas Eve

7:00 PM Service

“The Birth of Our Savior”

Luke 2:1-14 and Isaiah 9:2-7

**December 28 (Pastor James)**

“What would it mean to be the year of our Lord?”

Isaiah 61:1-6, 7-11

**January 4 (Pastor James)**

“Epiphany!”

Matthew 2:1-12 and John 1:1-9

**January 11**

Guest Preacher: Rev. Erin Guzman

**January 18 (Pastor Aimee)**

“Is it time to clean house?”

John 2:13-25 and Daniel 9:20-27

**January 25 (Pastor Aimee)**

“How are we reborn?”

John 3:1-21 and Deut. 6:4-15

**Hygiene Closet Update**

The number of people we serve continues to increase. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus in a tangible way to those in need. Every donation is making a difference. Since the beginning of 2025 we have averaged 13 households per month—41 people. In November 21 households (87 people) were helped! Again, THANK YOU for serving our community with your gifts and time.

*THANK YOU!*

**Thanksgiving Bags**

We are so grateful for each and every single person that had a hand in blessing families with Thanksgiving food bags! These last few months have proven to be full of extra challenges for people and their families to navigate. Your love and generosity in providing a meal for them for Thanksgiving shows your faithfulness and dedication to love and care for others the way Jesus has asked us to. Thank you for being how God has answered many people's prayers this Thanksgiving season. What a blessing you all are!

**Hygiene Closet**

There is really no way to express our heartfelt thanks for each of you that has donated, prayed for, and served through the Hygiene closet ministry. In the last few months, we have seen a significant increase in the need for this outreach, and we have gone from serving an average of 50 people, to serving over 80 this past month. We wanted to thank you for your continued support of this ministry. It is truly making an impact on the lives of many and we are very mindful of those the Lord allows us to minister to. Thank you for loving others by providing for their hygiene needs!

Pastor Aimee and Pastor James

## Thanksgiving at Liberty Prep

It is a joy to let you know of the good work we were blessed to do!

In November, Church of the Cross UMC and Smithville UMC worked together to purchase, prepare, cook, and serve a hot Thanksgiving Meal for Students of Liberty Preparatory High school and their families. Through your donations, hard work, and love we were able to bless over 40 people. I, Pastor James was able to check in With Liberty Prep on Tuesday. What food was not eaten at the meal on Monday, was boxed up and taken home. Most of the students were asking if they could take a box home for their brother, sister, mother, father, family member, loved one at home!

Liberty Preparatory High School is a drop out prevention high school. Many students that attend are facing hardships we have only heard about. We received an outpouring of thanks and gratitude from them for this blessing. We cannot tell you in words the feeling of the Holy Spirit moving in this mission. We hope to continue to bless so many as we continue in the years forward.

As we look at making disciples of Jesus Christ, we know we do so in relationship. We continue to strengthen that relationship with Liberty Prep and start new relationships with students as new students enter. We have also had the blessing of showing the love of God in our work. While it may not seem like it, these are the seeds we plant so that students may know they are loved, and perhaps one day, believe in God who loves them. We are working to make the world just a little closer to the kingdom of heaven on earth.

This could not have been done without all of you. We want to thank all of those who were there to help with the precooking Friday afternoon! We want to thank all of those who were there and helped cook, set up, serve, and greet the students Monday! We want to thank all of you who helped support this mission through donations and tithing! We could not do this without you!

Thank You and Blessings,  
Pastor Aimee and Pastor James

Preaching Schedule for  
Pastor Aimee and Pastor James  
November 30, 2025- February 18, 2026

November 30 - December 7  
Pastor Aimee- SUMC/COTC  
Pastor James- AC/Moreland

December 14 - January 11  
Pastor Aimee- AC/Moreland  
Pastor James- SUMC/COTC

January 18- February 18  
Pastor Aimee- SUMC/ COTC  
Pastor James- AC/Moreland



*For unto you is born this day  
in the city of David a Savior,  
who is Christ the Lord.  
Luke 2:11*



Cookie Crawl  
December 6  
11 AM- 1 PM



Christmas Caroling  
December 7  
2-4 PM

Happy Birthday      Happy Anniversary

- |                      |                               |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3 Jeffrey Shull      | 5 Christopher and Elaine Hahn |
| 7 Stacey Miller      | 12 Jeffrey and Cynthia Shull  |
| 8 Kristi Gill        | 29 Scott and Aimee Hare       |
| 9 Rev. Carolyn Berry | Andrew and Elizabeth Shold    |
| Michael Thompson     |                               |
| 13 Ray Scaggs        |                               |
| Angela Eichholz      |                               |
| 14 Charles Thomas    |                               |
| 15 Rick Tilton       |                               |
| 16 Duke Pierce       |                               |
| 17 Katie Nickles     |                               |
| 19 Aimee Hare        |                               |
| Tom Poulson          |                               |
| 20 Elizabeth Shold   |                               |
| 22 Eleanor Hohenshil |                               |
| 23 Landon Grimes     |                               |
| 26 Mary Ann Ickes    |                               |
| Betty Peachey        |                               |

**Save The Date for  
Ministries at Liberty Preparatory High School**

Back to School Breakfast- Monday, January 5  
Baccalaureate - Thursday, May 21  
Graduation - Thursday, May 28