

2024

A publication of Bluffton United Methodist Church, Bluffton, SC  
Volume 20, Issue 2 February 2024



In a recent article, Rev. Magrey DeVega cited a study listing the top 5 things people give up for Lent. They were: 1) social networking, 2) chocolate, 3) Twitter, 4) alcohol and 5) chips. One year I gave up Facebook. One year I gave up candy, cookies, cake and ice cream. Neither was particularly edifying. In fact, the longer I went without a cookie, the less holy I felt. One year, I decided to take something on instead. That year, I took on Encouragement, and I set a

goal of daily encouragement. I chose a person each day and made a point to call or write a card with an encouraging message. That Lent, I felt closer to God and closer to God's people. It was right for me, and I have continued that as my Lenten discipline for a few years. In fact, now I look forward to it.

However, Rev. DeVega went on in the article to speak of 10 things we could give up for Lent. Some are:

- The need to be right all of the time
- Comparing ourselves to others
- The need to have it all figured out
- Fear of the future
- The need to be in control

All of these resonated with me. I do not know how we give up these things, but I know we should, and I know prayer and God's Word help. (This week, careful reading of Isaiah chapter 40 has been very helpful.)

Right now, many of us are worried about our nation and its politics and policies. We are concerned about the future of our church. We are very disquieted about the expanding situation in the Middle East, the plans North Korea seems to be making, what is going on in China, and the farmers who are protesting in France. Just typing this makes me feel all nervous and queasy.

So, there are 3 things I am doing.

First, pray and read scripture. Last Sunday, Dean Loftin reminded me of a verse that I am holding close: Matthew 24:6, in which Jesus says: "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come." and I remember Jesus' promise to always be with us (Matthew 28:20)

Secondly, turn off the news. 24-hour news is not healthy; it raises anxiety. Turn off news notifications on phones, tablets, and computers. I am setting myself the limit I need to be informed and stopping there.

Finally, be choosy about sources. We all know people, news media and celebrities that thrive on inciting others' fears. Concerning the church, I mentioned last Sunday that General Conference (the worldwide body of the UMC) will be meeting in April/May. There are MANY decisions to be made, and much legislation to be sorted. Over 1000 petitions are presently on the docket to be sorted, matched etc. You can read these yourself.



This link will take you to the petitions and other information. The Advance Daily Christian Advocate is the official journal of the General Conference of the UMC.

[Advance Daily Christian Advocate](#)

There are specific ideas and petitions about regionalization. No one knows how that might play out, but you can look at it by clicking [Here](#).

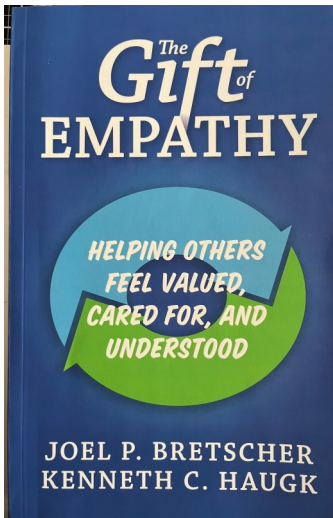
The Lewis Center for Church Leadership at Wesley Theological Seminary is an invaluable source of information for churches, leaders, groups and so on. It also studies trends in church life, and recently released a final report on disaffiliating UM churches as of 12/31/2024. The report was quoted in local papers. You may read the report itself [Lewis Center Report](#). It is easy to read such reports and get anxious. Please don't. This is God's world, and God's church and all things will happen in God's time.

Last year, our Church Council agreed that we do not want to do anything prematurely. Like many churches not mentioned in the news, we decided to see what happened at General Conference and proceed from there. In the meantime, we will be about God's work. And look at all the good things that are happening because we have focused on God's good work: the church continues to grow and touch lives. Our missions reach hundreds, probably 1000s of people each year. Young people are hearing God's Word. God is praised, worshiped and adored.

Be at peace, and plan to give up something bad for Lent!

Faithfully,  
*Pastor Scarlett*

# STEPHEN MINISTRY



The Stephen Ministry Team recently read the book, *The Gift of Empathy, Helping Others Feel Valued, Cared For, and Understood*, by Joel P. Bretscher and Kenneth C. Haugk. The book was written to help people understand the purpose and need for empathy in this world. We Stephen Ministers continually use empathy in our work. The final section of the book is titled, “A World Filled with Empathy.” It is worth sharing... “When someone who is hurting tells another person about their struggles, they’re most likely to get a fix-it solution, a pep talk, a platitude, a dismissive remark, a story about someone else’s suffering, or some other unhelpful response, when what they really want and need is empathy.”

The question then became, “what if we could live in a world where everyone's go-to form of relating was empathy? What if empathy became the natural mode of relating in your family, social group, church, school, workplace, neighborhood and entire community?”

What is empathy? It is when one takes a moment to listen, feel our hurt, and show that they truly get it and care about what we’re going through. Empathy is a power we all have within us, and tapping into it is simple. Becoming more empathetic means becoming more attuned to other people’s feelings or holding back on sharing your own story when someone else is in the spotlight. “Empathy is looking at the world from someone else’s perspective to experience what the person is feeling - and then expressing your understanding of those feelings to that person.”

The key to empathizing is listening. You have to listen to the person who is hurting in order to understand what they are going through. Then, you respond by putting what they said into your own words and stating back what you heard them say. That way, you show that you were listening carefully and are trying to understand how they are feeling. All of this should be done through the lens of Christ’s love. By that we mean letting His love shine through you.

The book covers guidelines for empathizing with someone close to you - a spouse or significant other, with children, with parents, with siblings, with friends, and in the workplace. It is easy reading and totally based on research done by the Stephen Ministry Organization.

If this sounds interesting to you and you would like to learn more about it, or church Stephen Ministry can make the book available to you simply by asking. A book can be ordered for you or one can be made available for you to borrow, read and return to Stephen Ministry. If interested, contact the church office or Mary Ellen Parks, (843) 368-1852, [maryellen.parks22@gmail.com](mailto:maryellen.parks22@gmail.com).

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## NURTURE AND DISCIPLESHIP



*Psalm 139:23-24 NIV “Search me, God, and know my heart: test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead in the way everlasting.”*

There was a pastor that would often ask people in his congregation “how is your heart? He did not mean physically, he meant spiritually. If you believe that you “*Love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*” *Matthew 22:27* your heart is ready for whatever this worldly life throws your way. We have so many happy times that makes our hearts happy. February has Valentine’s Day when we think of all those we love. And throughout the year we have weddings, graduations, birthdays, vacations all things steeped in love. But there are times when things happen that makes our hearts ache. Times that shake our faith. This is when our faith in the Lord is most tested. Times when we dig deep in our souls and our prayers are so very important. Times we give all of our trust in the Lord to give us strength. And he always does. So when asked how is your heart spiritually, can you answer; it is well with my heart and my soul and my mind?

*Debbie Kaulig*

# February EVENTS

## Spiritual Gifts Workshop



Have you ever considered that God created each of us for a particular purpose? Or that He knew in advance His plan for your life? Maybe you're just interested in learning more about how He blesses each of us with very diverse and unique gifts. If so, we have the perfect opportunity for you. As some of you know, we have a workshop that helps our congregational members better understand the gifts God has given them. We call these spiritual gifts. What exactly does that mean? The

best definition we've found is, "a spiritual gift is a divine, supernatural ability given by God to enable a Christian to serve and to minister".

Our workshops last 3 hours and in that time, you'll learn more about spiritual gifts in general, complete an individual exercise to identify your personal gifts, and explore how they fit with your personality and aspirations to potentially serve. If you aren't sure what gifts you have, or if you think you know but want confirmation, we would

welcome you to join us in a workshop.

**We have workshops scheduled for Saturday, February 17 from 9:00 am - 12:00 noon and Monday, March 11 from 1:00 - 4:00 pm.** We plan to schedule additional workshops during the year and hope you will prayerfully consider joining us.

Please contact Sara Jenkins at [spisuncity@aol.com](mailto:spisuncity@aol.com) or 843-298-2076 if you're interested.

## Souper Bowl of Caring

The BMW will be hosting a Souper Bowl Sunday Luncheon on **February 11 after the second service.** The soups will be beef vegetable, vegan vegetable, and broccoli cheddar. There will also be hot dogs and dessert. Please enjoy fellowship and food with one another. If there are any

leftovers, take-home containers will be available. **Donated cans of soup will be very much appreciated and will go the Soup Kitchen**



### **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**

Tuesday, February 13th from 5-7 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

**Ash Wednesday**—Wednesday, February 14. Imposition of Ashes noon-1:00 PM in the Sanctuary. No service at noon. Worship Service is at 6:00 PM in the sanctuary.

## Lent/Easter

**Palm Sunday**—Sunday, March 24th 8:30 AM and 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary. Lenten experience for all ages and egg hunt at 4:00-5:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

**Maundy Thursday Worship & Communion**—March 28, 6:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

**Good Friday**—Open sanctuary for prayer from noon to 1:00 PM

**Easter Day Services**—Sunday, March 31. Sunrise service at 7:00 AM front of the Annex. 8:30 & 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary.





# Music Ministry

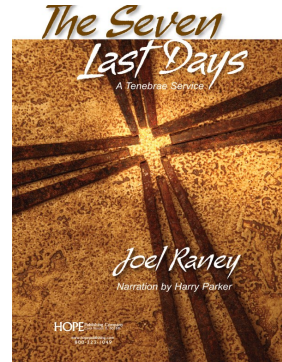
As we entered 2024, we quickly witnessed store shelves cleaned of lingering Christmas decorations and quickly replenished with patterns of red hearts. But according to the church calendar, our Valentine's decorations are shrouded by the dark shadow of Ash Wednesday. A corporate holiday calls us to show our signs of affection with velvet heart boxes of chocolate, shiny jewelry, and fancy dinner dates, yet God calls us to remember our sinful nature and impending death. How do we hold these two events together?

I'm reminded of the hymn, "What Wondrous Love Is This" (UMH 292) which sings

*What wondrous love is this, O my soul,  
O my soul  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul  
What wondrous love is this that caused  
the Lord of bliss  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul,  
for my soul  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul*

God loved us so much that He sent his Son to die for our souls, so that we would not perish but have eternal life. Our human love can never match this wondrous love, yet God accepts all that we offer Him. God knows us inside and out and desires that we know Him too. God doesn't ask for perfection, He asks for relationship. But our own sin widens the gap between us and God. The only way we can draw closer is by acknowledging our sinful ways and repenting. As we receive God's grace, though undeserved, we strengthen our relationship with God. It is in the midst of our ashes, that God's love makes us brand new. So perhaps Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday go together after all.

## Singers needed for our upcoming special Palm Sunday cantata!



Join us as we explore the final seven days of Jesus's life through scripture, narration and music. This special cantata will be accompanied by a chamber ensemble including cello, violin, oboe, flue and piano. Rehearsals are Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM. If you'd like to sing with us, contact Keeley. All voices are needed!



**Keeley DiMartino**  
Director of Music Ministry  
[MusicMinistry@BlufftonUMC.org](mailto:MusicMinistry@BlufftonUMC.org)

**Michael Cole**  
Organist, Pianist, Accompanist  
[mcoleorganist@yahoo.com](mailto:mcoleorganist@yahoo.com)

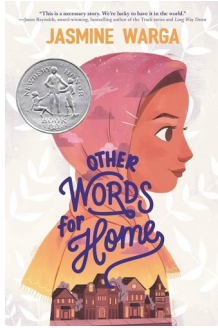
**Nancy Osgood**  
Director of Wesley Ringers  
[njosgood@gmail.com](mailto:njosgood@gmail.com)



# Bluffton Methodist Women

There will be a unit meeting on March 16th at 11:00 AM. Speaker to be announced after the February executive board meeting.

Nancy Humes



Other Words for Home: A Newbery Honor Award Winner by Jasmine Warga

A creatively written YA novel in verse, this book is about a young girl who must leave Syria to move to the United States. When events in her hometown become volatile, Jude and her mother are sent to live in Cincinnati with relatives. At first, everything in America seems too fast and too loud. But this new life brings unexpected surprises: new friends, a whole new family, a school musical for which she might try out. This lyrical, life-affirming story is about losing and finding home and, most importantly, finding yourself.

## History Corner

You see it every Sunday, but what do you know about the stained-glass window behind the choir loft? Well, here's some information for you.

The chancel window, designed and executed for the Bluffton United Methodist Church by the Willet Studio, has a figure of Jesus in the center. He opens His arms in invitation saying. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you..." (Mathew 11:28. 29).

A yoke is enclosed in a diamond shaped panel at His feet. He stands superimposed upon a cross; not hanging on to it, but its presence is there. In the cross arms are the alpha and omega, first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. He said, "I am the alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending." (Revelation 1:8).



The Chancel Window

At top is another symbol derived from the book of Revelation; the lamb holds a white banner with a red cross which is the banner of the victory of life over sin and death.

The background is composed of a decorative vine forming medallions ornamented with leaves and bunches of grapes. "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5).

Here people are representative of those who labor, those who are bur-dened and sick and a family group.

We welcome any stories or information you have about our church.

*"Since God acts in human history, historical records are of great significance. They become salvation history because they contain the story of God's action to save sinful human beings."*

*\*Quote from the UMC Church Membership Records Manual.*

**Committee members:** Al & Dian Litster, Joyce Atwood, Barbara McCann, Sarah Snow, Carolyn Smith, Gary Taylor and Mark Thomas.

Historians, Al & Dian Litster [tallowal@sc.rr.com](mailto:tallowal@sc.rr.com) 843-705-6221

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Please join me in thanking our dedicated and loving volunteers who help make Christian Education an exciting and engaging ministry at BUMC – We couldn't do it without you!

## January Volunteers

- ◆ Children's Messages – Lynn Newsom, Sharral Ruth, Scarlett Hester
- ◆ Kids' Church – Jo Parrott, Mikey Hervochon, Christina Bryant
- ◆ Christian Education Publicity – Mikey Hervochon
- ◆ Youth Leadership – Keeley DiMartino
- ◆ AV and Tech Support – Brian Osgood
- ◆ Youth Meals – Fields, Hesters, LeSages

## Winter 2024 Sunday Schedule

- ◆ Nursery Sundays at 8:30 and 11 – children up to 4 years old (Prekindergarten)
- ◆ Kids' Church Sundays at 8:30 and 11 – Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade
- ◆ Adult Sunday School Sundays 9:45 – Conference Room 1
- ◆ Youth Group – 6 p.m. Sundays – Annex



February is the month of love, and the month Lent begins. While you are swapping Valentines and eating candy hearts, think about Lent – the 40 days we reflect and pray and thank God for His ultimate gift of love. What will you “give up” for God? Sweets? Gossip? Social Media? Coffee? TV? I doubt there's anything we could give up that we love as much as God loved his Son or even as much as He loves us!

Or perhaps you want to “add” something to your life – attending worship every Sunday during Lent? Making sure your children attend worship? Kid's Church? Kid's and Youth Praise? Youth Group? BUMC has much to offer our congregation for this season in order to bring you and your families closer to God.

## February Activities for Youth, Children and Family Ministries

- Feb. 4 Youth will make valentines cards for those in our congregation who might need a little “happiness.”
- Feb. 11 Youth Group will meet at Hesters for a potluck Super Bowl supper (everyone bring something) and burning the palms from last year for this year's ashes.
- Feb. 13 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – 5 – 7 PM. Everyone is welcome. Donations above expenses will go towards our new ROOF!
- Feb. 14 Ash Wednesday – walk-in for imposition of ashes noon – 1; full Ash Wednesday service 6 p.m.
- Feb. 18 NO YOUTH GROUP – winter break for many of our families
- Feb. 25 Youth Group Topic – Lent – with games
- March 3 Youth Group – 5:30 p.m. Annex – sewing adults will help youth make banner for the Fellowship Hall

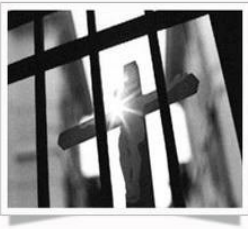
# MISSIONS

*"I, the Lord of wind and flame  
I will tend the poor and lame  
I will set a feast for them  
My hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide  
'Til their hearts be satisfied.*

*Here I am, Lord  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord  
If you lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart."*

(From the hymn, "Here I Am Lord" by Dan Schutte--United Methodist Hymnal #593)

Your Missions Committee wants to extend heartfelt appreciation to each and every member of our congregation who help us as we attempt to fulfill this Mission.



**MIRACLE JAR** donations in January for **Kairos Prison Ministry** amounted to **\$1,069.50**. "Kairos is a lay-led, inter-denominational Christian ministry in which men and women volunteers bring Christ's love and forgiveness to prisoners and their families." The local chapter ministers to those at the Ridgeland Correctional Institution. Thank you for your generosity.

The **Miracle Jar** for February will be for **LIBRARIES FOR KIDS INTERNATIONAL** which was founded by **our own church member, Roy Austin**. Their mission is "to help schools with limited or no access to the internet, establish libraries for their students and enhance learning opportunities." They concentrate on establishing libraries in rural schools that do not have electricity. Thus far they have shipped **826,000** books which has



## Epworth Foster Care

Members of Missions attended the ribbon cutting for the new **Epworth Foster Care Facility** in January. The facility is located on the campus of St. Andrew By-The-Sea United Methodist Church on Hilton Head. Our church provides **First Night Bags** full of essential items to the children for their first night of placement.

## Kairos Cookie Project

Our church is baking and packaging cookies for the Kairos volunteers to take with them to the prison. From Kairos volunteer, Brad Dean: "Those cookies are miracle workers. I didn't fully appreciate it until my first time inside the prison - the inmates are not trusting of others and the cookies break down barriers. For some it's a gesture of love that reminds them they are cared for, and they are always delivered with a Bible scripture and prayer. For others, it brings back memories of a mother or grandmother, maybe one of the few good childhood memories they have." If you would like to assist with this project, contact Paula Kirkland: [paulakirkland36@gmail.com](mailto:paulakirkland36@gmail.com).



(The cookies are "identical" to be considerate of the cell mates in the facility.)



# BUMC Treasurer's Report

## Designated Funds as of January 31, 2024

### Budget Target is 4 of 52 Sundays or 8%

|  | YTD Expens-<br>es | Annual Budg-<br>et | Percent of<br>Budget |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Worship Offerings:</b>                      |                   |                    |                      |
| Plate  | 31,137            | -                  | -                    |
| Online   | 15,686            | -                  | -                    |
| Total Worship Offerings                        | 46,823            | 615,500            | 7.6%                 |
| <b>Other Revenue:</b>                          |                   |                    |                      |
| Unrestricted Memorial Donation                 | -                 | -                  |                      |
| Altar Flowers, Facility Rental, Interest, Etc. | 623               | 8,500              | 7.3%                 |
| Roof Donations                                 | 32,855            | -                  |                      |
| Total Other Revenue                            | 33,478            |                    |                      |
| Total Revenue                                  | 79,678            | 624,000            | 12.8%                |
| <br><b>EXPENSE</b>                             |                   |                    |                      |
| Pastoral                                       | 11,247            | 173,402            | 6.5%                 |
| Worship  | 10,157            | 98,589             | 10.3%                |
| Ministry & Education                           | 5,453             | 74,700             | 7.3%                 |
| Missions                                       | 829               | 28,350             | 2.9%                 |
| UMC Apportionments                             | 4,921             | 59,055             | 8.3%                 |
| Administration & Finance                       | 6,387             | 84,835             | 7.5%                 |
| Property                                       | 5,640             | 79,215             | 7.1%                 |
| Total Expense                                  | 44,634            | 598,146            | 7.5%                 |
| <b>Surplus YTD</b>                             | <b>35,044</b>     | <b>25,854</b>      |                      |

**Notes:**

*Worship Expense over budgeted amount due to late billing for 6 months of 2023 Altar Flowers billed in 2024.*

***Visit [Blufftonumc.org](http://Blufftonumc.org) to establish your recurring online giving at the "select page prompt/donate!"***

# Anniversaries, Birthdays and Prayers

## *Anniversaries*

02/01—Liz & Cliff Charnes  
 02/25—Bill & Kathryn Stutesman  
 02/26—Jim & Kathy Griebel

## *Birthdays*

|                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 02/03—Connie Roberts      | 02/18—Ron Davies         |
| 02/04—William Yocco       | 02/19—Michael Ciba       |
| 02/05—Ida Pinderski       | 02/20—Elise Reichert     |
| 02/05—Nancy Osgood        | 02/21—Ruth Schneid       |
| 02/05—Susan Wiley         | 02/24—Bud Mingledorff    |
| 02/07—Shirley Mingledorff | 02/24—Jay Sprouse        |
| 02/07—Paul Scott Wehner   | 02/24—Kathryn Stutesman  |
| 02/07—Nick Mandalas       | 02/24—Roy Austin II      |
| 02/08—Linda Waugh         | 02/26—Lana Armstrong     |
| 02/10—Janet LaMartina     | 02/27—Jim Clelland       |
| 02/14—Hannah Downey       | 02/27—Chris McCorkendale |
| 02/14—Fred Rees           | 02/28—Dick Smith         |
| 02/18—Aubrey Himes        | 02/29—Cliff Charnes      |



Rebecca Adler & Family  
 Daniel Alba  
 Lana Armstrong  
 Rocky Austin  
 Lois Barton  
 Malinda Blackshaw & Family  
 Rita Bobko  
 Jenny & Bobby Brannen  
 Jason Brown  
 Krystal Buck  
 Paul Bucklin  
 Lynn Cleveland  
 Pat Cleveland  
 Amy Cooper Family  
 Pat Crews  
 David De Paolis

Elizabeth & Larry Duncan  
 Richard Falon  
 Donna & Kari Fiero  
 Jane Grim  
 David Harper  
 Mike & Kara Hurst  
 Meredith Inglis  
 Vera Jones  
 Lloyd & Paula Lamb  
 Paul Laughlin  
 Judy McDonald  
 Peter Minnaar  
 Elizabeth Napolitano  
 Ed Neal  
 Bob Newmarker  
 Barbara O'Connor

Michelle O'Connor  
 Mackenzie Orth  
 Megan Phelps  
 Evelyn Reddish  
 Tori Rinehart  
 Linda Allen Smith  
 Al Tahan & Family  
 Betty Thraikill  
 Jackie Tuohig  
 Brent & Jeanne VanBuskirk  
 Steve VanHorn  
 Judy Walden  
 Joe Walter  
 Rick Wortman

BLUFFTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
P. O. BOX 368  
BLUFFTON, SC 29910

## February 2024

TO BE ADDED TO OUR EMAIL LIST,  
PLEASE CALL: 843.757.3351 OR EMAIL  
THE CHURCH AT: [blufftonumc@gmail.com](mailto:blufftonumc@gmail.com)



### **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

8:30 AM & 11:00 AM – Online and In-Person

Pastor Scarlett's Email – [pastor@blufftonumc.org](mailto:pastor@blufftonumc.org) – Cell: 1.843.907.5389

Director of Music Ministry: Keeley DiMartino; email – [musicministry@blufftonumc.org](mailto:musicministry@blufftonumc.org)

Director of Christian Education: Sally LeSage – Email – [blufftonumc.education@gmail.com](mailto:blufftonumc.education@gmail.com)

Organist, Pianist, Accompanist —Michael Cole—Email—[mcoleorganist@yahoo.com](mailto:mcoleorganist@yahoo.com)

Church Office: 843.757.3351; Email [blufftonumc@gmail.com](mailto:blufftonumc@gmail.com); Website: <http://www.blufftonumc.org>

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Mon. – Thurs. 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

### **MAILING ADDRESS**

Bluffton UMC  
P.O. Box 368  
Bluffton, SC 29910