



# Keeping in Touch

Indian Heights United Methodist Church  
December 2024

6 A child is born to us, a son is given to us,  
and authority will be on his shoulders.

He will be named

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

7 There will be vast authority and endless peace  
for David's throne and for his kingdom,  
establishing and sustaining it  
with justice and righteousness  
now and forever.

Isaiah 9:6-7

Dear Siblings in Christ,

I pray this finds you well. Can you believe we will start our journey to the manger in less than two weeks? Of course, my children have been circling everything they want in the Amazon Ad since August - yet it still seems to have crept up on me.

Every year, we remember all that led up the birth of the Christ child. We remember with anticipation the waiting of the child that will be born unto us. So what is it that we are waiting for? What is it that we are anticipating and longing for? The Prophet Isaiah says "Unto us a child is born - a wonderful counselor, eternal Father, Prince of Peace...and his kingdom will have endless peace and justice and

righteousness now and forever".

I think we could all use a little bit of endless peace in our lives. After a season of uncertainty, we have come to the time in the year where peace is coming. The peace that will sustain us all, the peace that is born in the form of a child wrapped in a manger for there was no room at the inn. And this child, born of two very unlikely candidates, will change the world.

This is a time to celebrate in the wonder and magic that is here and now. A time to remember why we love one another and how we are called to love God with all our heart, mind and soul. This Advent, live in the moment. Do not long for something that is already here, because Christ is already among us. We simply need to share in the marvel of how He came with the world. So while we "wait" we share the Good News of the one Isaiah spoke of and will set the whole world on a new path towards righteousness, justice and ultimate peace.

I encourage you to invite others to journey with us to the manger this Advent and remind all people that they too are worthy, enough and beloved.  
-Pastor Ali

# The Season of Advent



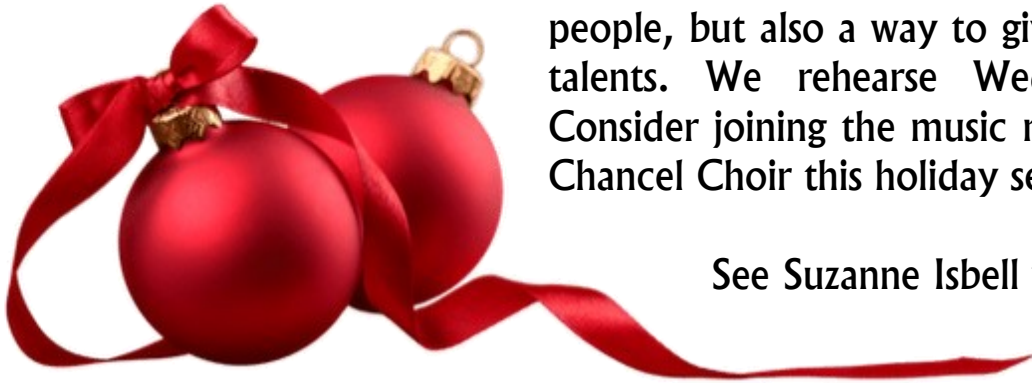
## Advent Projects

**Advent Prayer Puzzle:** As we begin to await the arrival of the Christ child we will be working on a Christmas Eve project. Beginning December 1, through December 22, fill out your Christmas prayer on a puzzle piece. The puzzle pieces are located outside of the Sanctuary. Fill out your prayer on the back of the piece and return to the basket. The final project will be displayed on Christmas Eve.

**Sharing Nativities:** Every year we remember the Christmas story when we tell the story of what happened that night in the manger. Do you have a nativity that is special to you? Bring it to the church on December 15 to be displayed through December 22. Fill out a card provided with your name and the story of your nativity.

## Choir Cantata on December 15

The Chancel Choir will be performing the cantata "Hope!" by Joel Raney this holiday season on December 15. It's a fun, yet meaningful telling of the Christmas story, mostly set in a variety of gospel styles. It's not too late to join in with our growing group! Rehearsals are not only a great time with wonderful people, but also a way to give of your time and talents. We rehearse Wednesdays at 7pm. Consider joining the music ministry through the Chancel Choir this holiday season!



See Suzanne Isbell with questions.

# Christmas Eve Worship

## December 24, 5pm

Includes Carols and  
Candlelighting

Kingdom Kids will have a  
birthday party for Jesus.





# POINSETTIAS

Make a donation for a poinsettia  
(or more) in memory or honor  
of your loved ones.

\* Please take plants home  
following Christmas Eve worship  
(please take by January 5)

The plants are \$13 each

Orders are due to the Church  
Office by December 11

## Order Form

Your Name:

Number of Poinsettias:

(please pay when you order; write “poinsettias” on your check memo line  
or mark the “flower” fun if giving on our website)

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

## Advent Study

Join Pastor Ali for a three week Advent study. "An Unlikely Advent" focuses on the experiences of four sets of often overlooked characters in the Nativity story. During this Advent season, Rachel Billups guides readers through the themes of hope, love, joy, and peace by sharing the stories of Elizabeth and Zechariah, Herod, the Magi, and the shepherds. Each set of unexpected characters has something to teach about living faithfully on the journey to Christmas. The study begins Wednesday, December 4 at 6pm. Gather in the lobby at IHUMC as we begin this series. Read "Week One" in preparation. You can purchase the book at Amazon.

Link here: [An Unlikely Advent: Billups, Rachel: 9781791028978: Amazon.com: Books.](#)



If you are unable to purchase the book reach out to Pastor Ali or Suzette.

## Westridge News

- **A big round of applause** for Pastor Ali, who helped the ELL students carve pumpkins. This was an activity to help those students learn fun things about our culture. Thank you IHUMC for donating some of the pumpkins.
- **Good news.** The rate of chronic absenteeism is down. Westridge is working with parents and students on ways to help eliminate this problem. Chronic absenteeism is when a student misses 10% or more days of school.
- **To help needy families during the holidays,** Westridge will be receiving gift cards from The Shawnee Mission West Love Fund. Last year 60 families received gift cards. If you would like to donate, check out the Shawnee Mission West Love Fund on Facebook or Instagram.
- The **books** donated by IHUMC will be delivered on December 2. Thank you all for your contributions.
- **Volunteer Opportunity:** Students who are struggling academically are encouraged to attend Academic Support from 3:50-4:30, Monday through Thursday. Students can go one day, or multiple days. Beginning sometime in January, Westridge will be looking for volunteers to assist students in various subjects. Volunteers do not have to go through MVP training because there will be multiple teachers on site. You may not always get the same student. You do not have to be an expert in the various subjects. If you feel more comfortable with one subject, a teacher can direct a student to you who needs help in that area. If you don't have an answer, you can refer the student to one of the teachers. You can volunteer one day a week for multiple days. For more information, see Lynn Reilly 913-6045-6393.
- **Free Musical:** Westridge Students are presenting "Dorothy in Wonderland" on December 17,19, 20, from 7-8:30pm. It's a great way to show your support and FREE entertainment.

# KINGDOM KIDS

Indian Heights United Methodist Church



Kingdom Kids (infants through 3rd grade) offers a nurturing and safe environment where children can experience God's love as they participate in active learning.

We weave Bible stories, activities, crafts and games into a full faith experience for our children.

Come check us out!!

**Questions? Contact:**  
**Haley Broockerd**  
**and Aby Peoples,**  
**Children and Family Ministry**  
**Coordinators**  
[umcihkids@gmail.com](mailto:umcihkids@gmail.com)

**Follow us on Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)

## Kingdom Kids

### Sundays, 10:30am







**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14  
9-10:30AM  
FREE, FAMILY FUN!**

**Merry Christmas from  
Kingdom Kids!!**

**Join us for a Birthday  
Party for Jesus  
Christmas Eve  
5pm**

**(Adults will worship in the  
Sanctuary during this time)**





# Johnson County IHN News

I am sad to report that Indian Heights UMC will no longer be serving the homeless through JOCO IHN.

At one time, this organization had 25 area churches involved, where 180,522 meals were served, 60,174 bed nights were provided, 927 individual (531 of those were children) were assisted, most of them going on to independent living.

IHUMC was a support church for Grace Presbyterian. We took in dinner, visited with the guests, entertained the children for two evenings of their host week which was four times a year.

Right after the Covid epidemic, church attendance was down in most churches in

the area, therefore, volunteers were also scarce. Churches started leaving the program. Recently, when they were down to just two churches that were hosting the guests overnight, IHN started a new model of sending the homeless to motels and giving them gift cards for food. The plan is that this model will continue until next summer. The area churches will no longer be involved.

Some of IHUMC members have served this Social Outreach for 15 years. Others joined later. I am so sorry that those of you who recently trained did not get to experience more of this rewarding Outreach. We so appreciate all of you that gave of your time, resources, and dedication to this program. We hope that

## New Mom's Night Out Group

Save the date! Are you a busy mom? Do you long to connect with other busy moms that you can talk about all the hard things with? Join Pastor Ali on the 2nd Wednesday of the month beginning January 8, 2025 for "Mom's Night Out". Our first gathering will be at The Lenexa Public Market at 6pm. [8750 Penrose Ln, Lenexa, KS 66219](https://www.lenexa.org/8750-Penrose-Ln-Lenexa-KS-66219) RSVP to Pastor Ali at [revalihaynes@gmail.com](mailto:revalihaynes@gmail.com). Not sure if you can make it? Just show up!



## Miscellaneous Stuff to Know...

Are you new to IHUMC? We love to wear **nametags** on Sunday mornings. It helps us get to know each other and eases that awkward, “what is her name?” moment. If you need a nametag (new or replacement), email Suzette: [ihumc66207@gmail.com](mailto:ihumc66207@gmail.com). It takes about two weeks to get them.

Don't' forget to check your church **mailbox**. You never know when something will show up in it. Let Suzette know if you need a mailbox (you don't have to be a member to have one).

Did you know an **email** is sent out (nearly) every **Monday** and **Thursday** morning to all on our email list? The email includes news you may not see elsewhere. Thursday's email has the link to the upcoming Sunday's bulletin (the bulletin is always put on our website so you can view it ahead, or if you worship from home, can follow along). Watch your “Spam”, “Promotions”, or “Social” email folders if you aren't seeing this in your general email. Not on our list? Let Suzette know.

When you move, get married, get a new email or phone number, etc. it is very helpful for the Church to have this information. Please email **updates** anytime to [ihumc66207@gmail.com](mailto:ihumc66207@gmail.com).

Interested in exploring **membership** at IHUMC? Pastor Ali would love to chat with you! Just email her at

[revalihaynes@gmail.com](mailto:revalihaynes@gmail.com)

## Passing the Torch

Happy (almost) New Year! IHUMC has seen quite a few transitions during 2024. The biggest one may seem like the “addition” of Parkwood Heights Day School. We've adjusted to sharing space and continue to watch the remodel at our old parsonage. We've said goodbye to some beloved members who gained their angel wings, and have been blessed with the presence of new members and visitors. We've done some updating on our old building, and the playground and garden areas have also undergone revisions.

We couldn't do anything without the love and support of the congregation, so a special thank you to all of you who make it all happen through the many different ways you give. Thank you to Pastor Ali and our staff, and to our faithful One Board who does so much work behind the scenes. Thank you to Parkwood Heights Day School for their willingness to share our space, and work through all the details this requires. Most importantly, thank you all for being present to love your neighbors, and to do the hard work it takes sometimes to exemplify that in a culture that often seems to favor division over compassion and love.

As we head into 2025, there will be plenty of work to do as we continue walking our Christian journey, both individually, and as a congregation. As you sit with the New Year and ponder goals or ideals for the upcoming year, remember that your presence as part of IHUMC matters deeply. The 2025 sign-ups are out now on a table outside the Sanctuary for greeters and ushers, and to sign up to help with the coffee time on Sunday mornings. There are many others ways to get involved and grow your faith. How can your light shine brightly in 2025?

## Meet Alexis Merry, Our New Worship Leader



**How did you get into worship leading?** You could say that my first experiences leading worship began during my undergraduate studies at Pepperdine University. Our chamber choir would mainly sing sacred choral pieces, and this opened my eyes to the amount of spiritual food we can offer to audiences as musicians. My first official position leading worship was for a Non-denominational church in Spring, Texas in 2020. Since moving to Overland Park, I have led soprano sections for many churches in the area, including Methodist, Lutheran, Christian Church Disciples of Christ, and Anglican.

**What do you love about worship leading?** I changed dramatically when I realized I could combine my love for singing with my love for Jesus in worship leading. No longer would I have to be concerned with all of the performative nuances required for my opera career. I could simply let down my walls and let my authentic voice out to help encourage others that they can, too. And I finally felt a sense of purpose in the church and amid a congregation. I love singing almost all genres of vocal music, from sacred to secular. But I treasure singing worship music.

**Where did you grow up? How did you end up in KC?** I was born in Houston, Texas, and lived internationally until I was well over 18. My family moved to Italy when I was 10 years old, where I first experienced European life and learned a new language. From there, we would go on to live in Wales and London, England, and eventually move to Jakarta, Indonesia, where I would graduate high school. All throughout my life I have been a singer. My first ever role was Mr. Walt Disney himself in Walt Disney the Musical Jr. in 3rd Grade (mustache and top hat included!). By my senior year in Asia, I knew that making a career out of singing was my goal, and Pepperdine University in California was the only college to accept me based on a virtual audition.

From there, my teacher would go on to recommend me to another teacher who was based here, in Kansas City. Funny how I ended up getting my Master's in Opera Performance in Walt's very own home state! I recently graduated with my MM in 2023, and finished a 2-year apprenticeship with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City.

**What is your favorite worship song?** I have an entire playlist of my favorite worship songs that I constantly listen to on Spotify, so this is a tough one! Right now my top three are:

- Revelations 19:1 by Sunday Service Choir
- One Name (Jesus) - Live by Naomi Raine
- Belong To You (Enemy Can't) - Live by Here Be Lions

**What do you hope to see for worship at IHUMC?** IHUMC is one of the warmest churches I have ever set foot in! It reminds me a lot of my first WL position in Texas. We all became very much of a church family, and I was able to interact with the congregation in a way that would allow me to get song requests from anyone. I was a one-woman show there, so being a part of such a fantastic team of people and musicians here is beyond a blessing. I hope for us to grow closer and more confident in our praise and prayer songs. I believe these to be sacred times for us to speak to God with our hearts through music. My experience leading worship for so many different denominations has taught me that every congregation needs its own very specially tailored musical formula, and I hope to be able to join IHUMC's unique voice alongside you all.



## Greater Heights Youth Group

Our Greater Heights Youth Group meets most Sundays at 11:30, immediately following worship. This is for youth 4<sup>th</sup> grade and older, but we do periodic service projects and invite younger children to join us. We are using a curriculum titled "Freedom Ride" and enjoy games, snacks, Bible study, and great conversations during our gatherings. If you are Safe Gatherings certified and interested in helping with this group, please reach out to Pastor Ali or Laura Harvey. We meet for an hour downstairs in the area off the kitchen. If you're unable to help in person we appreciate your prayers as we learn to follow Christ more closely.

### November Dates:

- **December 1:** Not meeting due to Thanksgiving
- **December 8:** Regular gathering
- **December 15:** Christmas party and missions project
- **December 22 and 29:** Regular gathering





# Baby Grace

## Diaper Distribution

1st Saturdays of the Month, from 9am-11am

Quarterly children's clothing distribution

(Aug/Nov/Feb/May)

More Information on our Facebook Page:

Indian Heights Baby Grace

Cash and Diaper Donations Always Welcome!

## Upcoming Baby Grace Diaper Distribution:

**Saturday,  
December 7  
9-11am**

**Our food pantry is also  
open during this time.**

Two churches are doing diaper drives for our Baby Grace in December, so hopefully we'll be stocked up for the beginning of the year. A big thank you to Lenexa UMC and Monticello/Lifebridge UMC! We are still serving approximately 50 families per month and growing! Thank you for all of your donations (time and diapers both!). And keep us in mind if you see a good sale!

We are so excited to be able to continue providing this vital service to our community. Donations are always needed and appreciated. There are containers to collect diapers at the church, or you can give a donation online (mark the Baby Grace fund):

[www.indianheightsumc.org/donate](http://www.indianheightsumc.org/donate)

Keep up with our latest news on our Facebook page (Indian Heights Baby Grace). Contact us at

[babygraceihumc@gmail.com](mailto:babygraceihumc@gmail.com)



How Can We Pray for You?

email your needs at:

[ihumcprayers@gmail.com](mailto:ihumcprayers@gmail.com)



## Our Little Food Pantry

Hours:

The 1st Saturday of every month,  
from 9-11 am (during Baby Grace)

**Mondays - Wednesdays**  
**10am-2pm**

Saturday's food pantry hours overlap with Baby Grace, making it the perfect time to open our food pantry. **Note that the pantry has been moved into our Library.** Donations are always appreciated (cash or non-perishable items. As we head into fall, canned meals (soup, stews, chili, etc.) are always appreciated. We seem to never have enough cereal-type bars, boxed juices and milk, or canned tuna. Another favorite are basic cooking items, including sugar, flour and oil...and personal hygiene items. Thank you to all who have made donations to this ministry!!

# Weather Alert:

Our church follows the Shawnee Mission School District's weather closures...if their schools and after school activities are cancelled due to the weather, Indian Heights UMC is also closed. We'll do our best to send an email alert out for closures, but please use your best judgment.



Our Good Shepherd Fund helps buy items for our food pantry. Donations of non-perishable items are always appreciated.



SAVE THE DATE:

March 28th and 29th, 2025

Woven Women

Led by Pastors Bailey Amtower & Ali Haynes

"Weaving together our stories, our environments, and our families to create transformative and powerful places to encounter God."

## Upcoming Book Study

Join Pastor Ali for a six week study on "The Shack" by WM. Paul Young.

When: January 15, through February 19, 2025 at 6pm

Description: Mackenzie Allen Philips' youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later in the midst of his "Great Sadness," Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend. Against his better judgment he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change Mack's world forever.

In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant "The Shack" wrestles with the timeless question, "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" The answers Mack gets will astound you and perhaps transform you as much as it did him. You'll want everyone you know to read this book!

What to buy: Study Guide: [The Shack Study Guide: Healing for Your Journey Through Loss, Trauma, and Pain: Young, Wm. Paul, Robison MD, Brad: 9781455597918: Amazon.com: Books](#)



## Upcoming Events:

- December 1 - 1st Sunday of Advent
- December 4, 11, 18 - Advent Study (6pm)
- December 7 - Baby Grace (9-11am)
- December 14 - Breakfast with Santa (9-10:30am)
- December 15 - Choir Cantata during worship
- December 24 - Christmas Eve (5pm)

## Events & Room Use:

Please contact the Church Office to reserve rooms and with questions about building use:  
ihumc66207@gmail.com.

Check our online calendar for all events.

## Ongoing:

- \* **Sunday Worship:** 10:30am (in person & live via Facebook). Videos of Worship are on our website the following Monday.
- **Adult Sunday School:** Sundays, 9:00am
- **Greater Heights Youth Group:** 11:45am (most Sundays)
- **Kingdom Kids:** Sundays, 10:30am
- **Women's Theology:** 2nd & 4th Wed. 9:30am
- **Men's Breakfast:** Thursdays, 7am @ Flapjacks
- **Choir Rehearsals:** Adult Choir practices weekly at 7pm (Sept - May)
- **Footprints Young Adult Group** - various monthly venues; watch the calendar for updates
- **Baby Grace Distributions:** 1st Saturdays of the month, from 9-11am
- **Food Pantry:** Mon-Wed, 10am-2pm AND 1st Saturdays, 9-11am during Baby Grace
- **Parkwood Day School:** Monday-Friday, 7am-6pm (see their website for full calendar)

## Support Groups:

- OA: Fridays, 6:30pm

## Need to Reach Us?

Indian Heights United Methodist Church  
10211 Nall Avenue,  
Overland Park, KS, 66207  
913-649-9040

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs, 9:30am-2:30pm  
ihumc66207@gmail.com  
www.indianheightsumc.org

## Church Staff

Senior Pastor, Ali Haynes  
revalihaynes@gmail.com  
913-710-2661  
(pastoral emergencies)

Music & Worship Coordinator  
Suzanne Isbell  
Suzanne.isbell75@gmail.com

Worship Leader  
Alexis Merry  
amerrysoprano@gmail.com

Haley Broockerd & Aby Peoples,  
Children & Families Ministry  
Coordinators  
umclHkids@gmail.com

Bill Schnackenberg,  
Treasurer  
financeihumc@gmail.com

Suzette Mack,  
Administrative Assistant  
ihumc66207@gmail.com

Our mission is to worship God,  
to follow Jesus joyfully, and to build



# Indian Heights

United Methodist Church

10211 Nall Avenue Overland Park, KS 66207



Worship Sundays at 10:30am  
(in person and Facebook live)

Adult Sunday School: 9am  
Kingdom Kids: 10:30am  
Youth Group: 11:30am