



St. Paul United Church of Christ
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 Sunday Worship Service—10 am
 Office Hours: M-TH, 9am-1pm
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The Good News

December 2024



The Search Committee has completed its search. Rev. Dr. K.C. Lazzara, our previous pastor, has indicated a desire to return to the St. Paul pulpit. Because of our experience with him, the usual profile requirements were waived, and a candidating service was held on November 3, 2024. A contract was subsequently negotiated and a congregation meeting to approve Rev. Lazzara's call as St. Paul's settled 3/4 pastor was held on November 24. The congregation approved his call. His projected start date is January 5, 2025.



Sunday, Dec 8 after Service



Special Offering
 Sunday, Dec 22



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY
Jim & Kim Hoover
December 14

ERICH

St. Paul held its monthly Consistory meeting on November 12. I was out of town and not there this month, so I want to thank the rest of Consistory for carrying on. As many of you know, we are moving forward with the approval of the reinstatement of Rev KC Lazzara as our permanent pastor. If all goes as planned, his first day back with St. Paul UCC will be Sunday, January 5th. The heat is back on in the whole church. Gail and I had a meeting with the

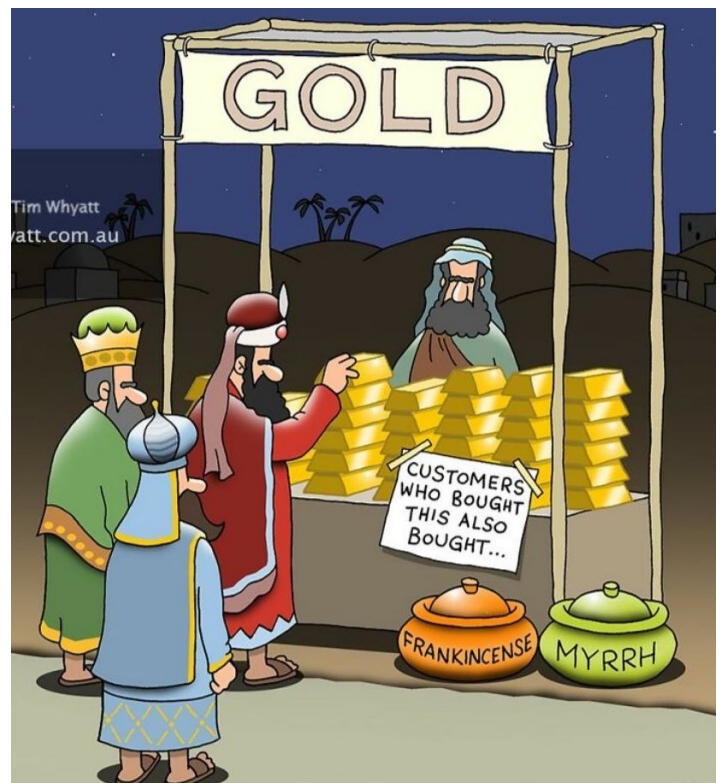


Conference Minister of Michigan UCC, Rev. Lillian Daniel who will perform the sermon here on December 15th. She plans on being here at 9am to take a tour of the church and meet members before service. Please take some time to read about Rev. Daniel and what she has accomplished at <https://michucc.org/lillian-daniel>. The church looks great as we approach the Christmas season. The year is coming to an end and as a reminder, we are always looking for members to consider joining Consistory. It is only one day a month at 7pm and the meeting only lasts about an hour and a half. People also can join via Zoom, so if getting to the meeting is a challenge, Zoom is always an option. I will be stepping down as President of Consistory. Please remember if you see anything in and around the church that needs attention, please let a member of Consistory know.

What wonderful memories this season brings. Times from our childhood (believe it or not, I never got coal in my stocking - at our house coal only went in the furnace); decorating the tree on Christmas Eve with really OLD ornaments and tinsel which had been saved from years gone past and wrapped in a piece of tissue paper; and checking those lights for that one bulb that needed to be replaced. My decorating gets less and less each year, but the excitement is still the same. Some reminiscing as old things are unwrapped remembering where and why it means something special. One year the kids in Sunday School cut out the manger scene from black construction paper and we put it in the front window until it fell apart. Warm memories are the best at Christmas and I have so many. Good friends (old and new), a growing family (that I love with all my heart) and the promise of a new beginning for us all. God sent his Son to show how to love and live. As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, let us remember the many blessings we have enjoyed this past year as we await the surprises He has for us in the coming year. I wish you all good health and much happiness this season and enjoy your holiday as you celebrate with your family and friends.



- 3 Chuck Calabrese
- 11 Carla Grawburg
- 14 Doris Mijal
- 19 Joy Frazier
- 27 Jim Hoover
- 28 Sue Regier





This is the season of Advent, the coming of Christ, one of the most meaningful seasons of the Christian year. It is also one of the busiest times of the year and many people's favorite time of the year. How do we approach this complex time and maintain a sense of perspective? There are many sources of suggestions on how to do this. There are thousands of websites and a multitude of magazines that promise to teach you techniques to manage your time, budget, and expectations to make *this* year the best holiday season you have

ever had. There are stores eager to sell you just the right products to enhance your Christmas experience. Where do you start?

I have a modest suggestion. Take a step back and refresh your Advent season this year. That doesn't mean you have to throw out all your traditions, but consider approaching the holiday from two new perspectives. One is the music you choose to listen to and a second is what decorations you use. These perspectives don't define the season as a whole, but are places to start.

As far as the music you listen to, if you listen to the same music every year and cherish it, that's fine, but consider diversifying. It seems as if every artist in every genre has a seasonal album. Look to your favorite artists and see if they have seasonal albums or songs/videos you can download. Go to their website and check that out. Then consider artists outside your normal wheelhouse. Look at other artists in your favorite genre and see if they have Christmas albums, e.g., if you like country; look at country artists you don't normally listen to. Then there are albums that go beyond genres like Mariah Carey who is called the "Queen of Christmas," and who has multiple albums. There are many instrumental groups with holiday albums; Mannheim Steamroller and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra are two. Pentatonix is an a cappella group with dynamic harmonies doing Christmas songs. If you're nostalgic for old fashioned pop, Neil Diamond and Barbra Streisand both have Christmas albums. Into "ethnic" pop? Celtic Thunder and Celtic Woman each have Christmas collections with some songs not usually heard.

Consider unfamiliar individual songs. "It Wasn't His Child" is the only carol I know of about Joseph, performed by Trisha Yearwood. "Some Children See Him" is about the universal nature of the Baby Jesus. Andy Williams and James Taylor both have versions of this. "There's a New Kid in Town" and "Straw Against the Chill" are about the nativity, sung by Kathy Mattea. "Mary, Did You Know," has become popular and has been recorded by many artists. "Sing Hosanna, Hallelujah!" (New Christy Minstrels) and "We Need a Little Christmas" (various soundtracks) are two fun songs to download. Look at versions of familiar songs by artists new to you. "The Little Drummer Boy" has been recorded in a dynamic version by Jennifer Nettles and Idina Menzel, artists unfamiliar to most. Find all of these on YouTube. Taking just a little time can result in a much-expanded Christmas playlist.

Another way to refresh Advent is to rethink your decorations. Magazines, websites and TV shows can give you information on how to do this. You can buy or make decorations. I suggest that you consider the meaning *behind* any new decorations you choose. One meaningful "decoration" is the nativity set, or crèche, a representation of the birth of Jesus.

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Nativity sets can be purchased from many retail sources. They range in size from a small tree ornament with just Holy Family to a large table top set with dozens of pieces. There are even life-sized versions for outdoor display. Sets come in traditional garb, ethnic styles or more creative versions. If you do a Google search, you will be inundated with options. If you want a smaller universe to start, try Amazon or eBay. There are also websites that specialize in nativity sets - try a Google search.

Beyond the nativity set, what decorations are meaningful? Evergreens, real or artificial, symbolize eternal life, and bring color and scent (if real) to the home. Wreaths, being circular and having no end, also symbolize eternal life. The red bows that traditionally adorn evergreens and wreaths symbolize Christ's blood. Candles signify that the Light has come into the world; purple candles honor Advent. A white candle is the Christ candle. The lights on the tree also signify the Light of the world. Any motif with triangles refers to the Trinity - the Christmas tree itself is an example of this. Gold decorations symbolize Christ's kingship. The red stripes of candy canes mimic the marks of the whip on Jesus's back at the Crucifixion. The shape of the candy cane refers to the crooks of the shepherds. Doves are the sign of the Holy Spirit. Bells ring out the good news of the coming of the Messiah. Angels recall the heavenly choir that heralded his birth. The wrapped gifts echo the gifts brought by the Magi. Scented decorations, like clove-studded oranges, bring to mind incense offered to God.

Have a blessed Christmas!

SHIRENE & MIKE



I know it seems like we just finished rummage and are still recovering from the hard work, but it won't be long until next fall is here, and rummage is around the corner. Please keep this in mind when going through your closets and cupboards and bring in your gently used items. The rooms are labeled and ready to go thanks to Kim and her team. As per last year, please keep the bags light and if you can place similar items together, that would be helpful. Also, no magazines, dictionaries or encyclopedias, and no large furniture.

We have a hard act to follow as this past rummage sale was a great success, but let's give it a go!



Address Change

Doris Mijal
 Courtyard of Sterling Heights
 13400 19 Mile Road, Room 202
 Sterling Heights MI 48313

- ♦ Linda Pratt for the lovely Christmas wreathes on the Sanctuary doors
- ♦ All those who helped with Hanging of the Greens
- ♦ Beth for decorating the Sanctuary Side Table



Loving God, let me walk in the path of your love this day.
Help me to see the beauty of your creation in the nature that surrounds me.
Grant that I see the glory of your spirit reflected in the souls of all whom I meet in my daily journey.
Touch me with the knowledge of the bounty you give me every day of my life.

Weave into my life unending praise for the blessings you bestow upon me, unearned and unasked.

When I grieve, grant me comfort.

When I doubt, grant me faith.

When I fear, grant me courage.

When I hate, grant me love.

When I am lost, show me the way.

Help me always to remember that you came to us as one of us, and showed us how to live, following the law of love, and how to die, lighting the way to eternal life. In the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ, Amen.

On Saturday, December 14 from 10:00am-3:00pm, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church would like our help with their Children's Christmas Party. This church received donations from our Rummage Sale. They will provide us coffee and donuts at 10am. They may be serving chicken nuggets for lunch (it has not been finalized yet). While the parent (s) are picking up pre-packaged gifts, the children will be making crafts. There are 52 children. Our help will be needed in helping the kids make crafts, loading gift bags into vehicles, security in the parking area or helping at their Clothing Closet. Both men and women can help.



Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church is located at 17100 Chalmers (Gratiot & McNichols area).

If you are interested in volunteering, please text, call or email Kim at 586/855-2041 or redapplemm@yahoo.com by December 6.

Thank you!