



“THE SPIRE”

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Inside the Pastor's Head

Brian Steele

Dear Friends,

Our Advent Series this year is called, “An Unlikely Advent.” In this series, we are looking at the overlooked characters of our Christmas story and how their unlikely stories can make our Christmas story even more beautiful. The author of our series, United Methodist elder Rachel Billups, explains how God has come to us through the most unlikely of ways and the most unlikely of people. As I got to thinking about our theme, I realized how unlikely our advent this year is. When I first came here 18 months ago, in no way did I anticipate that I would be writing my final newsletter article to you this soon. We are in unlikely times. A church merger. A new pastor and worshipping community for you. A mid-year appointment change for me. These are unlikely times. And God is still at work in making it beautiful. Recognizing God is at work in these times doesn't mean we don't grieve. The loss of St. Paul as a worshipping community is a heavy one. At the same time, the Advent and Christmas stories are stories of God doing new things in the most unlikely of ways, and they end up being exactly what the world needs. I believe that can give us all comfort that we are right where we need to be at this time. Change is coming, and while change can be hard, change is also the way we can receive hope again. God is still coming to be with us. God is still at work telling our unlikely story. Let us rejoice in that.

In Grace,

Brian

December 2023

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“Christmas is doing
a little something
extra for someone.”

- CHARLES M. SCHULTZ

GOOD
HOUSEKEEPING

A Look Back:

11/5: All Saints Day: Redefining Sainthood: Saints are more messy than we realize. They are not perfect people, but people who have received a perfect grace.

11/12: Miracle of Enough: A widow under debt thought she would have to sell her children into slavery. But then the prophet Elisha reminded her what she did have. Then her community surrounded her, and God made it enough. There is always enough to do whatever God has called us to do when we open our hands.

11/19 Christ the King Sunday: Redefining Royalty: Our king is one who calls us to lay down power, not seek it. We are called to bring good news to the least of these, and that however we treat the least of these, that is how we treat King Jesus.

11/26: Hymn Sing Along: We had a great time singing meaningful hymns and rejoicing in the gift of music.

Top 3 Things I’m Working On:

- 1) Advent, Christmas Eve and all that comes with this beautiful season.
- 2) Preparing for our transition.
- 3) Continuing education conferences online.

What I’m reading and listening to:

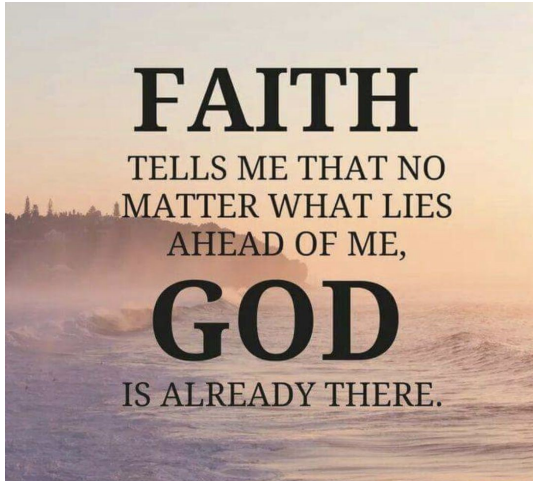
- For Spiritual Development: An Unlikely Advent by Rachel Billups, People-Pleasing Pastors: Avoiding the Pitfalls of Approval-Motivated Leadership by Charles Stone and Ed Stetzer and various other books about pop culture and the Gospel

- Podcasts I try to listen to regularly: The Bible for Normal People, Evolving Faith, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, The Emotionally Healthy Leader

If you’re interested in seeing what else I read or for recommendations at Goodreads: [goodreads.com/besteele2386](https://www.goodreads.com/besteele2386)



11/26 Andrew & Cassandra Kumar



Prayer Requests

Also, please keep in prayer:

- An End to Gun Violence
- Israel & Palestine
- Ukraine



If you have prayer requests or would like to share a praise to God, contact Kathy at the office or Pastor Steele at (269) 274-0029 and we will get your request or praise known.

Toys for Tots Collection December 3rd—17th



12/13	Fay Alston
12/16	Carol Kelley
12/30	Marcus Kelley

Happy Birthday to all of our August birthday folks! May the year ahead bring you blessings, perfect health and all of your birthday wishes come true!



Now Hear This



Thursday Virtual Coffee Hour on "Goto Meeting"

A time of fellowship on the first & third Thursday, of the month; December **7th & 21st** at **10:00am** is on-going. Coffee and conversation are always on tap for this event. Watch your email for the GoToMeeting invitation, log in and join the conversation. If you're not receiving the email, simply telephone the church office (248-338-8233) and Kathy will see you are added to the mailing.

For more information contact Marjorie Kumar at zorroku-mar1@aol.com.

Toys for Tots

December 3rd—17th

Advent Studies

Tuesdays , December 4th –19th

Breakfast

Saturday, December 9th at 9:00 am at **Leo's Coney Island** on Centerpoint Parkway, Pontiac MI (near Opdyke Road)

Leadership Meeting

Tuesday, December 12th at 5:00 via ZOOM

Troy UWF Dinner and Christmas Program

Thursday, December 14th at 6:00 pm

Children's Program Troy First new worship service with dinner after

Sunday, December 17th

Blue Christmas Service at Hazel Park

Thursday, December 21st 5 pm

St. Paul Service

Sunday, December 24th, at 9:45 am

Christmas Eve Service at St. Paul

Sunday, December 24th, at 4:00 pm

Christmas Eve Services at Troy First

Sunday, December 24th, at 10:00 am, 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm

Our Farewell Service

Sunday, December 31st at 9:45 am

Our Welcome Service to Troy First

Sunday, January 7th, 10:00 am with brunch afterwards

Simple Give Ending

Simple Give has been discontinued as of Nov. 26th, 2023, this will be the last day to give via Simple Give. We encourage giving in person through December 24th, 2023.



DECEMBER 2023

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				10am — Virtual Coffee Hour 	1	2
3 9:45am — <i>Worship Service with coffee hour after worship</i>	4	5 7 pm — Advent Studies	6	7 10am — Virtual Coffee Hour	8	9 9 am — Breakfast Leo's Coney Island
10 9:45am — <i>Worship Service with coffee</i>	11	12 5 pm - Leadership Meeting via ZOOM 7 pm — Advent Studies	13	14 10am — Virtual Coffee Hour 	15	16
17 9:45am — <i>Worship Service with coffee hour after</i>	18	19 7 pm — Advent Studies	20	21	22	23
24 9:45 am & 4:00 pm <i>Worship Services</i> 31 9:45 am <i>Farewell Service</i>	25	26	27	28	29	30

Christmas

Birth of Jesus Word Search

N K H F O S H I N I N G Z I P
 C C I D R J G W T V R K M V P
 T Q H V A A K G A B R I E L W
 C W Q W M A N G E R S N S N L
 D X O L E Y P K L Z T G S M C
 O L J L H N R G I F T S I Q U
 I W O E E K I R S N G W A S W
 N T R G L M E J H C C Y H D I
 N U S N H S O K E G J E S U S
 K R R A T S X N P F E K N L E
 E F C A E Q S I H P Q N X S M
 E Z B P B U O G E A Y O V A E
 P L H V S Q Y H R M Q D R E N
 E F G L Q K G T D Q H Y B A B
 R D O G F O N O S I O R N M M

ANGEL
 BABY
 BETHLEHEM
 CENSUS
 DONKEY
 EAST
 FRANKINCENSE

GABRIEL
 GIFTS
 GOLD
 INNKEEPER
 JESUS
 JOSEPH
 KINGS

MAGI
 MANGER
 MARY
 MESSIAH
 MYRRH
 NIGHT
 SHEEP

SHEPHERDS
 SHINING
 SON OF GOD
 STABLE
 STAR
 STRAW
 WISE MEN

BiblePuzzles.com