

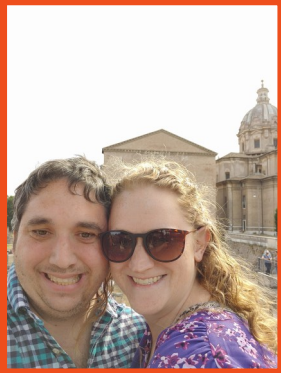


# “THE SPIRE”

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## From the Pastor

Brian Steele

Dear Friends,

By now you have probably heard that I’m a bit of a geek when it comes to my personal interests. I don’t care if it’s Disney, Marvel, DC, Star Wars, or Harry Potter, I’m all about it. While, of course, I love the action and superpowers of the characters, I also appreciate how many of these stories speak to the human condition. Specifically, when the show WandaVision came out in the first quarter of 2021, us fans started to realize that the entire show was walking with the main character, Wanda, through her grief of losing her partner Vision. As Wanda starts to come to terms with her grief and accepts Vision is gone as she knew him, there is this remarkable line that Vision tells her: “What is grief if not love persevering?”

Grief. We don’t talk about it a lot at church. At church you’re supposed to be happy! We’re supposed to turn that frown upside down because we get to praise the Lord! But here’s the thing: That’s not what the full narrative of Scripture shows us. In fact, we can even see the five stages of grief at different points throughout the full narrative of Scripture. I don’t have space in our newsletter to go through all of that, but I would be more than happy to share that information with you individually if you’d like.

But here’s the gist for now: It is faithful to grieve. Church doesn’t need to be the happiest place in town. It needs to be the realest place in town, and that makes grief welcome in our space. The late Rev. Junius Dotson, former CEO of United Methodist

*Continue*

## November 2022

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Is there something you’d like to see in “The Spire”?

Call or email the office by the 15th of each Month (248) 338-8233



Discipleship Ministries, told the story of how one of his parishioners told him once that she was leaving the church because it was too joyful and there wasn't a place to express her sadness. One of my favorite authors Sarah Bessey writes, "George Carlin once said that if you scratch any cynic, you'll find a disappointed idealist. I think the same can be said of the truly joyful: scratch a joyful person and you will find someone well acquainted with their sorrows." I believe that's who God calls us to be. People who have joy not because we have avoided grief and sorrow, but because we have allowed our heart to grow because we have walked through our grief and sorrow.

Friends, we have all experienced some sort of loss after the past two and a half years. Some have lost more than others. But we all have lost something, and all losses need to be grieved. Our churches have experienced losses recently, and I am committed toward making sure our churches are a safe place for grief. God invites our grief. Just read the Psalms as a starting point. There is an entire book written by Jeremiah (probably) called Lamentations that speaks to grief. At some point, many Biblical heroes also "grieve." Grieving in church recognizes that we can bring our full selves before our Creator and Redeemer, and that God is present with us through it. Grieving is an act of faith because we are trusting God with our full humanity. As I read once, the only way to avoid grief in life is to avoid love, and that's not a life we want to live and, thankfully, not a life Jesus calls us to live. I'm here to be in it with you.

In Grace, Brian



**United Methodists should review what General Conference has said in the *Book of Resolutions* as they reflect on the issues facing our state and nation and the candidates who run for office.**



### **JACK HARNISH**

Michigan Conference Communications

When was the last time you read the *Book of Resolutions*? Most United Methodists hardly know it exists; in fact, the *Book of Resolutions* acknowledges that “it is not a book that you will sit down to read from cover to cover.” But an election season might be a good time to consult the book.

The *Book of Resolutions* (BOR) includes the official statements of The United Methodist Church on over 200 topics. It is the voice of General Conference, the only body which can truly speak for the denomination. It is not church law, but it provides “guides and models for helping United Methodist members and groups relate a lively biblical faith to action in daily life . . . [and resource] materials . . . about United Methodist concerns on current social issues” (*BOR–2016*, p. 21).

So what does this have to do with the polls?

Since United Methodist membership includes a broad diversity of thought and experience, General Conference and the *Book of Resolutions* do not tell United Methodists how to vote. However, the church does believe that “the church should continually exert a strong ethical influence upon the state, supporting policies and programs deemed to be just and opposing policies and programs that are unjust” (*BOR–2016*, p. 472).

The *Book of Resolutions* goes on to say, “We recognize that churches exist within the body politic . . . [Their] existence affects, and is affected by, governments. We believe that churches have the right and the duty to speak and act corporately on those matters of public policy that involve basic moral or ethical issues and questions” (*BOR–2016*, p. 486). In that light, United Methodists may want to consider what General Conference has said as they reflect on the issues before the nation and the candidates who run for office. Here are a few of the resolutions addressing critical issues facing our nation as United Methodists go to the polls here in Michigan.

## **Abortion**

“Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion. But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child. We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers. . . . We oppose the use of late-term abortion . . . except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. . . . The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. . . . We mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of high abortion rates. . . . Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved” (*BOR—2016*, pp. 87-88).

## **Global Climate Stewardship**

“We acknowledge the global impact of humanity’s disregard for God’s creation. Rampant industrialization and the corresponding increase in the use of fossil fuels have led to a buildup of pollutants in the earth’s atmosphere. These ‘greenhouse gas’ emissions threaten to alter dramatically the earth’s climate for generations to come . . . . We therefore support efforts of all governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries, and communities to reduce their emissions” (*BOR—2016*, p. 41).

## **Health Care for All**

“The United Methodist Church is committed to health care for all in the United States, and therefore advocates for a comprehensive health-care delivery system that includes access for all, quality care, and effective management of costs” (*BOR—2016*, p. 242).

## **Welcoming the Migrant to the U.S.**

“The United Methodist Church understands that at the center of Christian faithfulness to Scripture is the call we have been given to love and welcome the sojourner. We call upon all United Methodist churches to welcome newly arriving migrants in their communities, to love them as we do ourselves . . . and to show hospitality to migrants in our midst, believing that through their presence we are receiving the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . The United Methodist Church is urged to advocate for the comprehensive reform of the US immigration system” (*BOR—2016*, pp. 287, 291).

## **Call to End Gun Violence**

“As followers of Jesus . . . we must address the epidemic of gun violence . . . . Therefore, we call upon United Methodists to prayerfully address gun violence in their local context. . . . United Methodist congregations [should] advocate at the local and national level for laws that prevent or reduce gun violence. Some of those measures include: Universal background checks on all gun purchases . . . Prohibiting individuals convicted of violent crimes from purchasing a gun for a fixed time period . . . Prohibiting individuals under restraining order due to threat of violence from purchasing a gun . . . Prohibiting individuals with serious mental illness, who pose a danger to themselves and their communities, from purchasing a gun . . . Banning large-capacity ammunition magazines and weapons designed to fire multiple rounds each time the trigger is pulled . . . Promoting new technologies to aid law-enforcement agencies to trace crime guns and promote public safety” (*BOR—2016*, pp. 394-395).



”(BOR–2016, pp. 394-395).

### **Basic Freedoms and Human Rights**

“We hold governments responsible for the protection of the rights of the people to free and fair elections and to the freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, communications media, and petition for redress of grievances without fear of reprisal” (BOR–2016, p. 471).

All United Methodists will not agree on every issue. Still, all United Methodists can agree that candidates should exhibit personal integrity and model the values that reflect our nation’s best. Truth-telling, character, and personal morality are essential attributes of a healthy society, including those who seek public office. United Methodists may differ on political parties, but all can agree that hate speech and mean-spirited rhetoric undermine the call of Jesus to love our neighbor.

In 1750, John Wesley recognized the diversity of thought among Christians and offered the call to “unite in love.” In his sermon “Catholic Spirit,” he said, “And it is certain, so long as we know but *in part*, that all men will not see all things alike. . . . Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him; and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question, ‘Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?’”

Or, in the words of the great Methodist missionary–evangelist of the previous century, E. Stanley Jones, “Here we enter a fellowship. Sometimes we will agree to differ; always we will resolve to love and unite to serve.” May it be true among United Methodists as we go to the polls this fall.

### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

“Born out of Christian conscience and teaching, our voices and our votes matter. Not only do our votes matter, but also knowing our common values and commitment to biblical faith for love, justice, and peace matter.”

–Susan Henry-Crowe





There are many hymns in our United Methodist Hymnal. As we approach Thanksgiving, the season of harvest, songs like, "We Gather Together to ask the Lord's Blessing" composed in 1626 by Nederlandtsch Gedenckclanck (Dutch) translated into English by Theodore Baker in 1894, "When Morning Gilds the Skies" another traditional hymn by Edward Caswall, 1854; and "Shalom to You" written by Elise S. Esliger, and composed by Carlton R. Young, John Newton, "Amazing Grace", Isaac Watts, (1674-1748) "This is the Day that the Lord Hath Made." John and especially Charles Wesley, also have hundreds of songs to their names.

By similar token there are also many Christian contemporary songs that have been accepted into our church worship services, namely "Awesome God", written, sang & recorded by the late Rich Mullins (1987); "EL Shadea " by songstress Amy Grant and "God Loves You" ("There's Nothing You Can Do About It)" by United Methodist Deacon, worship leader and friend Caleb William, whose inspiring music & words touch our hearts and lives, with hopes we will discover one day those words might be printed as published in the songbooks for generations to come for us to joyfully, continually worship God.

As we enter "All Saints Day" we remember songs of praise and Christ's, love for us. Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done" The Lord's Prayer. We shall miss our loved ones, people we have known very close to, as recent Susan Sweeder, whose lives brought a radiant Christlike glimpse to friends, neighbors, those whom we all acquaint ourselves, relationship to Jesus; souls gone before us, we have known with God into eternity, where God is no respecter of persons but perfect Love, for Jesus loves each & everyone of us intimately so- Psalm 139. "The Night is Long Passed for Joy Cometh in the Morning". Hallelujah!

By Victor Lutes



**2022**  
**Trunk or Treat**  
**Fun for Everyone!**







From Doug Sweeder—Finance Chair

### **October 17, 2022 Leadership Finance Report**

1. Finance withdrew \$7,000 in October from the Endowment to cover expenses thru November. We are now at \$78,500, which is the minimum to be retained in the Endowment Fund unless the rules are changed.
2. Finance converted the Endowment Fund, \$78,500 and the Goebel Fund, \$21,000 to cash. Money that might be needed in 1 – 3 years should be in liquid assets, such as a money market.
3. Leadership needs to discuss next steps for both funds. This includes changing the rules. Finance sent the proposed rule changes to Leadership. Are there any comments or questions. Other funding options are the memorials, around \$17,000, and borrowing from our UMU on-going loan.
4. Lawyer Bill: The October bill of \$3,600 was sent to the UMU for payment increasing our loan. The lawyer said any money awarded to St. Paul can be spent anyway we want, i.e. repay the UMU loan and then decide about the rest.
5. The Guardians of Harmony will perform a Christmas concert at St. Paul on Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm. The Advertising Committee will need to incorporate this in our Christmas Outreach promotion.
6. St. Paul utility bills for the church our increasing significantly, especially Bloomfield Twp water and sewer.
7. I need a volunteer to help fill out the Clergy Compensation form and the proposal for splitting the dual-charge costs equally for 2023.





- 11/01 Ric White
- 11/03 Doug Sweeder
- 11/04 Laura Ferguson
- 11/11 Dick Casper
- 11/19 Gary Lowell
- 11/19 Annabella Murphy

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



**November**

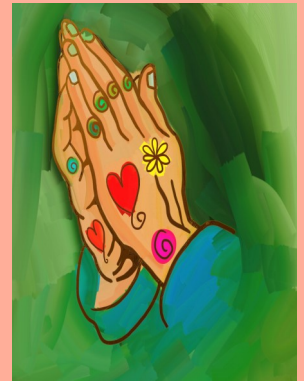
- 11/09 Issic & Kecia Brown
- 11/26 Bill & Jan Doxtader
- 11/26 Andrew & Cassandra Kumar



**Prayer Requests**

**Also, please keep in prayer:**

- Rev. Michelle Gentile
- Ruth Isca
- Dorothy Kelchner
- Helen Vaillencourt
- Chris Drouillard
- Hilda Soodoo's Family
- Bill and Linda Lee
- Ukraine
- Sue Sweeder's Family
- Praise that test results have continued to be positive for Linda L., Niece in Florida



Praise that a friend's husband is doing bet

*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.*

# Now Hear This



## ***Thursday Virtual Coffee Hour on “Goto Meeting”***



A time of fellowship on the first & third Thursdays, of the month; November 3rd & 17th 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.

## ***Lighthouse Food Collection***

November 1st-14th

## ***Election Day***

Tuesday, November 8th, 7am—8 pm

## ***Finance Meeting***

The next ZOOM meeting of the Finance Team is Monday, November 7, 2022 at 7:00 pm. Watch your email for the link, log on and join in. Everyone is welcome to join in.

## ***Memorials***

### **Hilda Soodoo**

Friday, November 11, Viewing 10 am, Funeral 11am, Repast Immediately Following Service.

### **Sue Sweeder**

Friday, November 11, Memorial Visitation 5p-8p

Saturday, November 12, Noon Memorial Service, Reception Immediately Following Service.

## ***Church Charge Conference—Church Parish***


Will be November 15th 7 pm ZOOM

## ***Leadership Meeting***

The next ZOOM meeting of the Leadership Team is Tuesday, November 22nd, 2022 at 7:00 pm. Watch your email for the link, log on and join in.

# 2022



<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
		<b>1</b> Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>2</b> Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>3</b> Lighthouse Food Collection  <i>10am — Virtual Coffee Hour</i>	<b>4</b> Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>5</b> Lighthouse Food Collection  <i>Men's Group Outing @ Top Golf</i>
<b>6</b> 9:45am — <i>Worship Service with coffee hour after worship</i>  Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>7</b> Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>8</b> Lighthouse Food Collection Election Day FH	<b>9</b> Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>10</b> Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>11</b> Lighthouse Food Collection <i>Visitation &amp; Funeral for Hilda Soodoo Parlor 9a-1p Repass 1-5 pm FH Visitation of Sue Sweeder Parlor 5-8 pm</i>	<b>12</b> Lighthouse Food Collection <i>Funeral Service for Sue Sweeder Memorial Service Noon &amp; Reception afterwards FH</i>
<b>13</b> 9:45am — <i>Worship Service with coffee hour after worship</i>  Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>14</b> Lighthouse Food Collection	<b>15</b> Church Charge Conference Staff Parish 7 pm Zoom	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <i>10am — Virtual Coffee Hour</i>  	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 9:45am — <i>Worship Service with coffee hour after worship</i>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Leadership Meeting 7 pm Zoom	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>  	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 9:45am — <i>Worship Service with coffee hour after worship</i>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>			