

TIDINGS

St. Paul United Church of Christ
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www.stpaulucctaylor.org
Senior Pastor - Rev. Dr. Geoffrey G. Drutchas
Minister of Christian Education - Pastor Cheryl Schalm

December 2022

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday December 1 - Blue Christmas Service - 7 p.m.

Sunday December 4 - Church Service and Sunday School - 10 a.m.
"Advent by Candlelight" - 6:45 - 8:45 p.m.

Sunday December 11 - Church Service and Sunday School - 10 a.m.

Sunday December 18 - Christmas Pageant - Sanctuary - 10 a.m.
Cookie Walk & Light luncheon - 11 a.m.

Saturday December 24 - Christmas Eve Services - 7 p.m. & 11 p.m.

Sunday December 25 - Sunday Service - 10 a.m.

January 2023

Sunday January 1 - Church Service and Sunday School - 10 a.m.

Sunday January 8 - Church Service and Sunday School - 10 a.m.
Removal of Christmas Decorations

Sunday January 15 - Church Service and Sunday School - 10 a.m.
2023 Annual Congregational Meeting - 11 a.m.

PASTOR'S PEACE

The first Sunday of Advent, a New Year for us as Christians, began pretty dramatically and memorably. I fainted in the pulpit, not long after the service started. This has happened before for me--more than a decade ago on Christmas Eve. Fortunately, this time, not unlike last, I had a soft landing in more ways than one. While briefly flat on the ground as if I was taking a short nap in the chancel, I was able to get up without difficulty—albeit surrounded by those eager to help, including our resident sound tech and skilled EMS worker Eric Poet and our emergency response team. I had my first ride ever in an ambulance, ending up at Beaumont Hospital-Taylor, where I have visited so many church members over the years. However, in this case I was the emergency room patient.

As it turned out, everything checked out fine as I underwent a battery of tests from chest X-Ray, a lung CAT scan, and a MRI brain scan. There were multiple blood tests too over the next dozen hours before my discharge close to midnight. As I previously informed the congregation by email, there was no evidence of any heart or brain problems, nor infection. The consulting doctor advised me that in one third of instances where folks faint, there is no discernible cause. Obviously, if it happens again, I will have to probe further as to any lingering cause. Meanwhile, I'm doing the best I can to simply pace myself for these weeks ahead—important weeks as we celebrate anew the birth of Jesus Christ.

In the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons we often speak about the “gifts of the season,” remembering the Wise Men who arrived at Jesus’ crib with treasures. I treasure the gifts that I see right in our congregation--our gifted Pastor Cheryl Schalm who stepped right up to the pulpit on the first Advent Sunday and carried with the service as EMS took me away; our lay leaders who quickly rallied to help me and then support Pastor Schalm in her worship leadership; and our congregation who raised me up in prayers and showed their caring heart, so typical of who we are as God’s people gathered at St. Paul United Church of Christ. It was equally reflected in the full house of worshippers just the week before as members and friends came together to acknowledge and celebrate all that we have shared over more than three decades of “Ministry Together.” I deeply appreciate the love and concern in Christ so apparent in these two very different Sundays.

All this concern, affection, and goodwill, I will deeply miss as I retire from my pastoral leadership of our church. This makes the Advent season all the more poignant for me. But as we proceed with our Advent observances and prepare for Christmas to come every day is more precious for the fact. I am looking forward to this full Advent and Christmas season shared as our church life recovers from the past two years when, due to community health concerns, it was so much more challenging to be together. May God bless us all with good health, good cheer, and an ever-deepening faith in these seasons of the Christ Child.

~ ***Shalom, Pastor Geoffrey Drutchas***

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EDITORIAL

Advent has begun. The Christmas rush is in full swing. Another year is quickly coming to a close. As we rush and race through the last month and weeks of "2022" leading to Christmas and the New Year, let us remember that Christmas is about Christ. As author Max Lucado reminds, Christ's name occupies six of the nine letters. This isn't Santa-mas, shopping-mas, or reindeer-mas. This is Christmas time. And Christ-mas isn't Christ-mas unless, or until we receive the message and accept the blessing of Bethlehem.

In all the hurry and scurry that this season brings let us afford ourselves the time to receive the promise of the season. God loves us. God came to save us. God is always with us.

May you experience the true blessing of the season this Christmas.

~In Christ, Pastor Cheryl Schalm, Minister of Christian Education

Christian Education Activities

Christian Education Seeks a Nursery Attendant

As we move forward with the hope and anticipation of reopening the nursery, Christian Education finds themselves in search of a nursery attendant.

Anyone interested in caring for our youngest treasures on Sunday morning during the worship hour should contact Pastor Schalm. The attendant receives \$20.00 per service and is paid once a month. The nursery is located in the church's family room located at the back of the sanctuary. The worship service can be viewed via the television located in the family room.

Christmas Outreach

Thank you to everyone who so generously filled an **Operation Christmas Child** shoe box with gifts for a child in need. All shoe boxes were delivered to the collection center on November 20th. From there they were shipped to Boone, NC for inspection prior to being sent via train, ship, plane and truck to children throughout the world. Each child given a box also received the message of Jesus Christ.

All **Angel Tree** gifts will be delivered to the Salvation Army on December 5th. All gifts will be used for the holiday store that is set up for families in need. A registered parent comes to the store at their scheduled time to select a gift and stocking stuffers for their child/ren. In addition to the gifts each family is given a food box. Thank you to everyone who so generously purchased a gift in support of this outreach.

All **hats, gloves and winter wear** will be delivered to the Salvation Army on December 5th to be used in their Holiday store for families in need. Thank you to everyone who so generously supported this outreach.

Rock Hard in Faith Youth Fellowship The Youth Fellowship Day of Service & Christmas Gathering is scheduled for December 3rd.

The youth will be serving at Cass Social Services the morning of December 3rd, prior to returning to the church to prepare dinner for the guests of ChristNet. Afterwards the group will head out for a Christmas celebration dinner. Youth must sign the sheet on the youth board to confirm their participation.

Youth Sponsored Cookie Walk

After a two year cancellation due to the pandemic, the youth will once again be holding their annual Christmas Cookie Walk. The cookie walk will take place following the Sunday School Christmas Pageant being held on Sunday, December 18th as part of the morning worship service. Cookie donations are being sought. Please plan now to bake and donate!

Dinner and Dialogue

Every Wednesday the youth group will meet at the church at 6:00 p.m. for dinner and dialogue prior to the start of Confirmation class. All interested in participating should sign the sheet on the youth board by the Sunday prior.

Calling all College Students and Recent High School Graduates

Christian Education is in need of addresses of all St. Paul UCC college students and High School graduates enrolled in continuing education programs (trade school, skill programs, apprenticeships, etc.). Please forward addresses to Pastor Schalm or to the church office.

ALL CHURCH EVENTS

'Blue Christmas' Service Remembers Loved Ones

Church members and friends who have lost loved ones over the past year or more and are experiencing Christmas the first or second time without a loved one are invited to attend a special "Blue Christmas" program and worship service on Thursday, December 1, 7 p.m. We will initially gather in the church parlor and then join for a time of very special worship in the chancel of the St. Paul sanctuary.

Participants are encouraged to bring a photo of their loved one with them that night to place on the altar. The "Blue Christmas" Service will be led by Pastor Geoff Drutchas. For more information, contact the church office (313-291-1221)

Second Advent Sunday Observed with Communion and Confirmation

As our congregation gathers for the Second Advent Sunday December 4th, lighting the second candle of the season symbolizing the peace which Jesus brings to our lives, our St. Paul worship hour will be doubly special. Besides sharing in the sacrament of communion, our attending members and friends will confirm in faith three young people who have been enrolled in confirmation class throughout this past year and this fall. Evelyn Hard, Adia Pettigrew, and Tovah Pettigrew will all come forward to confirm their baptism and be welcomed into the adult life of faith.

By tradition, the confirmation ceremony has always coincided at St. Paul Church on Palm Sunday. However, with Pastor Drutchas' impending departure and an accelerated fall schedule and catechismal program, each is ready for confirmation.

Since communion will be shared at the end of the service, it will be an occasion of first communion for the confirmands as well.

This Second Advent communion will again make use of communion kits distributed to arriving worshipers by the elders. At St. Paul Church we observe an open communion, inviting all men and women of adult, confirmed faith to share in both bread and cup. Church membership is not required. However, all are asked to make a renewed commitment through this sacred meal to walk more closely with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

'St. Paul Day' Dawns Soon at Santa's Magic Forest

Santa's Magic Forest, the Downriver's "finest holiday display," has opened its doors at the Activity Building in Taylor's Heritage Park for the four weekends of the Advent season. Organized entirely by community volunteers, the Magic Forest features nearly two dozen heart-warming North Pole and Christmas scenes populated by animatronic figures. A number of the scenes were first installed at the Hudson's Department Stores. There is an opportunity for children to have their pictures taken with Santa and Mrs. Claus, as well as the Grinch.

St. Paul Church members are invited to help welcome visitors to Santa's Magic Forest on Saturday, December 10, 12 noon to 8 p.m. Volunteers are being scheduled for two hour slots, serving as guides and docents, or handling vestibule admissions.

All proceeds from modestly-priced tickets (\$3 each) sold at the door on weekends supports Michigan's largest client choice food pantry, located on Northline Road, just a mile from our church. It is a major pantry fundraiser, purchasing more than a month of food to stock the pantry shelves. Through its store-like setting, the pantry provides groceries at no cost to families in needs across seven Downriver communities.

After St. Paul Day, Santa's Magic Forest will continue through Sunday, December 18, open on Friday evenings, 5-8 p.m., Saturdays, 1-8 p.m., and Sundays, 1-7 p.m. To volunteer for St. Paul Day or for more information, speak with Pastor Geoff Drutchas or call the church office.

'Share the Light' Festival of Lessons & Carols Upcoming

An annual Festival of Lessons and Carols will be offered in worship on Advent's third Sunday, December 11. Entitled "Share the Light," the festival will include scripture, carols, and meditations on both the prophecies which foretold the coming of Christ and the circumstances of his birth. Some of the most beautiful carols written for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany will be sung as the sacred story of Jesus' birth is celebrated in word and song.

Pastor Geoff Drutchas will lead the morning worship with the participation of lay readers. If you would like to lector for the service, please speak with Pastor Geoff.

Making Room For the Christ Child and a Home for the Savior

The Sunday School Christmas Pageant, ***Making Room for the Christ Child and a Home for the Savior***, will be held on Sunday, December 18th. This year's pageant will be intergenerational, incorporating the voices of choir members and older youth. The pageant will be part of the morning's worship service being held in the sanctuary. The youth sponsored cookie walk will be held and a light

Christmas luncheon will be served following the service. A special visit from Ole' St. Nick is also expected.

Christmas Eve Services Return to Traditional Schedule

In a beautifully decorated sanctuary that especially shines at night, Christmas Eve services at St. Paul United Church of Christ will be offered at their traditional times again—both 7 and 11 p.m. In keeping with our Christmas Eve worship custom, partially disrupted for two years because of Covid concerns, the night will include joyous carols, a children's story time (7 p.m.), a retelling of the Christ's birth, a chancel step communion for those who prefer it, as well as the final singing of 'Silent Night' and the Lord's Prayer in candlelight.

White candles will be offered to worshipers as they arrive for each service that night. Also, those who prefer to use communion 'kits' for the sacrament in their own pew instead of stepping to the chancel steps to receive bread and cup will be greeted by elders who can provide them. Christmas Eve worshippers following the Facebook live-streamed service may, alternatively, use elements from their home kitchen which will be consecrated with prayer along with all other elements shared that holy night.

Church members are encouraged to invite their families and friends to join with us with our sacred observance of Christ's birth and the start of the twelve-day Christmas season.

'Shepherd's Morn' Christmas Morning Service Set

It happens only every seven years. But this is the year when Christmas Day arrives on Sunday. Our congregation will be gathering at its usual 10 a.m. hour for worship, continuing our celebration of Christ's birth. In his last sermon before departing from St. Paul United Church of Christ, Pastor Geoff Drutchas will preach on the message which the shepherds brought to Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem's manger side where the infant Jesus lay. Communion will be offered, which may be especially important for those not able to attend the previous Christmas Eve services in the dark.

Following the service, there will be refreshments in Fellowship Hall. Church members and friends are invited to bring Christmas cookies to share. The cookies should be dropped off in the church kitchen prior to the service so that they can be readied for the Fellowship Hour in advance.

Annual Congregational Meeting Scheduled

The annual meeting of the St. Paul congregation will be held on Sunday, January 15, 2023. In addition to reviewing reports on our ministry and programs over the past year, the congregation will be voting on a new budget and a slate of nominees for Council leadership. The proposed 2023 budget will be sent to all church members in mid-December accompanied by a letter from the President-elect Aaron Johnson.

The annual meeting will follow our 10 a.m. worship service that morning. Church members should sign in at the narthex and pick up a copy of their annual report.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deck the Halls with Boughs of 'Poinsettias'?

In keeping with custom, our chancel 'Angel Trees' and chancel area will be banked with fresh poinsettias honoring and commemorating loved ones and friends or for a special event in someone's life. You can purchase a poinsettia to be included in the Christmas Eve floral array. The names of those whom you wish to honor or remember will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin and posted online throughout the Twelve Days of Christmas. Your poinsettia can be retrieved from the chancel area after the 7 or 11 p.m. service you attend. If you need assistance please be sure to ask a deacon, council rep or usher and they will gladly help.

To reserve a poinsettia, simply use one of the white envelopes in the pews, include your \$10 contribution per plant, mark the envelope "Poinsettias," and indicate whom you would like to commemorate. The envelope can be dropped in the narthex tithe box, handed to an usher, or returned to the church office. All poinsettia requests need to be received by Friday, December 9th.

Candidates Sought for Church Council

Nominations are invited for several St. Paul Church Council positions as our congregation looks to its annual meeting and election on the third Sunday of the new year, January 15, 2023. Council positions open for nomination include second vice president, secretary, elder, trustee and deacon. All open positions are for three-year terms.

The nominee elected for second vice president thereafter serves as first vice president during the second year and as Council president during a third and final year of office. All Council members attend monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month, as well as assume other duties on Sunday mornings and other occasions. Throughout the year there are also special assignments that arise. Any church member interested in being nominated should contact the church office or speak with Church trustees Michael Isaacs, Fred Miller and Toni Hill.

The "Christmas Fund Offering" for Retired UCC Clergy and Lay Persons will be received any Sunday in December.

For over 100 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, one of our Special Mission Offerings of the UCC Church, has been a way to ensure that a light of love and hope will always shine for the faithful servants of our church denomination who find themselves facing unforeseen financial need.

One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that your offering provides direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees via "Thank You" gift checks. With your continued generosity, these faithful servants will receive the support of the church in their time of need.

Think of the ways your life has been touched by a former clergy, and how important those experiences were for you. Your contributions do make a difference in the lives of many!

You will find a "Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross" envelope included in this Tidings.

You may also use **Vanco, our electronic online giving source** for your UCC Christmas Fund donation. It is easy to set-up a donation. Visit us online at www.stpaulucctaylor.org/giving, click on the blue Online Giving button, scroll down to the bottom of the "Donations" listing, and select UCC - Christmas Fund Veterans of the Cross and enter the amount of your donation.

On behalf of the Stewardship of St. Paul, God Bless you, Merry Christmas, and Thank you.

St. Paul Church Hosts ChristNet Suppers

St. Paul United Church of Christ is hosting a week of suppers for ChristNet Homeless Shelter guests, November 27 through December 3. Among St. Paul groups hosting the nightly suppers for 25 shelter guests are the Girl Scouts, the Women's Fellowship, and the Youth Fellowship. Small groups of individual volunteers are hosting the other nights.

The mostly hot meals are being delivered to a local spot where homeless guests are being hoteled until a permanent shelter opens in March 2023. Other Downriver churches have also scheduled host weeks for December, January, and February.

St. Paul United Church of Christ was instrumental in founding the ChristNet shelter more than three decades ago. Partnered with the Wayne Metro Community Action Agency which has funded the hoteling of guests since the start of the Covid pandemic, ChristNet has a new day-time home on Eureka Road in Taylor where it is able to provide a refuge from the streets, as well as case-working assistance as homeless men and women seek to recover lost identifications and secure the necessary services and training to restabilize their lives.

HEALTH MINISTRIES

Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas and a healthy New Year. Anyone interested in giving input and volunteering to serve on a Health Ministries Program are needed. I will continue temporarily to serve as a coordinator of Health Ministries until decisions are made regarding a new pastor and priorities. Thanks for your support through the past and future. Please contact Kathy Williams if you will help on this committee.

Free Covid Testing Available

Wayne County Commissioner Raymond Basham provided us with some at-home Covid-19 tests on a recent visit to the church November 20th. Contact the office if you need some. The Hotline to call for free in person testing is 888-535-6136 or visit michigan.gov/coronavirus.

Save the Date to Help Save a Life - Blood Drive Thursday, February 16

Mark your calendars now for our next blood drive. Donors are needed. More information will be shared at a later time as to when and how you can begin to sign up to donate. If you are unable to donate, perhaps you can find someone that you know to donate. Hours will be from 1 to 6:45 p.m. Thanks for your consideration.

Exercise Class Wednesday's

Exercise classes are still being offered Wednesday's from 10:30 -11:30 a.m. A variety of exercises are all part of each session and can be done in a seated position with the use of a chair or standing position or a combination of both. A small donation of \$3 to \$5 is suggested. Can't make it to class, but want to join us from home? Join us on ZOOM. You must be able to access the internet by computer, I-pad, or phone with video availability. You do not have to have to show on camera during class, but you will need to be able to see the instructor. You can also find the zoom link on our St Paul website under 'What's Happening' Health Activities. If you would like to participate or have any questions, contact Parish Nurse Kathy Williams. **NO CLASS DECEMBER 28TH.**

Our Daily Bread Devotional Availability

The first quarter 2023 Daily Bread edition is now available by contacting Kathy Williams or calling the church office to have one mailed to you, or by asking the Deacons on Sunday for a copy. We have regular and large prints available. Please specify the print type that you want.

In need of medical equipment? Contact Parish Nurse Kathy Williams or the church office and let them know what you are needing.

JOYS AND CONCERN

Adam Sutyak wed Melissa Woloszyk, October 29, 2022. Pastor Cheryl Schalm officiated. **Daniel Newton wed Jamie Pattison**, November 11, 2022. Pastor Geoffrey Drutchas officiated.

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards, and phone calls during my recent procedure and recovery. With Love, Dorothy Evison.

MEMORIALS

MEMORIAL FUND:

In Memory of: *Daisy Stedman* From: Gary & Pat Staffeld
In Memory of: *Beverly Kulhanek* From: Ryan, April, Jacob & Drew Kulhanek
In Memory of: *Janet Beacon* From: Kathe' Stears

MUSIC GROWTH FUND:

In Memory of: *Glen Sigman* From: Anna Anderson

KITCHEN FUND:

In Memory of: *Arlene Felske* From: Dan & Dorothy Evison

ORGAN FUND:

In Memory of: *Glen Sigman* From: Tracy & Sue Spears, Kathe' Stears

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT FUND:

In Memory of: *Glen Sigman* From: Deborah & Dan Case
In Memory of: *Daisy Stedman* From: Dan & Dorothy Evison

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP FUND:

In Memory of: *Lynn Blouch* From: Larry & Loretta Kurtzel

WE ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS FOR

Church Members and Friends: Dan Case, Debbie Case, Margo Charette, Miles Church, John Dubke, Hayden Forsyth, Barb Gish, Kyle Hard, Carrie Hill, Wayne Jones, Judy Kirsch, Rev. Norm Kirsch, Sheila Klimek, Larry Kurtzel, Gloria Lakatos, Rosemarie Laslo, Neil McEachern, Jeff MacZink, Michelle Mellin, Jeff Natzke, Bob Robinson, Shirley Robinson, Eleanor Rossi, Jerry Rossi, Sally Sigman, Beverly Sitz, Sue Spears, Nancy Rabb, Gabriel Sidak, Sandi Rose, Joan Smarr, Dianne Sturgeon, Linda Tank, Bert Thompson, Shelly Wilson, and Lorelee Wilson.

Extended Family: Susan Barnard, Cliff Barnard, Rhonda Wioncek Berndt, Karen Collett, Philip and Connie Linne Alberts, Dawn Sturgeon Anderson, Mary Board (daughter, Clifford Board), Josh Edelbrock, Arthur Jensen (son, Phil Jensen), Talama Braba (Judy Albright's daughter), Kim Cichowicz, Courtney Daoust, Joseph Gawne (husband, Rebecca Romas), Gabriella Gomez (niece, Darlene Babin), Raymond Harmon, Kevin & Steven Johnson (grandsons, Patricia Olson) Richard Jones, Wayne Jones, Jeff Kasher, Tom Koths, Janet Kren, Joanne LeFleur (daughter, Helene & Neil McEachern), Jennifer & Tammy Lee (granddaughter & daughter, Barb Siemers), Courtney McEachern Matthews, Kim McEachern (daughters-in-law, Helene & Neil McEachern), Brenda Meridth, Debi Petri, Judy Robin (aunt, Lucinda Chavez), Jerry Rossi, Tammi Sherman, Kevin Siemers, Mary & Darrell Smith, Debbie Smitt, Debra Stavros, Brenda Stockwell, Nicholas Surre (great-grandson, Helene McEachern), Sharon Thompson, Bill Warner, Robin Weiner and Victoria Witcher (daughter, Cheryl Stewart).

Congregations' Parents: Ronald & Myrna Matthews (parents, Brenda Rossi), Robert Brainard (father, Ed Brainard), Jan Filpus (mother, Julia-Joy Miller), Carol Hoffman (mother, Tracy Hoffman), Vicki Simon (mother, Michael Isaacs), and Bruce and Pat Vernor (parents, Eileen Vernor Drutchas),

Church Members & Friends in Nursing or Rehab Care:

Loretta Kurtzel- The Bellaire Senior Living, 12621 Hale Street, Riverview, 48193;
Esther Perry - Bellbrook Assisted Living, 873 West Avon Rd., Unit 209 H, Rochester Hills, 48307; *Eleanor Rossi* - Lakeland Nursing Center, 500 Williams St., Angola, IN 46703, *Melissa Rossi* -17652 Colgate, Dearborn Heights, 48125.