



"In Touch" at Hazel Park First UMC

Newsletter for all those who worship at First United Methodist Church of Hazel Park



Organized in 1924 • Incorporated in 1925 • Sanctuary Completed 1953

315 E. Nine Mile Rd. • Hazel Park, Michigan 48030 • 248-546-5955 • www.hpfirst.org



Pastor's Pen

Pastor Brian Steele

Inside the Pastor's Head



Ready for a heavy question? 3...2...1... GO: Why do we exist as a church? That's a question we have started to ponder as we have gone through our district's R3 Process (Reflect, Reimagine, Reengage). In order for us to get there, we have defined our Core Values. Our Core Values are: hospitality, inclusion and acceptance, spiritually (and physically) hungry and allowing everyone to serve and serve everyone. Those Core Values are the truths that we hold most important and what guide us in our shared purpose together. In other words, our core values help us to define our purpose and answer that heavy question, "Why do we exist?" At our next Church Council (June 20th) we are going to take a step toward answering that by adopting the following purpose statement: To embrace all people with love so that the individual and community can grow together and thrive into the fullness of Christ.

This is a statement that our R3 team has developed out of our Core Values. Because we value virtues like hospitality, inclusion, and serving everyone, we feel called to embrace all people with love. Then, because we embrace people with love, out of that we desire to see people individually and even our community grow together and thrive into the fullness of Christ. Personally, I think this statement reflects the church I have seen for the last two years. We are on a good path. We are by no means a finished project, but we are on the path. It would be my hope that this statement can be a continual reminder to us about why we exist, and help us decide what type of ministry we go forward with and what maybe we need to leave behind.

I encourage and hope you will prayerfully consider this statement until we gather on June 20th. If you have any questions or thoughts on it, please feel free to share! I love that we're a community that welcomes all voices. I'm grateful to be your pastor, and thank you for all that you continue to do.

A Look Back:

5/5 Revelation: Heaven on Earth: It's God's Reality: God doesn't throw away God's original vision for the world. While the saints who have already passed are currently in heaven, our final destination is a New Heaven and New Earth as God will renew this current earth and we will get to explore, play and find joy in caring for creation with Christ forever and ever.

5/12 Ascension Sunday: The Cosmic Christ: The disciples were ready to get this new Christian movement going...and Jesus leaves. Why? We need a God who is not limited by time and space. The Holy Spirit comes to provide us a God who is in all places at all times. Because Christ reigns at the right hand of God the Creator, that means Jesus's fingerprints are all over creation.

5/19 Pentecost: A Spirit that Builds Bridges: The Holy Spirit comes and speaks the languages of the people. The Spirit goes beyond normal cultural customs and even religious practices in order to reach new people. We are called to build bridges with the Holy Spirit for the sake of new people coming to know Jesus. In order to do that, we have to speak their languages.

5/26 Core Values: Hospitality: Hospitality is at the core of who we are as a church. Biblical hospitality goes beyond just friendliness and calls us to create a culture where strangers become friends who are honored guests. Church consultant Jim Ozier says guests are highly anticipated, eagerly awaited and extravagantly loved. This is at the core of who we have shown ourselves to be as a church and what God is calling us to go deeper into.

Top 3 Things I'm Working On

- 1) Going to vacation
- 2) Preparing worship series for the rest of the year.
- 3) Preparing to be a parent (Wowzer!)

What I'm reading and listening to:

- For Spiritual Development: A lot of books on Revelation. Like, a lot.
- Podcasts I try to listen to regularly: The Bible for Normal People, Evolving Faith, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership

Upcoming Events



Saturday, June 2nd ~ Women's group meets in the fellowship hall at 1pm
Saturday, June 2nd ~ Men's group meets at John R Grill at 10pm
Thursday, June 20th ~ Church Council Meeting @7pm

Things to Keep in Mind



In conjunction with the Hazel Park community-wide yard sale, we will hold a church yard sale on Friday June 7 and Saturday, June 8. As in past years, we will set up our big tent on the West lawn of the church. If you have items to donate for the yard sale, they will gladly be accepted. Please contact Ren Renforth or Amber Flint for more information.

Pastor Brian will be on Vacation from June 3rd to June 17th. You can contact Warren UMC and Rev. Melissa Claxton if you have any pastoral care needs. Their office number is (586) 264-4701



Brianne and Brian send their heartfelt thanks for the beautiful baby shower. They are so thankful for this loving church and their support in our new journey. Thank you so very much! We look forward to sharing photos of Baby Steele when we can!
Love, Brianne and Brian"

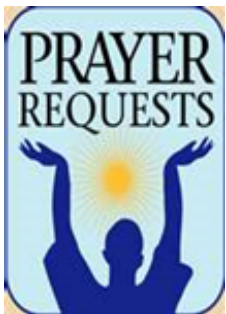
Health/Life Concerns: Adrien Lachapelle, Mo Mcfarlane, Zeiss Ray Oset, Rob Narducci and his friend For the kids/teachers/families at Macomb Montessori Academy. Bill Anderson, Rick Kachadorian, Pastors friend Kat as her grandmother undergoes heart surgery, Jackie M., Healthy pregnancy for Brianne,

Comfort for the friends and families of: The family of Lanny o'Neal, Prayers for the family of Ren in the passing of Joyce.

Serving in the Armed Forces: Emma Hardy, Sean Redd, Casey Allen, Brendan Schemers, Ronald Turner & Chris Collis

Gratitude's and Joys: The hospitality of our church, grandkids in church and grandparents.

Church Leaders: Pastor-Rev. Brian Steele, Al Holland-SPRC Chair, John Sarns-Ad Council Chair, Frank Cox-Lay Leader, Ashley Detoledo-Secretary, Lisa Johnson-Treasurer, Matt Sarns-Music Director, and Harriet Hardy-Organist.



Embodying a faith that matters for all people

Why does your faith matter to anyone else?

I've been trying to articulate why my faith matters to anyone else. And I've been coming up empty. Maybe it has to do with how I was forced to make my faith matter to someone else during my adolescence.

Have you been on “fishing trips”? Not the fishing for actual fish (you know, the fun kind) but where you had to go “fishing” for people with tracts and half-baked, Christian cliches (along with a dose of fear of eternal damnation)? You know, the trips where your youth pastor dropped you and your friends off at the mall with the instructions “go save souls today” and as a shy 13-year old, you had no idea (nor desire) to try to engage in conversations with people thrice your age. So you sat at the water fountain, people watching while feeling shame that you didn't love God enough and feeling guilty because you were going to have to lie to the youth pastor that you actually spoke to somebody.

Please tell me I'm not the only one.

A new kind of preaching

A few Christmases ago, some Christians went viral for going to the mall and “preaching” to all the families and young kids waiting in line to get a picture with Santa about how Santa isn't real; they should be in church instead worshipping Jesus. And it's like... let the kids have their magical moments, guys.

Or how some Christians go buck wild (in the worst ways) in commenting on my videos that talk about being inclusive on social media platforms. It's like, we go out of our way to make/force our faith to matter to someone else, but we don't stop there. We're not satisfied until their faith is aligned with our faith.

At our worst, religion operates out of fear.

When we operate out of fear, our “weapon” of choice is fear. We use fear to control people and then we have to keep perpetuating fear so that the people remain under our control.

Listen to the narrative of certain Christians. It's all fear-based. We “other” people to dehumanize them and then prop up the “othered” people as a reason to be afraid if we don't “repent.” Instead of grappling with the idea that perfect love drives out fear, we use fear to drive out love and replace it with blind obedience.

Why would that matter to anyone else?

While we sing “they will know we our Christians by our love” the truth of the matter is, we're known more for what we hate than who we love. “There's no hate like Christian love” is a very common sentiment amongst people who are not part of our churches.

It seems like this kind of faith matters little to others. But my faith does matters, to me.

A faith which matters

I've long left behind the idea of evangelizing for the sake of altar-call-conversions. Instead, I want to be a blessing to the people I encounter. What do I mean by blessing? I just want to help someone breathe a bit easier — even if it's for a second. When I encounter people, I want to leave that encounter with them feeling a bit more loved — even if it's a fleeting moment.

Richard Rohr wrote that “Secular freedom is having to do what you want to do. Religious freedom is wanting to do what you have to do.” I want to engage in acts of justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

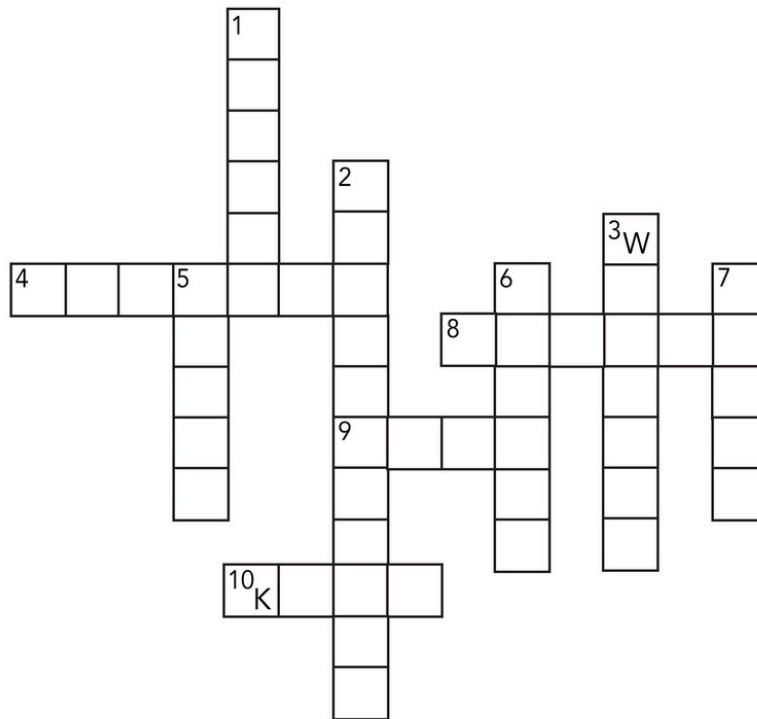
While I can't control people into believing in God (nor would I want to...), I want to live in such a way where people can't deny the good that my freedom in God is leading me —and my church — to do. In that sense, I guess my faith can matter to others as we work — together— in making our communities more whole and better for everyone and not just those who gain from the status quo. Faith matters when we embody that famous quote attributed to St. Francis: let's preach the gospel, using words when necessary. Let's live in such a way that while people might deny the existence of God, they cannot deny the works of love that Christians are engaged in.



THE WONDER OF STARS

The heavens display evidence of God's great power.
What else does the Bible say about the sky?

Directions: Use the clues and Bible references (all NIV) to complete the crossword.



DOWN

1. The sun, moon and stars do this to God. (Psalm 148:3)
2. God made these as numerous as the stars. (Genesis 26:4)
3. Don't do this to the stars and sky. (Deuteronomy 4:19)
5. What do the heavens declare? (Psalm 19:1)
6. The moon and the stars do this at night. (Psalm 136:9)
7. When we're pure, we do this like the stars. (Philippians 2:15)

ACROSS

4. The heavens are the work of these. (Psalm 8:3)
8. On what day did God create the stars? (Genesis 1:14-19)
9. God calls each star by this. (Isaiah 40:26)
10. A star announced the arrival of him. (Matthew 2:2)

Answers: DOWN: 1. praise, 2. descendants, 3. worship, 5. glory, 6. govern, 7. shine, ACROSS: 4. fingers, 8. fourth, 9. name, 10. king

Hazel Park First United Methodist Church
315 E. Nine Mile Rd.
Hazel Park, MI 48030

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Sunday Morning Service: 11:15 am
Church Office: 248-546-5955
E-mail: Hazelparkfirst@wowway.com
Website: www.hpfirst.org



June Birthdays

Larry Rivers - 9 Amber Flint - 14
LeeAnn Cox - 19 Brittany Anderson - 22
Sandra LaChapelle - 24



June 2024



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

June Birthdays

Larry Rivers - 9 Amber Flint - 14
LeeAnn Cox - 19 Brittany Anderson - 22
Sandra LaChapelle - 24



1

2

3

4

Men's group meets
at the John R Grill at
10pm

Women's group meets
in the fellowship hall
at 1pm

2

Worship Service
w/communion
@ 11:15

3

2

4

Praise Team 4:00

5

6

**YARD
SALE**

City Wide Yard Sale

8

**YARD
SALE**

City Wide Yard Sale

9

Worship Service
@ 11:15

10

11

Praise Team 4:00

12

13

Church Council
Meeting @ 7:00

14

15

16

**HAPPY
FATHER'S
DAY**

Worship Service
@ 11:15

17

18

Praise Team 4:00

19

20

21

22

23

Worship Service
@ 11:15

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

Worship Service
@ 11:15

Praise Team 4:00