



"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

Dear Friends,

A new year gives us opportunities to look forward. However, I believe it is always wise to look back before we look forward. We want to get our bearings before we head out on a new journey. When I reflected on what God did through our church in 2024, there was a lot to celebrate. We defined new core values (hospitality, inclusion, spiritually hungry, and allowing everyone to serve while serving everyone). We also adopted a new purpose statement: To embrace all people with love so that the individual and community can grow and thrive into the fullness of Christ. We persevered through several trials as we had unexpected distractions with my housing. Personally, I feel like God developed a spirit of resilience in me, and I think we have become more resilient as a church as well. Knowing what God has done in 2024 can bring clarity into what I believe God is calling us to live into in 2025. In worship on 12/29, I shared three "gifts from Jesus" for our church in 2025. They are becoming more outwardly inclusive, being graciously accountable with each other and being experimental in worship. Let's break these down a bit. Since inclusion is one of our core values, I think Jesus is calling us to live this out in a more public way. That potentially includes some signage around our building, clarity in our digital world (web site and social media), and by simply telling our neighbors and those in our community that this is a church for ALL.



Second, as inclusive as our community is, we also need to become a healthier community in addressing conflict and how we do life together. Our Methodist heritage held strong values of grace and accountability, and I think that's what Jesus is calling us to start doing. We are called to be gracious, forgiving, and merciful with each other. But we also tell the truth. We have to tell each other the truth that sometimes what we do is harmful to another and we need to go a new direction in our relationships. This is why Jesus calls us to be people of grace and truth. This work is something we're going to talk more about in lent. It isn't easy work, but that means it is worthwhile and I believe Jesus will be with us as we do that work. Third, I want us to embrace a spirit of creativity in worship. In other words, let's experiment with how we worship. I don't want us to change for the sake of change. I want us to change for the sake of mission; for the sake of living into our shared purpose. I want us to change for the sake of loving our neighbors and making sure our worship builds bridges to them rather than creating barriers. So, we're going to have six services for the first six months of the year where we make church a little more simple, a little more Gospel feely, and a little more free. We do all of this for the hope of connecting with our neighbors a little more. It's 2025 and God is with us as we lean into becoming the most effective church we can be for our community. As the late President Jimmy Carter once said, "We appreciate the past. We are grateful for the present and we're looking forward to the future with great anticipation and commitment." Let's trust God as we lean into becoming more outwardly inclusive, graciously accountable and experimental in worship. I'll be with you every step of the way.

In grace,
Brian

A Look Back:

12/1 Making Room Be a Neighbor: Perhaps Jesus's birth story is a story of hospitality. It's unlikely that Mary and Joseph were rejected by an innkeeper at what we would consider an inn. It's possible that instead they were taken in by neighbors and given the main living space since "there was no room in the guest room."

12/8 Making Room: Welcoming the Stranger: We hosted guests from Samaritas Social Services about their services they offer to refugees and how we will partner with them in February to welcome a refugee family to the Detroit Metro area. This is the call we have in Scripture to welcome the stranger. We are called to be in community with people who are different from us. We want to widen God's table instead of create barriers.

12/15 Making Room: Seeing the Light on the Margins: Mary's name means "their rebellion" and Mary calls us to rebel against the powers that be. We draw the circle wide as the manger welcomes all. The light of Christ extends to the margins of society, and the church is better and more holy because of it.

12/22 Making Room: Walking Each Other Home: The early Methodists would literally walk each other home from their group meetings so that nobody would be tempted to go into a bar and fall into addiction. That was an act of love, and it's those types of acts that we do for each other today. That is how we live into our purpose to grow and thrive together into the fullness of Christ. We love each other and God helps us grow.

12/29 Gifts for the New Year. What gifts does Jesus have for our church? The three main gifts I believe Jesus is calling us to are to be outwardly inclusive, graciously accountable and experimental in worship. To break it down, I believe Jesus is calling us to be more clear that we are an inclusive church outside our church walls. This includes how we communicate digitally, around our church

Top 3 Things I'm Working On:

- 1) Preparing for Lent
- 2) Working on Year-End Reports for the Conference (FYI, I do not enjoy this)
- 3) Looking for ways for us to live into our goals for the new year! (See 12/29 Gifts for the New Year)

What I'm reading and listening to:

- For Spiritual Development: The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander
- Podcasts I try to listen to regularly: The Bible for Normal People, Evolving Faith, Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership, The Emotionally Healthy Leader

Upcoming Events



Saturday, Jan. 11th ~ All Church Breakfast w/Taking Down the Greens
Thursday, Dec 16th ~ Church Council Meeting at 7pm

Things to Keep in Mind



YOUR birthday and anniversary is important to us! If you are unsure if your birthday or anniversary is on our list, please let us know! We want to celebrate YOU! Send an email to the office, or leave a note in the mailbox, so we can get you added!



We got a new email address. Please use the email address below when you need to send something to the church!

hpfirstumc@gmail.com

Church Directory for 2025

Updated Church directories will be coming out in January. If you want your name in it, or need to update your address/number or email, please let the church office know as soon as possible.



What Do **YOU** Want to See More of?

The church newsletter is for YOU! What do you want to see more of in the newsletter? Recap of events that the church did, bible quotes, devotionals, getting to know the members of the church, and/or activities. I need your help to make this what you need it to be! Send me an email with your ideas or what you would like to see

Greater Detroit District Refugee Resettlement Program

In February our church will be partner with Samaritas and Cass Community Social Services to enable a family of refugees to find a home and furnishings. We need to establish a RRP committee to plan and coordinate the activities necessary, We are asked to donate funds, donate furnishings, purchase household furnishings and supplies from a wish list on Amazon, assist with moving in, and make a welcome basket. More details will be available as soon as they are known.

Our family has been vetted and waiting many years for this opportunity,

We will receive a great deal of support from Cass and Samaritas in our efforts. We will be able to help a family in need who has been displaced for many years receive a home of their own and become citizens like us.

More to come. Think how you can participate. Most of all pray for this family and our cooperation.

Ron Anderson
Chairperson

Donation List:

We are going to have the privilege of helping a refugee family in February through our partnership with Samaritas Social Services. Your donations will help this family build a new and sustainable life. Please donate what you can as an act of neighborly love. Stay tuned for more updates about what we will be doing, who refugees are and aren't, and what the refugee process is like.

Material Goods:

- Baby items, as needed (baby food, clothing, diapers, car seats, and cribs)

Furniture:

- Mattress and box spring (only married couples or small children of same gender may be expected to share beds)
- Bed Frame

Toiletries (These items must be purchased brand new):

- Toilet paper (list number of rolls)
- Shampoo
- Soap
- One toothbrush per person
- Toothpaste

Kitchen Items:

- One place setting of tableware (fork, knife, spoon) per person
- One place setting of dishes (plate, bowl and cup) per person
- Pots and pans: at least one sauce pan, frying pan, and baking dish
- Mixing/serving bowls
- One set of kitchen utensils (such as a spatula, wooden spoon, knife, serving utensils, etc.)
- Can opener

Linens and Other Household Supplies:

- One bath towel per person
- One set of sheets for each bed
- Blanket(s) for each bed as seasonally appropriate
- One pillow and pillowcase for each person
- Alarm clock
- Paper, pens and/or pencils (one set per case)
- Personal hygiene items as appropriate (such as deodorant, feminine hygiene products, and razors)

Furniture:

- One set of drawers, shelves or other unit appropriate for storage of clothing per family.
- One couch or equivalent seating per family (in addition to kitchen chairs)
- One lamp per room, unless installed lighting is present and adequate, and light bulbs as needed
- Kitchen table (per case) and chair (per person)

Cleaning Supplies:

- Dish soap
- Bathroom/kitchen cleanser
- Laundry detergent
- Sponges or cleaning rags and/or paper towel
- Two waste baskets
- Trash bags (list number of boxes)
- Mop or broom

DID YOU *Know?*

Did you know that you can make a difference by collecting aluminum pop tabs?!

The Ronald McDonald House is a community of inclusive, compassionate, supportive programs and services that directly improve the health and well-being of children and their families. When we collect and donate them to

Why Collect Pop Tabs?

Because it is so easy! The tabs on aluminum cans are small, can easily be removed and are easy to store. You may wonder why we collect just the tabs. Whole aluminum cans are both difficult to store and deliver. Tabs are smaller, easier to store and are easier to handle in large volumes. Collecting pop tabs is a great way to teach others about philanthropy and the importance of recycling while raising money to help children and their families at the same time.

What Do We Do with Pop Tabs?

We take the tabs to a local recycling company and receive money for each pound of tabs collected. It takes approximately 1,200 tabs to equal one pound. Through this recycling program, we can raise funds to continue providing a “home away from home” for families.

How Can I Collect Tabs?

By encouraging your class, group, church, business or organization to collect pop tabs, you can help us help families going through the toughest time of their lives. Every little bit helps! Collect your tabs in any way you would like—in coffee cans, plastic bags, boxes, buckets, or any other container with a wide opening. Set up a competition between groups to see who can collect the most!

Where Do I Take the Pop Tabs?

There is a ‘Pop Tab House’ located in the library where you can put any collect tabs that you have and we will donate them!





Materials Needed:

- white paper
- scissors
- pencils

Celebrate kids' unique individuality with this fun craft. Have the children trace their handprints on whitepaper. Then have children cut out and fold their hands two or three times while cutting a few shapes from each fold. When the children unfold their handprints, they'll see a unique snowflake design. Discuss how different and how beautiful each child's snowflake turned out. Stress that God has made each of us unique, special, and beautiful.

If using regular watercolors is getting a little dry, here's a fun technique to liven things up: use salt to create a beautiful painting with unique crystal texture! While your kid creating beautiful artwork, sneak in a little science lesson that will introduce the concept of evaporation. When she's finished, you'll have some picture perfect art—just the thing to decorate bare walls.

Note: This project works best with Epsom salt, but table salt or rock salt can be used instead.

What You Need:

- Construction paper
- Crayons
- Paintbrushes
- 4 tablespoons Epsom salt
- ¼ cup (60 ml) hot water
- Small cups or bowls
- Spoons
- Covered table



What You Do:

1. Mix one-quarter cup hot water with four tablespoons of Epsom salt. Stir the mixture to dissolve.
2. Have your child draw freely with the crayons on the construction paper.
3. Let her brush the drawing with the salt mixture. Stir the salt water each time a brush is dipped into the container to keep the brush full of very salty water.
4. Ask your child why she thinks the salty water creates such an unusual effect when painted over his crayon picture.
5. Give the painting time to dry completely.
6. Explain to your kid that as the painting dries, the water will evaporate leaving the salt and producing a bumpy looking texture after the crayon and salt mingle.

Now brush the salt crystals off the paper, and hang it up!

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

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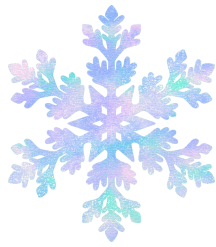


Sunday Morning Service: 11:15 am
Church Office: 248-546-5955
E-mail: Hazelparkfirst@wowway.com
Website: www.hpfirst.org



January Birthday's

- Amy Finnigan - 4
- Matt Sarns - 9
- Sue Anderson - 13



January 2025



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

January Birthday's

Amy Finnigan - 4
Matt Sarns - 9
Sue Anderson - 13



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11

Worship Service
w/communion
@ 11:15

Taking Down the
Greens @10

12

13

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18

Worship Service
@ 11:15

Church Council
Meeting @7pm

19

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25

Worship Service
@ 11:15

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31

Worship Service
@ 11:15