

the **EVANGEL**

St. Paul's Newsletter

December 2023



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Pastor's Message

Make Room

It's hard to believe that Advent and Christmas are upon us. As we turn our hearts to the beauty of this season, we're exploring anew the stories of extraordinary people in the Christmas story like Zechariah, Elizabeth, the shepherds, the magi, and even King Herod. Another character that comes to mind is that of the innkeeper. While he's in every children's Christmas pageant that I've ever seen, shouting "No room," and then offering a stable out back, he's never mentioned in Luke's gospel. Luke simply tells us that there was no room at the inn that night.



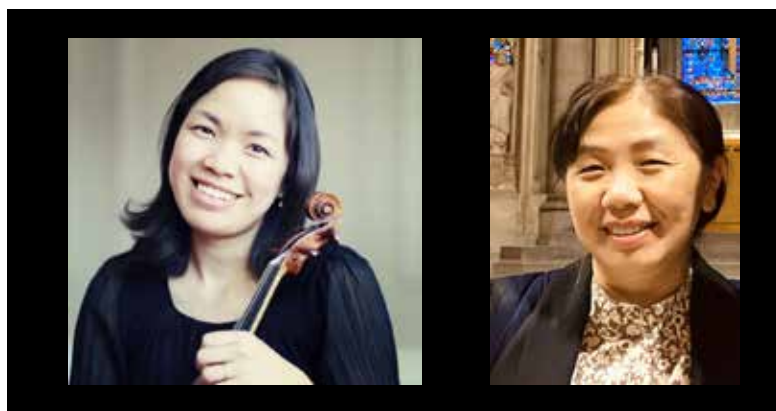
In this season, it's easy to get caught up in all of the work that needs to be done to prepare for everyone else that is joining us, including family, friends, and honored guests. Yet, the arrival of a baby in the manger at Bethlehem beckons each of us to pause and celebrate once again the wonder, the beauty, the awe, and the love that comes to us. We are invited to "make room" yet again for God's presence and love that burst into our lives even when the world seems filled with chaos.

While our schedules may be full, I invite you to pause and make room for the Christ who seeks to enter into our lives with hope, joy, peace, and love each day. Join us for decking halls, All Music Sunday, A Merry Little Christmas Party, a Christmas Open House at the parsonage, an Advent study, and so much more as we make room for the babe who captures our hearts with love. And don't miss out on Christmas Eve worship services as well! We can't wait to see you at St. Paul's where with the story and our lives, we continue to inspire people to live and love like Jesus.

Christmas Open House

Saturday, December 16; 3 - 6 p.m. 632 Romeo
Rev. Elbert & Dawn Dulworth invite you to the parsonage to celebrate the joy of the season with a warm fire, fellowship, carols and plenty of food.

Advent Blessings,
Elbert Dulworth
Senior Pastor



Orders due December 4

Poinsettia Sunday December 17

Help decorate the church and memorialize or honor loved ones by purchasing a poinsettia. After services on December 17, plants may be picked up or donated to be delivered to homebound members. Place your order online at stpaulsrochester.org or find forms in the kiosk in the Narthex or in the church office. You may also call 248-651-9361 to order. **Poinsettias are \$15 each.**

Christmas and Candlelight

Tuesday, December 5 at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary

St. Paul's United Women in Faith invite you, your friends, spouses and neighbors to an evening of music and fellowship.

It is UWF's holiday gift to you.

Begin the holiday season with a program featuring Eun Park Lee on violin with Dr. Seung Hee Cho on piano/organ. Dessert and coffee will be served in the Narthex following the program. Free will offering collected for RANH.



HARMONY IN THE HILLS



Advent Concert Series

Fridays, December 1, 8 & 15; Noon in the Sanctuary

Add something special to your Advent Fridays by attending these 30-minute concerts. Free Admission.

December 1 Bret Hoag, guitar & Townes Miller, flute

December 8 Dr. Glenn Burdett, organ

December 15 Jason Branham, organ

All Music Sunday

Sunday, December 17

9:30 & 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Celebrate Christmas with a Festival of Carols for Christmas featuring St. Paul's Music department including choirs, handbell choir, praise teams, and orchestra.

**No Open Door service
Sunday, December 17.**



Christmas Baskets

St. Paul's and our partners at Neighborhood House will help over 100 families in need giving them Hollywood Market gift certificates to make their Christmas a little brighter.

We need volunteers to make calls (contact Amy Reno at reno224@gmail.com) and distribute gift cards (contact John Kelly at jpkelly1909@gmail.com).

Gift card distribution will be:

December 14; 12 - 2 p.m.

December 15; 12 - 2 p.m. & 5 - 6 p.m.

December 16; 10 a.m. - noon.

You are invited to participate - no reservations required - just a friendly attitude and a warm smile.

To make a financial donation, please write "Christmas Baskets" on the envelope and on the memo line of your check made out to St. Paul's UMC or donate online at stpaulsrochester.org and click on **Give** tab.

A Merry Little Christmas Party with Live Nativity

Saturday, December 9; 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Parlor, Rickard Chapel & North Lawn

Everyone, young and old, is invited to join us as we celebrate the most wonderful time of the year. **NEW!** This year we will have a live nativity on the north lawn featuring real animals. Walk by and listen to the narrated Christmas story with shows every 15 minutes. In the Parlor, join us for crafts, and in Rickard Chapel visit with Santa and have cocoa and cookies.

Invite your friends and share some Christmas cheer.

If you wish to donate, new and gently used toys will be collected for Grace Centers of Hope.



Blue Christmas

Thursday, December 21

7 p.m. in Rickard Chapel

You're invited to a service designed for those for whom the holidays may be difficult. If you have experienced the loss of a loved one, a transition or life change due to illness, depression, separation or divorce, please know that your church cares about you and offers a time for reflection, prayer and scripture.

It is our prayer that you will find comfort and hope in knowing that you are not alone, your feelings are honored and that God knows your pain and loves you unconditionally. Rev. Judy May preaches.



Classes & Groups



Seeker's Study

**Mondays, November 27 - December 18
1 - 2:30 p.m. in the Parlor and on Zoom**

Please join us for *Heaven and Earth: Advent and the Incarnation*, Bishop Willimon's introduction to the God who brings heaven to earth and changes everything. In Advent, we celebrate and anticipate the earth-shaking, life-transforming

good news that God is coming to us. Watch out! Get ready! God is on the way! Books can be ordered from your favorite bookseller. Contact Rev. Judy May at 586-242-1555 with questions.

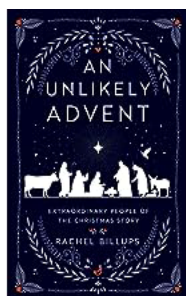


A Study of the Nativity Stories in Matthew & Luke

Christmas in the Bible

November 27 and December 4; 6:30 - 8 p.m. in Room 132

Only two books in the Bible mention the birth of Jesus. Rev. Rick Kress leads an interactive Bible study that will help us encounter those accounts, found in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2, two similar but also different versions of the story. Bring your Bible and be ready to consider Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds, wise men, and more as they are described in the biblical text.



Advent Study An Unlikely Advent

**Tuesdays, November 28 - December 19
6 p.m. in the Parlor**

Our Advent sermon series will be accompanied by a study in several of our small groups throughout the church. *An Unlikely Advent*, by Rachel Billups, explores the stories of some of the extraordinary people of the Christmas story. We'll reflect on people like Zechariah, Elizabeth, Herod, the magi,

and even the shepherds. Some of their stories might be a little bit more messy, but God still accomplishes great things through them or even in the face of the adversity that one of them brings. Join Pastor Elbert or one of our many others who are sharing this study in this holy season as we journey towards Christmas.

Cass Community Social Services

Rochester Holiday Breakfast

Sunday, December 3 at 11 a.m.

Royal Park Hotel, Rochester

Get tickets for the 17th Rochester Holiday Breakfast and hear about the good work of Cass from Executive Director Rev. Faith Fowler while supporting this important Detroit-based non-profit. For tickets (\$50 per adult; \$20 per child) contact Lola Rushin at 313-883-2277, ext. 225, or email lrushin@casscommunity.org for more information.



SPARK Christmas Luncheon

Thursday, December 7

12:30 p.m. at Rochester Mills

Join us for our annual Christmas luncheon. We will be meeting at Rochester Mills Beer Company for lunch and will remain for our meeting and selection of books for 2024. Please RSVP to Linda at lkb_jab@hotmail.com or 248-765-5511 for reservations.



J.O.Y. Just Older Youth

Tuesday, December 19

12 p.m. in Hickey Hall

Just Older Youth will be making music of the season! After a brown bag lunch and dessert, we will sing familiar tunes that will move us ever closer to the celebration of the birth in Bethlehem.

United Methodist Men's Breakfast

Saturday,
December 2
8 a.m. in the
Parlor

All men are invited to join us for a delicious breakfast, brotherhood and interesting program. No RSVP necessary. Contact Dave deSteiger at 248-376-0416.



United Women in Faith

We Believe Love in Action Can Change the World
December Circle Meetings

- **New Hope Circle** - Tuesday, December 5 at 7 p.m. for Christmas and Candlelight.
- **Faith Circle** - Wednesday, December 13 at 1 p.m. Luncheon at the Olive Garden.
- **Patience Circle** - Thursday, December 14 at 9 a.m. in the Parlor. Christmas Brunch and Ornament Exchange.



Executive Board Meetings: Thursday, December 14; 7 p.m. in Parlor. Spend Down Meeting



Beer & Hymns

Tuesday, December 12 at 7 p.m.
Gus O'Connor's Public House
324 S. Main Street, Rochester

Sing Christmas Carols along with the worship band. The Open Door will provide appetizers. Participants buy their own drinks.

Christmas Cookie Sale

Sunday, December 10; 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. in the Narthex

Purchase an excellent variety of homemade cookies and holiday treats pre-boxed to take home or give as gifts. All proceeds go entirely to local missions supported by our United Women in Faith.

Bakers needed!

Deliver cookies to the Parlor on Saturday, December 9 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in **DISPOSABLE CONTAINERS.**



Share your favorite cookies!



HUGS. Humor, Understanding, Growth and Support

For mothers and grandmothers of all ages

Wednesdays at 9:30 - 11 a.m. in Room 132

Dec 6 That's a Wrap We're having a wrapping party. Come if you love wrapping or if you need a spot to wrap those gifts outside of little eyes, or simply come for coffee and conversation. Bring paper and ribbons.

Dec 13 Christmas Brunch - 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Parlor Enjoy brunch and have a relaxing start to December. Stay tuned for a sign-up for our celebration.



See the calendar at stpaulsrochester.org for more detailed information. **Scan QR code to reserve childcare.** HUGS observes the Rochester Community Schools calendar. When schools are closed, HUGS will not meet.



HUGS Mission Moment

We are continuing to collect plastic jars of peanut & sun butter and jelly for the Rochester Area Neighborhood House Food Pantry. Bring them to HUGS or drop them off with Sue (4657 Fawn Hill Court, Rochester) or Steph (163 Sugar Pine Road, Rochester Hills).

Stay in Touch

Remember to Stay in Touch with our older members this Christmas by sending a card to those listed below. Include a little note letting them know that you are remembering them and praying for them. They get so much enjoyment from reading all of the notes and cards.



Nancy Allinger
790 Letica Dr. Apt. 405
Rochester, MI 48307

David Beerer (Donna)
1301 Hathaway Rising
Rochester Hills, MI 48306

Al & Nancy Boughner
151 Albertson St.
Rochester, MI 48307

Earl & Jean Bryant
1254 Churchill Cir.
Rochester, MI 48307

Thelma Childress
790 Letica Dr. Apt 335
Rochester, MI 48307

Betty Curtis
3345 Waterstone Blvd. #67
Lake Orion, MI 48359

Ronald & Kathleen Davis, Sr.
2310 Geyer Ct.
Lake Orion, MI 48360

George & Janet Dice
979 Wexford Way
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Jan Frank
1356 E. Auburn Rd.
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Isabel Ford
875 W. Avon Rd. 201C
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Carolyn Googasian
500 E. University Apt. 407
Rochester Hills, MI 48306

Dr. Tim & Betty Lou Hickey
15 Avenue De La Mer Apt 2505
Palm Coast, FL 32137-2290

Ruth Kelliher
1212 Kings Cove Ct.
Rochester Hills, MI 48306

Rev. Dwayne & Ruth Kelsey
3250 Walton Blvd. Apt. 254
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

Fredric & Barbara Kuretich
1447 Morley Ave.
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Rev. Johnny Liles (Lynda)
434 Taylor Ave.
Rochester, MI 48307

Mary Lynn McCrindle, Melody McCrindle
729 Wilcox St.
Rochester, MI 48307

Diane McElreath
2251 W. Auburn Rd.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

Evelyn Osofsky
19354 Acorn Ln.
Clinton Twp., MI 48038

Robert Peters
882 Cobblestone
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

Marilyn Pradko
6931 Central Park
Shelby Twp., MI 48317

Bill Ray
160 Stark Rd.
Rochester Hills, MI 48307

Gwen Shelly
1726 Bedford Square Dr. Apt. 12
Rochester Hills, MI 48306

Donald & Jane Shephard
102 Bobolink
Rochester Hills, MI 49309

Gayle Schuman
2251 Auburn Rd. Apt. 54
Rochester Hills, MI 48309

Wally & Lynn Semrau
3095 Blossom Ridge Blvd.
Oakland Twp., MI 48306

David & Isabelle Smith
3631 Lexington Dr.
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Donna Stenton
1442 Sunset Dr. Room 20
Lapeer, MI 48846

Lorraine Towers
790 Letica Dr. Apt. 310
Rochester, MI 48307

Ethyl Waltenbaugh
1206 Churchill Circle
Rochester, MI 48307



Mission Challenge 2024

Raise \$20,000 for Lighthouse Family Shelter in Pontiac

Mission Council is pleased to announce the 2024 Missions Project. Lighthouse Family Shelter will use our \$20,000 donation to convert bathrooms on the first floor to make them wheelchair accessible. Lighthouse Family Shelter houses 18 families, on average 60 people. The Family Shelter is intended to be a short term fix, with the goal being to set the families up with permanent housing. Upon their arrival the families are assigned a case worker who helps them during the transition. The program has a 95% success rate for families staying in the permanent housing for two years after assignment.

We look forward to contributing to this worthy cause.



Baby's First Christmas

Sunday, December 3

9:30 a.m. service in Hickey Hall

If your child or grandchild will be celebrating their first Christmas this season, we invite you to join us on Sunday, December 3 at the Open Door to be recognized. All new babies will be celebrated with a hand-crafted ornament. Please email Amy Heitman at Amy@stpaulsrochester.org.



All Together in Church

On **Sunday, December 24 and 31**, all children are invited to be in worship with their families. We are giving our dedicated and loving childcare staff and volunteers who serve each Sunday time off to celebrate with their families. We will have activities available from our ushers and ambassadors but feel free to bring busy bags from home if you would like. **Sunday school and childcare will resume on January 7.**

MS Youth Group

All 6th - 8th graders & their friends

Sundays; 5 - 7 p.m. Hickey Hall

- Dec 3 Noah's Arc Act of Kindness
Christmas Basket Cards
- Dec 10 Holiday Movie, PJ's & Cocoa



HS Youth Group All 9th - 12th graders & their friends

Sundays; 5 - 7 p.m. in the Lounge (meet in Hickey Hall)

- Dec 3 Noah's Arc Act of Kindness
Christmas Basket Cards
- Dec 10 Holiday Movie, PJ's & Cocoa

No Youth Group December 17, 24 & 31

Have a wonderful Christmas filled with love and laughter

Youth Group Resumes January 14 for our annual Blanket Palooza event.



Youth Group Alumni Dinner

Tuesday, December 19; 6:30 p.m.

Rochester Mills, 400 Water St. Rochester

All youth group alumni are invited to join us for a FREE dinner and catch up with old friends.

Please RSVP by December 12 to Jodi at Jodi@stpaulsrochester.org.

Third Thursday Dinner Out

Thursday, December 21; 6:30 p.m.

Pelicana Korean Fried Chicken

1410 Walton Blvd. Rochester Hills

All High School youth are welcome for a FREE dinner out. Bring friends and a big appetite.



Christmas Eve Family Service

Sunday, December 24

4 p.m. at the Family Service

Join us as we celebrate the good news of Christmas with a family-friendly service full of music, joy, glow candles, and a children's story.

Holy Family Participants Needed

Sunday, December 24; 7 & 10 p.m. services

We would LOVE to have your child or grandchild participate as Baby Jesus in one of our Christmas Eve services! The parents will dress as Mary and Joseph. Siblings are welcome to join in too, as shepherds and angels. This well-loved tradition requires no rehearsal, acting or line memorization. Please email Amy@stpaulsrochester.org.

Christmas Eve Services **Sunday, December 24**

Open Door Service

9:30 a.m. in Hickey Hall - Rev. Dr. April Gutierrez

Family Service

4 p.m. in Sanctuary - Rev. Dr. April Gutierrez

Celebrate the good news of Christmas with a service full of music, joy, glow candles, and a children's story.

Candlelight Services

7 & 10 p.m. in Sanctuary - Rev. Elbert Dulworth

Traditional service of carols, lessons and candlelight.

Services also live-streamed.

See more at stpaulsrochester.org.

Find us on YouTube @StPaulsUMCRochester and Facebook @St Paul's United Methodist Church - Rochester



Holy Communion

December 3 at 9:30 & 11 a.m. services

The sacrament of Holy Communion celebrates the presence of Christ and helps us find strength for Christian living. In the United Methodist Church, communion is open to all who intend to lead a Christian life.



Blood Pressure Clinic

Sunday, December 10

10:30 - 11 a.m. & 12 - 12:30 p.m. in the Narthex

Stop by to have your blood pressure checked.



Year End Giving

All Gifts for 2023 must be postmarked by December 31

All gifts for credit in the year 2023 must be dated 2023 and RECEIVED by the church by December 31 or POSTMARKED in the year 2023. Also, if you are prepaying a 2024 pledge, please make that notation on the check and envelope. **Thanks for your continued and faithful support.**

SUNDAY WORSHIP **Worship with us!**

The Open Door Service • **Traditional Service**
9:30 a.m. in Hickey Hall 11 a.m. in Sanctuary

- 3 Communion • Celebrating Second Sunday in Advent
Matt. 2:13-23 An Unlikely Advent: Playing the Villain Rev. May
- 10 Celebrating Third Sunday in Advent
Matt. 2:1-12 An Unlikely Advent: A Curious People Rev. Dr. Gutierrez
- 17 All Music Sunday • Celebrating Fourth Sunday in Advent
Luke 2:8-20 An Unlikely Advent: When God Shows Up Rev. Dulworth
- 24 Christmas Eve • Open Door at 9:30 a.m. (see services above)
Luke 2:1-20 Making Room at Christmas Rev. Dr. Gutierrez
- 31 New Years Eve • Traditional service at 11 a.m.
Psalm 96:1-2, 6, 11-13 Sing a New Song Rev. Kress

Looking Ahead... January

- 1st Happy New Year
Church Office Closed
- 2nd Church Office Closed
- 6th UMM Breakfast
Support for Caregivers Group
- 7th UWF Sunday
- 11th UWF Book Club
- 13th Leadership Training
- 14th Blanket Palooza
- 16th J.O.Y.
- 17th Early Bird Men's Group
- 18th SPARK Book Group
- 21st Harmony in the Hills Concert
Alvin Waddles Trio
- 22nd Blood Drive
- 23rd Taizé Service



SERMON SERIES **December**