



St. Paul United Church of Christ
31654 Mound Road
Warren MI 48092
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Sunday Worship Service—10 am
Office Hours: M-TH, 9am-1pm
Rev Korderro Brown, Pastor
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The Good News

December 2023



Fall Rummage Sale

**Friday, September 20, 2024
Saturday, September 21, 2024**

**We are NOT collecting rummage
at this time. You may start to
bring in items beginning March 1.**



**Christmas
Raffle**

Sunday, Dec 10 after Service

JOYCE

In Sunday School, it will be all about Christmas. We will be preparing for Advent, sharing our thoughts about the reason for the season, and discovering just what the spirit of Christmas means. Merry Christmas to you all!





ERICH

St. Paul held its monthly Consistory meeting on November 14. I would like to welcome Rev Korderro Brown! He is fitting in nicely and doing a great job. Hanging of the Greens is complete and looks fantastic, as usual. The boilers are up and running. Blinds and the inside of the windows of the Educational Building have been cleaned and look really good. Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday and Consistory has decided that we will only have one service at 10am that day. The year is coming to an end and we are looking for new members to join Consistory. We are always looking for fresh ideas. Please let a current Consistory member know if you are interested. Also, we want to restart the Worship Committee. So, if you are currently on this committee and would like to continue or would like to join it, please see one of the Consistory members. Our Rummage Sale will continue next year. More information will be coming in early 2024. The lobby project has been moving along. It is a big undertaking with finding companies that will paint and do the floor. They have the painter and flooring companies ready along with the type of flooring and paint. Hopefully, that will be starting soon. Please remember, if there is anything that needs attention (building, service, etc.), please let us know, so we can address it at our meeting.



- Remove green Plexiglas and repaint windows on the Ed. Building – COMPLETE!
- Repaint the gray metal railing outside – COMPLETE!
- Update more lighting in rooms – COMPLETE!
- Remodel the lobby with new furniture, flooring, etc. – In Progress
- Repaint and fix plaster in Sanctuary – AFTER MOUND ROAD PROJECT
- Fix and repaint the ceiling in the Fellowship Hall
- Look at the possibility of a covered vestibule that will block the wind when entering the educational building

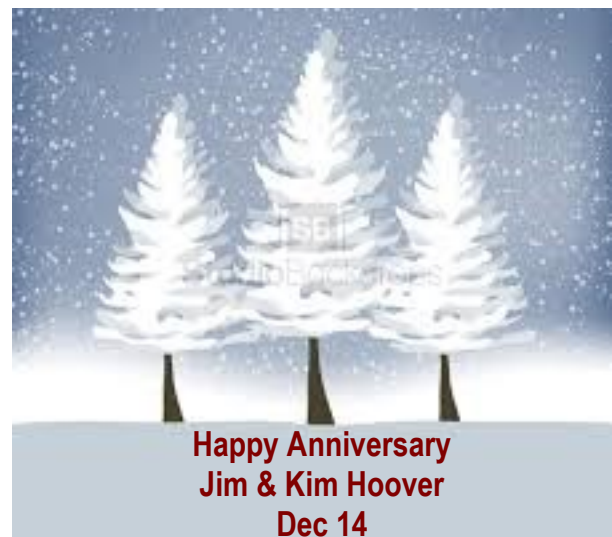
Hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I certainly did! We shared our blessings with 23/27 (I lost count) family and friends. They were sitting all over the place. It was noisy, confusing, lots of running up and down the stairs and OH so much food! But it was great. Whenever and whatever you share with those you love, it is a blessing. I am so thankful that I can share my thoughts and hopes with all of you this year. We have much to be thankful for here at St. Paul. All the improvements to our building, a successful rummage sale and most of all, we have been blessed with a new Pastor to lead us. It's a new year with many possibilities and opportunities. Let's make this a banner year; if you have a talent - SHARE IT; if you have an idea - SHARE IT; if you have extra time - SHARE IT. Most of all, share your friendship and your welcoming smiles with all you meet. It will make you all warm and fuzzy inside.



The Lobby Committee has finalized the choice of flooring and contractor for the lobby, and has chosen the contractor for the painting. We are still in the process of choosing the paint color. As a test, the blinds in the hallway were cleaned, with excellent results. We will now obtain a cost estimate from the same company for the lobby blinds. This company also cleans carpeting commercially, and we will explore having it clean the sanctuary carpet after the lobby has been refreshed, which we anticipate being completed in the first quarter of 2024. The painting and flooring should be done in January of next year, with the new furniture being installed soon thereafter.



- 3 Chuck Calabrese
- 11 Carla Grawburg
- 14 Doris Mijal
- 19 Joy Frazier
- 27 Jim Hoover
- 28 Sue Regier



Finally, it's Christmas! We all know the story, so what's the point of revisiting it? Or do we know it as well as we think we do? Are there any nuggets of wisdom we can wring from these stories yet? I say "stories" because there are two nativity stories, in Matthew and in Luke, and they cover different territory. Our Christmas story is actually an amalgamation of the two. So what insight can we gain from these two stories? Let's examine the one in Matthew.

Matthew's advent history starts with a genealogy. So what is so interesting about the dreaded list of "the father of?" On the face of it, they're pretty boring, but we can look more deeply. One interesting fact is that it's not unisex. In the sea of men, there are five women mentioned. One is Rahab. Rahab was a prostitute who hid the spies Joshua sent in to the city of Jericho when he led the children of Israel to the Holy Land. Rahab sheltered the spies from the city guard. God therefore granted her and her descendants life within the new land of Israel. More than that, she is an ancestor of Jesus. Rahab's story appears in Joshua 2.

Another woman mentioned is Tamar. She is actually mentioned before Rahab in the genealogy. Tamar's story is too convoluted to relate here; suffice it to say that she continued the ancestral line of Jesus by tricking her father-in-law into doing his duty under the law of Moses. It can be said of her that she symbolizes two things: the triumph of a woman who has no power and the fact that God's will overcomes all obstacles in fulfilling His prophecy that the Messiah will come. You can find the full story of Tamar in Genesis, chapter 38.

The next woman mentioned is Ruth, whose story is beloved by many. After the death of her husband, she leaves her native Moab with her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi, to come to Israel. There she meets, and eventually, marries, a kinsman of Naomi, Boaz. It is from this marriage that Jesus is descended. Why is this important? Ruth is from Moab, and the law of Moses decrees that descendants of Moab cannot enter the congregation of Israel for ten generations, yet three generations after Ruth, David becomes Israel's greatest king! A more powerful argument for inclusivity you cannot find. Ruth has her own book in the Bible.

Next to come in the genealogy is "the wife of Uriah," who scripture readers know as Bathsheba, David's lover and then wife. She was the mother of Solomon, and therefore an ancestor of Jesus. And what is Bathsheba? An admitted adulteress whose husband is killed by her lover. The path to salvation lies through Bathsheba, a sinner, but she does not sin by choice. Seen by David on the roof of her home, she is summoned by her king. She cannot refuse a lawful summons. Nor can she refuse his advances when she meets him. She does not choose to sin, and thus is included in Jesus's genealogy.

The final woman in Jesus's list of ancestors is Mary herself, his mother. Clearly, Mary is pivotal in his line of descent, as she is his only earthly parent; Joseph not being involved in his conception. It is only by Mary's marriage to Joseph that Jesus becomes part of the house of David. And Mary's conception of Jesus is pure. It is by the Holy Spirit.



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And so the genealogy of Jesus is laid out by Matthew and we ask why this is important. To Jews of Jesus's time and place, it was critical that the Messiah be a Jew, and this genealogy establishes that. In fact, it is fourteen generations from Abraham to David, and fourteen generations from David to Jesus. The number fourteen in and of itself might not have been significant to the Jews, but the number seven was. It was considered a "perfect" number (don't ask me why, I don't know) and fourteen is twice seven, or twice perfect. This helps to establish Jesus as the bona fide Messiah.

And finally, how do we know there were three kings? Scripture doesn't say that they were kings; it just says "wise men." Tradition names them as kings. And scripture doesn't say how many there were. Why has tradition said there were three? Simple. They brought three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh, so logic dictated three givers. Nothing more. And what was the significance of the three gifts? That too was simple. Gold signified a king, which is what made King Herod so nervous. Frankincense was used in worship, signifying Jesus's divine nature. Myrrh was used to anoint a body for burial, referring to Jesus's ultimate fate. The symbolism of the three gifts is clear in retrospect but would have been mysterious when given to a peasant child in ancient Israel. Clearly, God guided the choice of gifts for this particular birthday.

So it is possible to glean some underlying meanings from the story we know so well. We just have to step back a bit to do it.



- * Linda Pratt for the Christmas wreaths on the Sanctuary Doors
- * All those who helped with Hanging of the Greens
- * Beth for decorating the Sanctuary Side Table
- * Kerry Wolgast for providing the Fall altar display items
- * Dick & Diane for putting up window insulation in the church office

A Christmas Blessing

May love come alive within your heart
 As Christmas time draws near.
 May hope fill each room you decorate
 And bring joy to those you hold dear.
 May peace be before you at every meal
 And faith ring through every song.
 For Christ is alive, the light of the world
 May he bless you all season long.