



St. Paul's United Methodist Church
201 S. Monroe St., Monroe, MI 48161
(734) 242-3000



www.stpaulsumcmonroe.org / stpaulsmonroe@sbcglobal.net

December Newsletter



A Note from Pastor Melody...

During these nine months of COVID-19, I have wondered at times where life is going. Our communal life here at St. Paul's has changed so much. Instead of worshipping together in our exquisite sanctuary, we worship in our homes online. Instead of gathering in a multitude of fellowship opportunities, we are restricted to phone calls, Zoom meetings, and socially distanced and face masked "Hello's". It's hard. It's lonely. And there are times when, as one parishioner shared with me, "It feels like the walls are closing in."

Yet I remind myself that amid COVID isolation, God is still here. We are not the first to go through a pandemic. Part of my own family history is that on my late mother's side of the family, she lost two of her aunts and her uncle during one week of the 1890's Flu pandemic. My grandmother and one other sister survived. My mother and her sister (my aunt Ann) were the only children of that next generation.

Yet God is still here. We are not the first to be separated from close family and friends. Many of us remember the longing to be with others when separated by military service, schooling, political decisions or long distance employment. Now, my daughter Kara and I made a Zoom call on Thanksgiving, sharing love and smiles.

Yet God is still here. We are not the first to strive to stay attached through technology. Living over twenty years ago in Asia, I wrote letters home on paper-thin Aerograms and made precious weekly phone calls to the US. Now we stay connected to long distance and close-by friends through Christmas cards, emails and Facebook postings.

Yet God is still here. God is still present in online worship, faithful and reliable staffing of our office, Advent baskets left on doors by the Eve Circle, "St. Paul's Saints" signs delivered with love and cookies by our Outreach Committee, meals offered through take-out containers every Tuesday through GodWorks, the Sacrament of Holy Communion offered to people in cars on the first Sunday of each month, food and gifts to needy families through online sign-up sheets and phone calls.

Yet God is still here. As a St. Paul's family member, know that you are not alone. You are loved. And we will get through this together.

Blessings, Pastor Melodye

Christmas Eve: We've heard it and said it ourselves numerous times since March; "nothing is the same this year". And that's true for our Christmas Eve service as well. While it is hard to plan a Christmas Eve that doesn't involve going to church at some point, we hope that you will take time to join your St. Paul's family at **7:00pm on Christmas Eve for our pre-recorded service**. We will have special music, scriptures, and readings from familiar faces, and a lovely service that is currently being planned by Pastor Melodye, John Tyner, Alisha Cooley, and the rest of our Worship Team. **We invite you to block out that time with your family and watch on our Facebook or Youtube pages at 7:00pm** (links to both pages can be found on the church website at www.stpaulsumcmonroe.org).



Poinsettias: Thankfully we were able to order our poinsettias for Christmas. We've listed those people and the names of their loved ones the flowers were requested in honor or memory of below:



Colleen Baker in memory of Lynn Robert Baker and Bernice Louella Baker

Terry & Terri Berry in memory of Russell, Mabel and William Gross

The Heatherly, Farmer and Fleming Families in memory of George & Catherine Heatherly, and other loved ones

George and Jannet Low in memory of Faith Hunter, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Gustafson Sr., Robert Gustafson Jr., Robert Low, Gertrude Sandstorm and Ernestine Justice, and in honor of Lisa Byers

Jack & Fran Rayce and family in memory of Peter Massa and Thomas Rayce

Jerry, Shirley and Bryan Spence, in memory of Helen Weeman and other loved ones

Holly, Joe, Joshua & Taylor Thompson in memory of Cecil and Peggy Thompson and in honor of Allie and Larry Hilliard

Ken, Ann & Joey Swinkey in memory of parents and grandparents

Dan & Carol Hartong in memory of their parents – Erman & Pauline Emig and Harold & Della Hartong

Ken, Mary, & Paula Vergowven in memory of Bob & Edith Vergowven and Robert & Marilyn Riter

The Regelin Family in memory of Harold Sodt & Margaret Sodt

Mark & Robin Simonson in memory of loved ones in heaven, in honor of our family and friends, and in appreciation of the people of St. Paul's

Jim & Robin Morr in memory of Linda Morr, Marion & Gladys Morr, and Gordon & June Graham

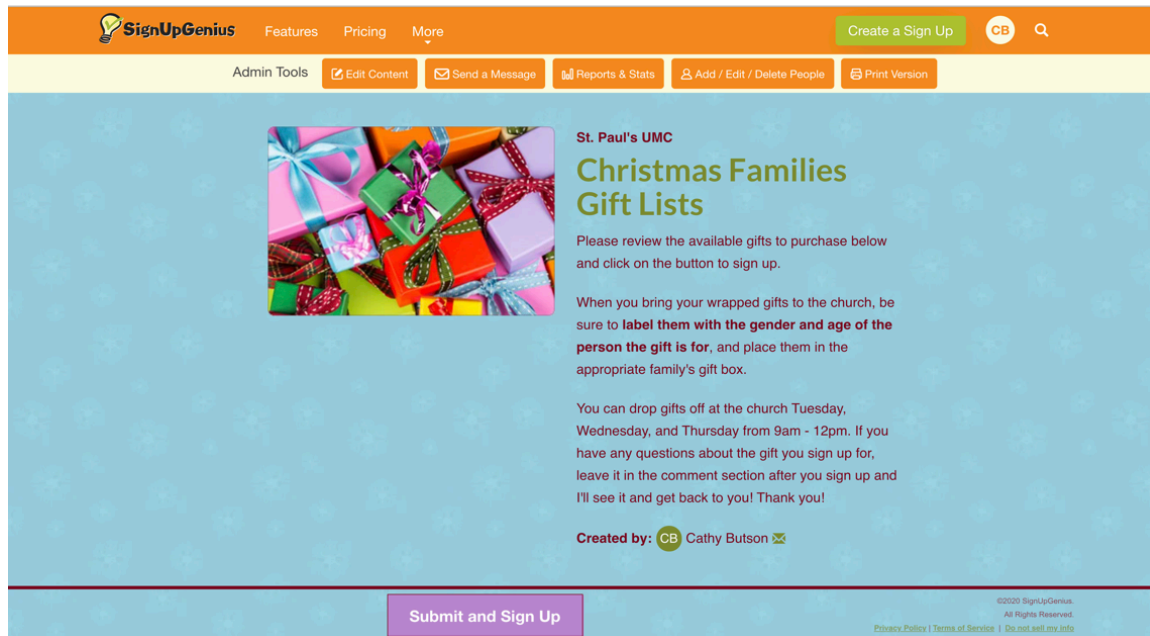
Duane & Mary Anne Bair in memory of loved ones

Advent Bible Study: Pastor Melodye is holding two sessions of the "Hope" Advent Bible study. The morning session has *SWITCHED* from Tuesdays to **10:30am on THURSDAYS** beginning December 10, and the evening sessions are **8:00pm on Wednesdays**. These sessions are meeting on Zoom for anyone who would like to study together in a group setting. The study was also available for you to download and print for your personal use. If you can, a color printer enhances the art work included in this study. Printed copies are available at the church office for those who may not have access to a printer. **Zoom links have been sent. If you aren't familiar with Zoom, it's pretty simple, but please contact the office if you need help.**

"In the middle of darkness, we are called to share God's light - to each other and to the world."

Christmas Gifts for Adopted Families: This year St. Paul's has adopted 11 families through the Salvation Army. You helped us to provide food for them for Thanksgiving, and already so many have signed up to provide gifts for Christmas. Because we are doing virtual worship, we needed to figure out a way for people to sign up for gifts they'd like to purchase for the families we've adopted for the holiday season. We are using Sign Up Genius to do this and below is a step by step guide on how to sign up for the items you'd like to get. It's easy, I promise!

1. Copy and paste this link in your browser (or click the link in the email from the church, on our website, or our facebook page) <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D45A8AD2AAAFEC70-christmas>
2. Once you are there, you'll see a blue page with a picture of gifts, and a short description of how to wrap and label gifts. It looks like this:

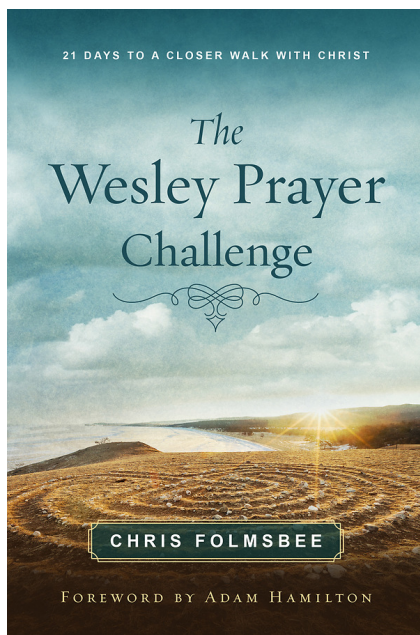


3. Now, just scroll down the page and you'll see each item listed individually. If you are viewing the page on your computer, you should see all the items listed on one long list. If you are using your cell phone, there are multiple pages, so be sure to click over to the next page to view all the items.
4. When you see an item you'd like to purchase, click the green "Sign up" button next to that item. You can click as many as you'd like, then go back through and un-click if you change your mind.
5. Once you've selected all the items you'd like, click the purple "Submit and sign up" button. This will bring you to a new page that will show you everything you signed up for. You will enter your name and email address, and then hit the purple sign up button, and you're done!
6. Then, you will receive an email showing you what items you signed up for. I will also receive an email letting me know you've signed up.

Easy-squeezy! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email.

Just a few reminders: There are lots of pages if you are using your phone or tablet, so be sure to scroll all the way through. There are some families that have all their gifts purchased, and some that have very few. **One of the families got back to us very late with their requests, so be sure to look for family #11's requests.** *If it's easiest for you to donate money, please know that the Outreach committee will gladly do your shopping for you!* **Gifts must be wrapped and returned by Sunday, December 20th. You can drop them during the week or on the 20th.** Members of the Outreach Committee will be at the church from 9:00am – 11:00am that day to collect gifts. *Thank you again for your generosity, St. Paul's!*

Wesley 21 Day Prayer Challenge: Renew your passion for prayer and discover deeper commitment to God in just 21 Days with the Wesley Prayer Challenge.



The Wesley Covenant Prayer has been used in Methodist services around the world on the first Sunday of the year since John Wesley introduced it in 1755. Wesley expected that people would pray this prayer as a way of remembering, renewing, and surrendering themselves in complete trust to God. In *The Wesley Prayer Challenge*, author Chris Folmsbee invites readers to consider words from the Wesley Covenant Prayer each day for three weeks, while reflecting on their meaning in the context of the larger piece.

A Scripture, a prayer, and a challenge for daily life are also included each day. Additional components for a three-week study include a comprehensive Leader Guide, a DVD featuring author Chris Folmsbee. Pastor Melodye challenges herself AND us to this time of prayer. She will be preaching and leading Zoom studies on these issues recalled by Wesley's prayer. Books are available in the Church Office for \$12 each. You can also get this book through Kindle

**The sermon series and book study will start the week of January 10th.
Details on study dates will be posted soon!**

Pledge Cards: Don't forget to send in those **bright, lime green** pledge cards! Your pledge cards give us an idea of how to budget for 2021. Once you have prayerfully considered how you can use your treasures to help bless others, return your pledge card through the mail, or drop it at the church during office hours. Thank you for your dedication to St. Pauls' Ministries.

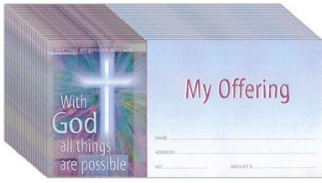


Office Hours: The office is open **Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00am – 12:00 noon.** If you plan to come in, please wear a mask. Call ahead if there is something you need so we can get it ready for you! Pastor Melodye is keeping office hours from 10am – 12pm on Wednesday mornings by appointment only, so please call to schedule a meeting time if you'd like to talk with her. Please reach out if you have questions, concerns, or need anything during this time; 734-242-3000 or stpaulsmonroe@sbcglobal.net.

Worship: Remember to join us on **Sunday mornings at 9:30am** on our church **Facebook** page (facebook.com/stpaulsumc/) for Worship. If you miss the 9:30am video, you can catch the video on our **Youtube** page (search for St. Paul's UMC Monroe MI) any time. You can also follow links to these pages on our church website: www.stpaulsumcmonroe.org.



2021 Calendars: Stop by the church office to pick up a free 2021 calendar! Once again Bacarella Funeral Home has donated lovely calendars to us. Do you need some stocking stuffers? Gifts for your postal carrier or pharmacist? Come on by and grab some (we have a bazillion)!



Offering Envelopes: If you use numbered offering envelopes, your 2021 set will be available in the church office any time after December 8th. Please give us a call so we can grab them and set them on the counter for you. If you haven't used envelopes in the past but think you might like to, just let us know and we'll get you a set. Once again, don't forget you can give using direct debit from your checking or savings account and it can come out monthly or twice monthly. Just fill out the form on the last page of this newsletter ☺

Prayer Requests: We continue to accept prayer requests via email, phone calls, or dropping them off in the church office. You can also reach Pastor Melodye at (517) 250-1879. Here are some of the requests and updates we've had the past few weeks:

- Mary Anne Bair
- Bill Huntley
- The family of Jan Hile
- Jim Fedosky, brother of John, who has been dealing with an extreme kidney infection
- Ileene and Larry Smith, who both have Covid. (Ileene worked in the St. Paul's office for years)
- And please continue to pray for our doctors, nurses, all hospital employees, EMTs, postal workers, grocery store workers, and all those who are working every day to keep us safe and attempt to continue a sense of normalcy during this time.



Ways to Give: We are thankful for technology that allows us to continue to give even though we are not meeting together right now. You can give your tithe and offering in many different ways:

- **Mail a check** to 201 S. Monroe St., Monroe, MI 48161.
- **Use the ACH form** to have funds electronically transferred once or twice a month directly from your checking or savings account.
- **Drop donations at the church** during the office hours listed above.
- We have established a **PayPal account** through the Michigan UMC Conference. There is a link on the St. Paul's website, or **scan the QR Code with your smart phone camera (just like you are going to take a picture of it) and an option to go to the PayPal site should pop right up.**



January Birthday List:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 – Charles VanBelle | 19 – Judy Bodenmiller, Ellie Himebauch, Roger Spalding |
| 3 – Dorothy Hile | 20 – Julie Balk, Bill Huntley, Olivia Low |
| 6 – Gary Doubler, Nancy Freud, Joan Sara, Alexa Shull | 21 – Isabella Hunter |
| 8 – Holly Thompson | 22 – Michelle Davis |
| 9 – Bill Burkett | 23 – Jack Venne |
| 10 – Obie Green, Megan Pirlot, Brooke Shugarman | 25 – George Stoner |
| 12 – Wyatt Lambert, Jeffrey Vergowven | 26 – Kathy Heatherly |
| 15 – Sharon Balk | 30 – Duane Bair |
| | 31 – Judy Drumm, Emily Short |



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DIRECT DEBIT AUTHORIZATION AGREEMENT

- Please type or print legibly in black ink.
- Check the correct box to indicate whether this is a new application, change of deduction amount/allotment, or a cancellation of deduction agreement.
- Attach a voided check to the completed application for validation of bank and account information.
- For security of your personal information, enclose in an envelope marked "Direct Debit Authorization" and place in offering plate or deliver directly to the church office.
- Offering allotment for an existing account should be made by completing the following information and recording your name only and submitting as noted above.

Current Expenses _____ %	Missions _____ %
Building Expenses _____ %	Major Project Fund _____ %
Other _____ %	
TOTAL _____ %	

New Account
 Change Deduction or Offering Allotment
 Cancel Agreement

Name: _____		
Address: _____		Social Security Number: _____
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____
Email Address: _____		Phone: _____

I hereby authorize St. Paul's United Methodist Church to debit my Checking account or Savings account at the financial institution named below for payments* of church offering. I acknowledge that the origination of ACH transactions to my account must comply with the provisions of U.S. law. St. Paul's United Methodist Church and I agree to abide by all applicable ACH operating rules.

*Payments may be deducted on the 5th and/or 20th of each month as follows:
 - Deduct \$ _____ monthly on the _____ day of the month.
 - Deduct \$ _____ bi-weekly on the 5th and 20th days of the month.

Financial Institution: _____	
Bank Transit & Routing Number: _____	Account Number: _____
Name as it appears on the bank account: _____	
Direct Deposit Payments will begin on: _____	

This agreement is to remain in full force and effect until St. Paul's United Methodist Church has received written notification from me, or I have received written notification from St. Paul's United Methodist Church of its termination so as to afford the interested parties a reasonable time to act on it.

Signature

Date