



"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

Devotional: : *Why Lent Matters to Me*



It's almost here. Our first Lent together. The time of preparing ourselves for resurrection. When I think of the core message of lent, two words come to mind: spiritual formation. Robert Mullholland defines spiritual formation as "being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others." Being conformed to the image of Christ means we get to experience resurrection in our lives. That's a beautiful thing! But we can't get there unless we enter into repentance, self examination and, yes, death. Not death in a literal sense, but a spiritual one. There are some parts of ourselves--not the parts that God created or designed us for--that need to die. While I know "repentance" is a churchy word that doesn't give the prettiest image, it is simply about going a new direction in life. It is a remarkably underrated form of spiritual formation. Self examination is what St. Augustine was referring to when he asked, "How can you draw close to God when you are far off from your own self?" Self examination is a gift where we realize the beauty of who we are and stop trying to be who we are not. We see the beauty of our limits and our gifts. If you're looking to make Lent more formational for you, stay tuned for some devotions that will be available! We'll also be having a class for both churches (Hazel Park 7:00 p.m. Wed and TBA for St. Paul). If there are any other resources you'd like or questions about lent, please feel free to ask!

In grace,
Brian

A Look Back:

*A new section to give a brief recap from each sermon in the previous month!

1/15: The Sneetches and Beloved Community: The Sneetches created a social construct of who had value and who did not. That's what we have done with race. If racism only comes from a social construct, that means it can also be deconstructed, and that is our call us people who follow Jesus.

1/22: Stop Searching for Solla Sollew: Our protagonist believed that a trouble-free life was possible in a new place. But, more than likely, the blessings of God can be found right where we are.

1/29: Act a Fool: Horton the Elephant showed us that we are called to be fools for Christ. That means we value "every person as a person no matter how small."

Top 3 Things I'm Working On:

- 1) Prayerful and strategic visioning for the future
- 2) Planning worship series for the rest of the year
- 3) Developing our hospitality ministries

If you're interested in seeing what else I read or for recommendations at Goodreads: [goodreads.com/besteel2386](https://www.goodreads.com/besteel2386)

What I'm reading and listening to:

- 1) For Spiritual Development: *The Myth of a Christian Religion* by Greg Boyd and *Tempered Resilience: How Leaders are Formed in the Crucible of Change* by Tod Bolsinger
- 2) Podcasts I try to listen to regularly: *The Bible for Normal People*, *Evolving Faith*
- 3) For Fun: (your pastor likes to have fun, too): *Star Wars: Light of the Jedi* by Charles Soule and *Kang the Conqueror* comic books.

Upcoming Events



Saturday, February 4th ~ Women's group meets in the fellowship hall at 1pm
Saturday, February 4th ~ Men's group meets at Coney island at 10pm
Thursday, February 16th ~ Church Council Meeting at 7pm
Wednesday, February 22nd ~ Ash Wednesday Service at 5pm

Things to Keep in Mind

Let's Make Our Church a Fragrance Free Zone



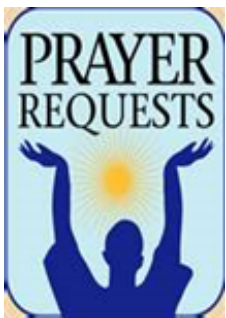
Please refrain from wearing fragrances or lighting scented candles in the church.. Certain scents can be a problem for many folks, especially those with asthma and migraines. Please help make our church home a safe place for all people.



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!



Health/Life Concerns: Rob N., Diane's nephew, Ren's nephew who is recovering and her homebound sister, Jennifer's recovery from surgery, Chemo port being removed for Lisa J, Kathy R ,Charlie can keep his job, The Baldwin House, Katie Banninger (In hospital), Victoria Foerster, Gloria and Rick Kachadorian, For those whom the holidays are difficult and painful, Baldwin House, Amber F's Dad Carl who has glaucoma in his eyes, Teresa for Social Security, The Martin Family, John S as he recovers, Rick and Gloria, Susie, Rich D's children, Sam, The Pinnell Family, Mr. James Cagiel



Comfort for the friends and families of: Family of Emily Panone, Family of Boyd Daugherty

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.

Does Jesus have something to teach us about toxic busyness?

If you made a list of things you would do on your ideal day, what items would you write down? This may seem like a wild stab, but there's a good chance that very few of the items on your actual "to-do" list for today are also on your list of items for your ideal day. There's a tension here between the things we would ideally do and the things we have to do. Most of us feel like the list of things we have to do is ever-growing, often at a pace quicker than our ability to actually get things done. Each new email from a coworker, each text from a family member, each news article acts as a call to action to some new item we feel compelled to complete. In the midst of all that comes this article, giving you one more item you need to do: You need to say "no". For the good of yourself, for the benefit of those around, and for the betterment of the world, it just might be time to flex a few "no's".

This doesn't need to be a selfish act. As we look at the instances of Jesus saying "no", we may begin to understand that often our "no's" come as acts of humility. A "no" can suggest that we are not in control, that we are not all-important, and that we trust there is a plan at work outside of ourselves. When Jesus said "no" There's an unsettling story of Jesus. While the story has a happy ending, we're not quite sure what Jesus' motivations are for doing the things he does in this story, and that makes us uneasy with it.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 11, we hear of Jesus being told that his friend Lazarus is very sick. Lazarus' sisters asked Jesus to come and help his friend. Jesus seemingly says "no". We read that when Jesus was told of Lazarus' sickness, "he stayed where he was two more days" (John 11:7). During this time of waiting, Lazarus died. Now why didn't Jesus go as requested? Was he being selfish? Not likely--this is the person who said there was no greater love than laying down one's life for friends and then accepted death on a cross. Was Jesus engaged in more important things? Also not likely--the story in John doesn't mention Jesus doing anything during those days.

Perhaps a better question is to ask why Jesus didn't immediately say "yes" when this new call to action was presented. Why didn't Jesus immediately say "I'll be right there"?

We get a hint at what the answer to that question is in John, as well. In verse 4, Jesus said "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Why do we say "yes"?

When we're saying "yes" to the different calls to action that interrupt our days, what are our motivations? Likely, some of our motivations are altruistic: we see an opportunity to do something good or helpful, so we say "yes, I'll do that." There are other instances, though, when our motivations are less-than-altruistic. In these instances, we say "yes" not simply because there's an opportunity for something good to happen, but because there's an opportunity for us to do something good, and to perhaps be noticed doing the good. Or in other instances we're a bit fearful that someone else might take advantage of this opportunity instead of us. Or we're fearful that we, ourselves, are the all-important factors in this situation and if we don't say "yes" then the deal won't get done. We can only wonder what motivated Jesus to wait two days to respond to Lazarus' sisters' request to come visit the dying Lazarus. The scripture doesn't tell us what Jesus was thinking (besides that God would be glorified). What we don't see, however, is Jesus saying that he and only he needed to respond in order for Lazarus to heal. He doesn't rush off to heal Lazarus so he can show how powerful he is.

Instead, Jesus waited and Lazarus died. When Jesus did arrive at Lazarus' home, we get a scene of grief. In his mourning, Jesus calls out to his dead friend--and his friend comes out of the tomb, resurrected. That's a pretty incredible turn of events. There's so much we don't know about this miracle. Did Jesus know exactly what would happen? Maybe so, there are clues in the text that Jesus expected a miracle. But it was not forced. Jesus let it happen. Jesus accepted his role in the events surrounding him. He said "yes" when it became clear a "yes" was not just going to be self-serving, but so that healing would come and people could witness the possibilities of God. A meaningful "yes"

Jesus then provides witness to criteria for our busyness. Or, at least, provides us a lens by which we can assess the fruit of our busyness. Are we saying "yes" because to do so serves the greater good? Because saying "yes" reveals healing and the possibilities of God? Or are we saying "yes" to the requests of a day because it makes us feel important or seen?

There is definitely a lot of important work to be done in our world. An awareness of that fact creates in us a sense that we need to jump on nearly every opportunity of involvement or task sent our way. But the truth is not all of our busyness bears good fruit. It's not all productive. At times, even in the face of high demand, Jesus waited and trusted. When the action served the higher purpose, Jesus responded.



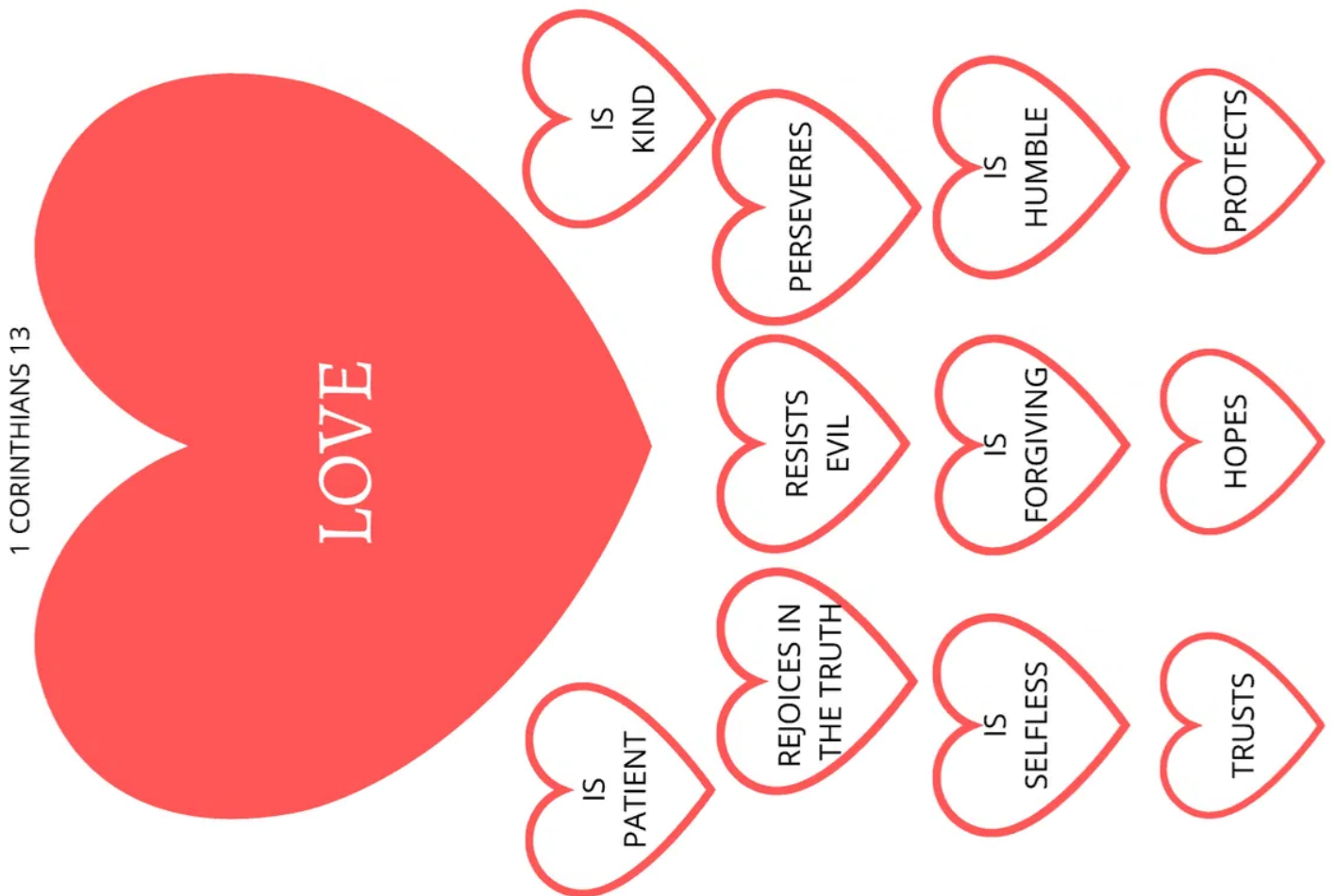
Valentine's Lesson: Based on 1 Corinthians 13

Talk to the kids about what love looks like. What kind of actions are loving? Where do they see love in their own lives? What do they do for others that is loving?

What I especially love about this craft is that it lends itself naturally to talking about the specifically Christian aspects of love: humility, selflessness, rejoicing in the truth...

Materials Needed:

- 1 Corinthians 13
- Valentine Craft template (below)
- scissors & glue/tape
- Yarn



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

HAVE A
Fabulous
BIRTHDAY

February Birthdays

Toni Robertson - 8 Rev. Brian Steele - 3
Renee Dusseau - 17 Lillie Smith - 18
Paul Holland - 21 Pierre Cross - 25
Dorothy Canyock - 28



February 2023



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

			1	2	3	4 Men's group meets at the Coney island at 10pm Women's group meets in the fellowship hall at 1pm
5 Worship Service w/communion @ 11:15	6 National Pay a Compliment Day <i>you are wonderful</i>	7 Praise Team 5:00	8	9 National Chocolate & Pizza Day 	10 Praise Team 5:00	11 National Make a Friend Day!
12 Worship Service @ 11:15	13 National Self-Love Day <i>I matter</i>	14 Happy Valentine's day Praise Team 5:00	15	16 Church Council Meeting @ 7:00 Praise Team 5:00	17	18
19 Worship Service @ 11:15	20	21 Praise Team 5:00	22 Ash Wednesday Service @5pm	23 Praise Team 5:00	24	25
26 Worship Service @ 11:15	27 National Strawberry Day 	28 Praise Team 5:00	<p align="center"></p> <p align="center"><u>February Birthdays</u></p> <p align="center">Toni Robertson - 8 Rev. Brian Steele -3 Renee Dusseau - 17 Lillie Smith - 18 Paul Holland - 21 Pierre Cross - 25 Dorothy Canyock - 28</p>			