



# *"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](http://www.hpfirst.org)



## **Pastor's Pen**

*Pastor Brian Steele*



## **Inside the Pastor's Head**

Dear Friends,

Pastor Sharon Appling has officially been announced as your next pastor starting July 1st! I know Sharon and she has a deep faith with a passion for discipleship and spiritual formation. I trust that she will serve you well and help our church continue to live into its purpose to embrace all people with love so that the individual and community can grow and thrive into the fullness of Christ.

To help you all get to know Sharon a bit, I did a questionnaire with her at Annual Conference. Check it out below!



## Getting to know Pastor Sharon Appling

**Favorite Color?** Navy Blue.

**Favorite Movie?** Sounder

**Favorite book (besides the Bible)?** #SeeAllThePeople by Discipleship Ministries

**Favorite book of the Bible?** Esther in the Old Testament and Gospel of John in the New Testament

**Favorite food or dish?** Vegetable Stir Fry with Shrimp and Scallops

**Do you have a life verse?** As for me and my household, we will serve the lord.

**What makes you laugh?** Children.

**What are you most excited about in serving at Hazel Park?**

I first developed relationships with some of the membership through Lay Servant Ministries and to see where they have evolved in their ministries is extremely exciting.

As we prepare for our temporary goodbyes, know that I am grateful for much of what happened during my tenure here. While my final Sunday as your pastor will be June 29th, we have a bond that will take us into eternity.

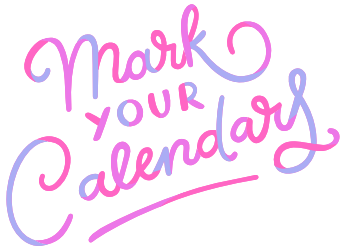
Always remember that you are dearly loved by me and more importantly by our gracious and redeeming God.

In Grace,  
Brian



## Upcoming Events

- ~Sunday, June 15th - The Chosen Video Study After Coffee Hour
- ~Tuesday, June 17th - Chair Yoga @ 6:30pm
- ~Thursday, June 19 at 7:00 PM - Regular Monthly Church Council Meeting
- ~Sunday, June 22nd - The Chosen Video Study After Coffee Hour
- ~Tuesday, June 24th - Chair Yoga @ 6:30pm
- ~Sunday, June 29th - The Chosen Video Study After Coffee Hour
- ~Tuesday, July 1st - Chair Yoga @6:30 pm
- ~Saturday, July 5th - Men's Group meets at John R Grill @10am
- ~Sunday, July 6th - The Chosen Video Study After Coffee Hour
- ~Tuesday, July 8th - Chair Yoga @6:30 pm



## A letter from your SPRC

Dear Church Family:

The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is pleased to inform you that Michigan Area Bishop David Alan Bard has appointed the Pastor Sharon Elaine Appling as the pastor of First United Methodist Church of Hazel Park effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

Rev. Appling became a Certified Lay Minister in 2018 and was assigned to Conant Avenue United Methodist Church as director of Spiritual Formation. In 2019, Rev. Appling was assigned to serve as Pastor of Omo Zion UMC, Embury UMC, and St. James UMC.

She currently serves as the Lay Servant Ministries Training Chair for the Greater Detroit District. As a member of the Michigan Conference Board of Ordained Ministry since 2017, Rev. Appling is the Psychological Assessment Mentor of clergy and aspiring congregational leaders. Working alongside of United Methodist Women seeking justice, equality, and educational reformation in averting the School to Prison Pipeline is a personal passion.

A graduate of Wayne State University, Pastor Appling holds a Bachelor's degree in Arts and Secondary Education, as well as a Masters of Instructional Supervision with an advanced specialty in Central Office Administration.

After a 46-year career with the Detroit Public Schools, Pastor Appling retired in 2010 as Assistant Superintendent of Schools. She now devotes her time to her love of teaching the Bible, grant writing, youth ministry, senior ministry, laity training, and inspiring others to engage their spiritual gifts in transformative ministry.

Pastor Appling also attended the Methodist Theological School and Ashland Seminary of Ohio, where she explored the application of John Wesley's Sermons and Charles Wesley's Hymns to local church ministry and worship design. Honors include: 2004 Principal of the Year, 2006 NAACP Gertrude Powe Award, and 2008 National Public Radio Visionary Leader Recognition, "A School That Never Closes."

Pastor Appling has one daughter, a son-in-law, six grandchildren, and counts herself blessed to be the sister of seven siblings.

The SPRC is working with our District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Daryl Totty, to complete the details of this appointment and we look forward welcoming Pastor Appling in July.

In Christ,  
Albert P. Holland, Chair  
Staff Parish Relations Committee

## The Mysterious, Connectional Act of Prayer

When Linda Douty's friend died from a brain tumor, the event sent the lifelong United Methodist on a spiritual spiral as she sought to understand why the prayers of many failed to result in her friend's healing.

"She was fit, successful, all of the plusses in life you can imagine," Douty shares about her 50something-year-old friend. "Every prayer group I knew was praying for her. And she died." "Wait a minute," she remembers thinking, "This doesn't add up to what I've been taught." When she shared her confused anguish with her pastor, he counseled, "'When I feel like you feel right now, I pray, because Jesus prayed.'"

At the time, Douty thought the answer was "glib," she recalls. Thirty years later, Douty, who is a spiritual director in Memphis, Tennessee, doesn't have a better response. "It was an unsatisfactory answer at the time," she shared. "But I call myself a Christian, a follower of Jesus. And what did Jesus do? He prayed in every circumstance. He prayed when he was happy, when he was sad, when he was bewildered, in the Garden of Gethsemane, even on the cross. So whatever this mystery is, Jesus thought it was important. 'The acts of asking for prayer, praying for others, reciting prayers together are built into our faith tradition. Jesus modeled it, we repeat it. But do we understand it? United Methodist spiritual leaders offer help unraveling the complexity of prayer, and, perhaps in doing so, leading us to accept the mystery and seek a deeper connection with God.'

### Unanswered prayers

Like Douty, many people struggle with prayers that aren't answered in the ways we want. "When people say, 'God didn't answer my prayer,' I always say, 'You're in good company and I point to the lament in the Psalms,'" shares the Rev. Claire McNulty-Drewes, a United Methodist pastor in the Mountain Sky Conference. "I do pray for miracles and I believe in miracles. And I've seen miracles. But I also know the human body is an insidious thing. I don't know why a child gets cancer. It seems unfair. I don't know why car accidents happen to some people but not to me," McNulty-Drewes shares. "The lament psalms remind me I'm not the only one who may be questioning if there really is a God." To make a specific request when praying to God is common. Our church services are filled with prayer times where we share "joys and concerns" – and mainly, concerns – with one another, asking God for healings, jobs, safety, positive outcomes. "Viewing prayers as merely requests is transactional," explains Sally Sharpe, a United Methodist and spiritual director in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee. "I'm coming to you because I want something. If my prayer is successful, I'll get what I want. And I think a prevalent understanding of prayer is transactional. But I believe it's experiential, it's relationship."

*"Prayer is an opportunity to ground me in that which is holy rather than that which is earthly."* Rev. Claire McNulty-Drewes

"I've learned not to tie my prayer to the result of getting what I want," says Douty. "I long ago threw away my prayer notebook where I would write, 'Here's the day I prayed for XYZ and here's the day God answered it.' That makes it about my agenda and this has no room for mystery." Of course, there are situations, usually times of crisis, when we plead and beg with God for a certain answer to our desperate prayers. It is in these times, says McNulty-Drewes, when reframing our understanding of prayer may help, regardless of how the situation unfolds. "Instead of being about changing God's mind or getting what we want from God, it's about changing our mind," she says, referencing a book she read titled "The Meaning of Prayer," published more than 100 years ago by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. "I'm less inclined these days to give God direction," Douty admits. "If I have a friend with a tumor, rather than pray to make that tumor go away, I'm more apt to envision that person completely enclosed in the love and mercy of God." Prayer is more about relationship than results, Sharpe offers. "When we are being transparent, authentic and real with God, that's where we are experiencing God's love and God's presence," she points out. "So in our prayers, if we don't get the answer we are asking for, but we feel safe, seen and known by God, that enables us to trust God even when things aren't going as we would like."

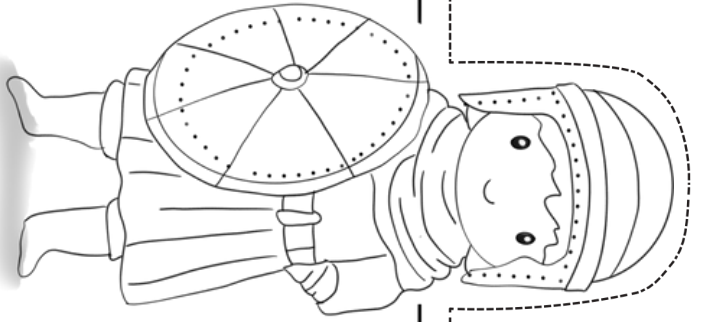
### Nonstop connection

The Apostle Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:16, commends us to "pray without ceasing." What may seem an impossible task of around the clock praying becomes attainable when redefining prayer from a single act to a way of being. Sharpe likens her prayer life to a cell phone conversation on which she never presses "end." "We may not have words for a couple of hours, but we're still together," Sharpe says, expounding on the analogy. "The connection is there even if the conversation pauses. I'm always in the background waiting and listening for God to break in again and speak to me, and vice versa. God is attentive and right there. And it goes both ways."

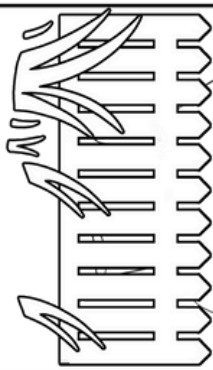
### Failsafe praying

If you've ever thought, "I don't know how to pray," there's good news. "There is no way to get prayer wrong," Sharpe offers. "If you are seeking God and calling out to God, you're seeking connection and that's a win. Prayer is turning to God. You can't mess it up. Just be you. God is always open to that, delighted with that. 'Everybody is different. So why would we think there is one method to connect to God?,' she asks, then recommends, "Find the language that suits your soul." "Prayer becomes an opportunity to reframe my day to day posture," McNulty-Drewes explains, "to ground me in that which is holy, rather than grounding me in that which is earthly."

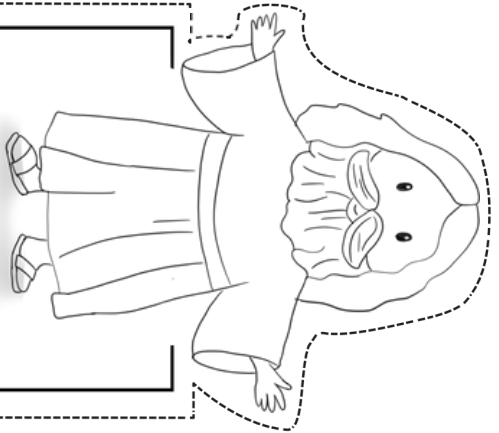




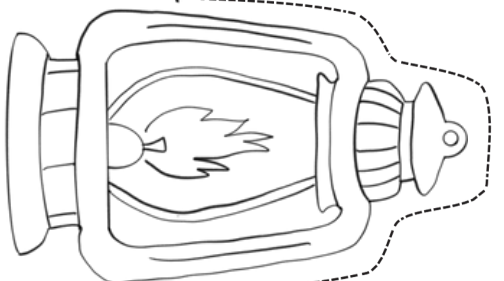
**PUT ON  
THE FULL  
ARMOR  
OF GOD**  
EPHESIANS 6:11



**I AM ONE  
OF HIS  
SHEEP**



**BE  
LOVING  
IN EVERYTHING  
YOU  
DO!**



**SHINE  
YOUR  
LIGHT.  
SHARE GOD'S  
LOVE!**

Instructions: 1. Choose one or all bookmarks. 2. Color it. 3. Cut it out and never again lose your place!



**FAITH  
HOPE  
LOVE**

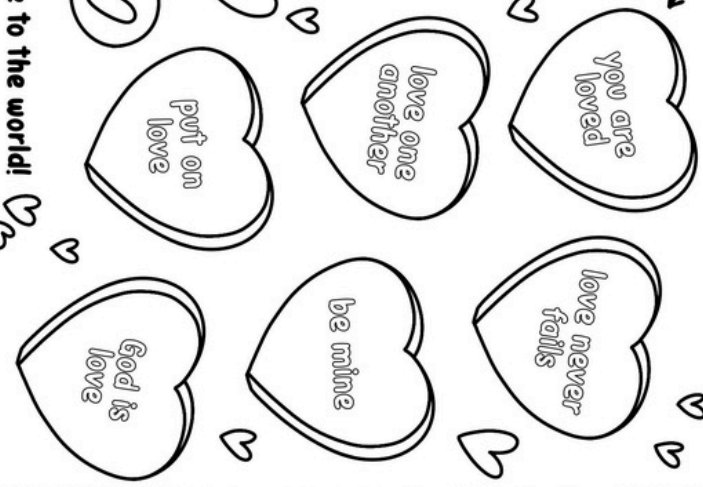
the greatest of these!  
1 Cor. 13:13



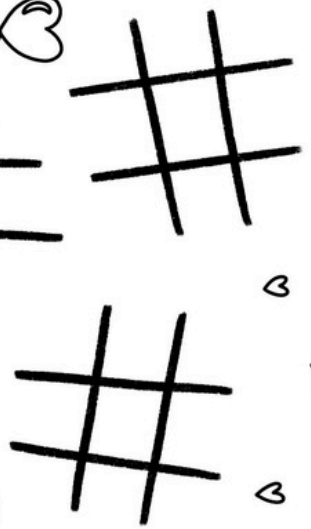
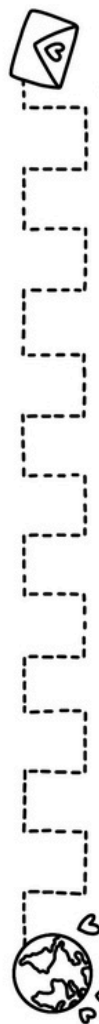
**L O V E L  
O E L O V E  
V O V L O  
L E L L E L**

How many times  
can you find the  
word "love"?

**GOD'S CANDY HEARTS**



Help spread God's love to the world!



Play tic tac toe  
with X's + O's!



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

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

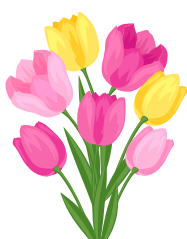


Sunday Morning Service: 11:15 am  
Church Office: 248-546-5955  
E-mail: [hpfirstumc@gmail.com](mailto:hpfirstumc@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.hpfirst.org](http://www.hpfirst.org)



**June Birthday's**

Larry Rivers - 9  
Amber Flint - 14  
LeeAnn Cox - 19  
Brittany Anderson - 22  
Sandra LaChapelle - 24



# June 2025



SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

1 Worship Service @ 11:15  The Chosen Video Study	2  Chair Yoga @ 6:30pm	3  Praise Team 4:00	4  Bible Study @ 7	5	6	7  Men's group meets at the Coney island at 10pm
8 Worship Service w/communion @ 11:15  The Chosen Video Study	9  Chair Yoga @ 6:30pm	10  Praise Team 4:00	11  Bible Study @ 7	12	13	14
15 Worship Service @ 11:15  The Chosen Video Study	16  Chair Yoga @ 6:30pm	17  Praise Team 4:00	18	19  Church Council Meeting @ 7:00	20	21
22 Worship Service @ 11:15  The Chosen Video Study	23  Chair Yoga @ 6:30pm	24  Praise Team 4:00	25	26	27	28
29 Worship Service @ 11:15  The Chosen Video Study	30  Chair Yoga @ 6:30pm			<p><b>June Birthday's</b></p> <p>Larry Rivers - 9 Amber Flint - 14 LeeAnn Cox - 19 Brittany Anderson - 22 Sandra LaChapelle - 24</p> 		