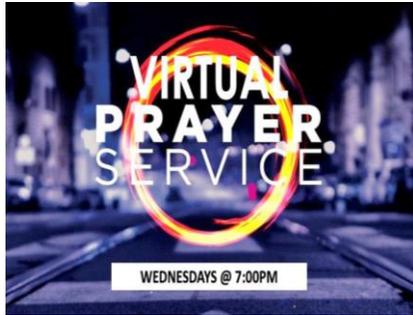




**Love. Grow. Serve.**

*December 2020*

**Caring for Each Other**



*Everyone is welcome and invited to participate*

This **Virtual Prayer Service** is a time and space for us to gather and lift our prayer requests during this Advent season. Join us Wednesdays at 7 p.m. for a time of sharing, prayer, and supporting each other. We are in this together, and no one needs to feel alone. Also, we want everyone to know they are loved and valued.

\*This will be a "ZOOM Meeting" through an email invitation link we will need to send to you. Please click "GOING" on the event page on Facebook or, contact the church office.



**Marble Giving Back: Gift Cards for Aid in Milan**

Marble Memorial supports the efforts of Aid in Milan year-round. At Christmas, we lend additional support. This will be our third year to help by donating gift cards to Aid in Milan so families can buy needed food or gift items for their families. Here's how to help: Purchase a \$25 gift card for any of the following stores: Meijer, Wal-Mart, Target or Kroger. **You may drop the gift cards off at the church no later than Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup>.** You may also take them directly to Aid in Milan during their business hours. You stay in your car and call into the office – they will come out to you: (734)439-8420.

**Current Pantry Needs for Aid in Milan:** ramen-style noodles, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, sliced bread. Larger sized diapers and pull ups are always in need.

**Marble Memorial  
United Methodist Church  
Rev. Matt West, Pastor  
8 Park Lane, Milan, Michigan 48160**

**Church Phone: 734-439-2421**

**Pastor's Emergency Number: 269-967-4444**

**Church Website: [marbleumc.org](http://marbleumc.org)**

**Church E-mail: [office@marbleumc.org](mailto:office@marbleumc.org)**

**Church Office Hours: Mon-Thu, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
(closed holidays)**

**Facebook: "Marble Memorial UMC"**

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## **Coming Soon...the Christ Child - Pastor Matt West**

Hello, neighbors!

"Coming Soon..." *What is coming soon?* Well, in case you missed last Sunday's (11/29) service, we have started the season of Advent. This year we are taking a different look at the Christmas story. What if we approached the story from the viewpoint of a movie? We began with the trailer and will work our way to the climax. Be ready for a cliffhanger, too! Do I have your attention now? Stay tuned then!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, "The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect, and who look forward to something greater to come." I am willing to bet that most of us, if not all, would fall under one of those areas mentioned by Bonhoeffer. The beautiful thing is that it does not matter and can only make this season even better. Imagine a movie trailer with a group of misfits that begin a journey not knowing what is next, but who they discover is the real surprise! This sounds like a movie I could get into and provides the something greater to come.

I also found these thoughts from Christianity.com interesting as we discuss what is, "Coming Soon", in this season. "While Advent is certainly a time of celebration and anticipation of Christ's birth, it is more than that. It is only in the shadow of Advent that the miracle of Christmas can be fully understood and appreciated, and it is only in the light of Christmas that the Christian life makes any sense. It is between the fulfilled promise of Christ's first coming and the yet-to-be-fulfilled promise of his second coming that Karl Barth penned these words: 'Unfulfilled and fulfilled promise are related to each other, as are dawn and sunrise. Both promise and in fact the same promise. If anywhere at all, then it is precisely in the light of the coming of Christ that faith has become Advent faith, the expectation of future revelation. But faith knows for whom and for what it is waiting. It is fulfilled faith because it lays hold on the fulfilled promise.' The promise for Israel and the promise for the church is Jesus Christ; he has come, and he will come again. This is the essence of Advent."

Do I still have your attention? Stay tuned!

As I wrap things up for this newsletter, I leave you with an Advent prayer to use throughout the month from author Renee Swope.

This Advent, Lord, come to the manger of my heart. Fill me with Your presence from the very start.

As I prepare for the holidays and gifts to be given, remind me of the gift You gave when You sent Your Son from Heaven. The first Christmas gift, it was the greatest gift ever. You came as a baby born in a manger. Wrapped like the gifts I find under my tree, waiting to be opened, to reveal Your love to me.

Restore to me the wonder that came with Jesus' birth, when He left the riches of Heaven and wrapped Himself in rags of earth. Immanuel, God with us, Your presence came that night. And angels announced, "Into your darkness, God brings His Light." "Do not be afraid," they said, to shepherds in the field.

Speak to my heart today, Lord, and help me to yield. Make me like those shepherd boys, obedient to Your call. Setting distractions and worries aside, to You I surrender them all. Surround me with Your presence, Lord, I long to hear Your voice. Clear my mind of countless concerns and all the holiday noise. Slow me down this Christmas, let me not be in a rush. In the midst of parties and planning, I want to feel Your hush. This Christmas, Jesus, come to the manger of my heart. Invade my soul like Bethlehem, bringing peace to every part. Dwell within and around me, as I unwrap Your presence each day.

Keep me close to You, Lord. It's in Your wonderful Name I pray, Amen.

I have asked you to stay tuned and most are probably looking for more. If that is the case, then please join me as we journey through this season of Advent with our series "Coming Soon..." Invite others to worship with us every Sunday at 10:00am online via our Facebook page (Marble Memorial UMC). I don't know about you, but I am excited to see what God has instore for us as we near the end of 2020!

***Peace be with you, neighbors... Pastor Matt***

## Marble Meetings

Staff Parish Relations Committee:

Tue, Dec 8, 7 p (ZOOM)

Trustee Committee: No meeting in December

Finance Committee: Tue, Dec 15, 7p (ZOOM)

Church Council: No meeting in December

UMW Circles:

Sarah Ruth Circle: no meeting in December

Sister's Aglow Circle: Dec 14, 7 p (info TBA)

Susanna Wesley Circle: Dec 21, 7p (info TBA)



*It is likely that Marble will be observing Christmas Eve Services virtually this season. Plans and times will be shared with you all soon.*

## A Note from Our Outgoing Council Chair

To the congregation of Marble Memorial United Methodist Church: Greetings in the name of Christ,

I have enjoyed the privilege of being Chair of the Church Council under three Pastors. I am appreciative of the support and congenial Christian attitude here at Marble. People were always willing to follow through and complete additional requested tasks. I thank you for your service to Christ and Marble.

Due to retirement and becoming a Snowbird, (pending COVID regulations), I asked to be replaced as Chair. Tim Kartje has graciously accepted the position. Tim has a vast wealth of administrative experience to draw from. He has a Christian background and life long history in this Church. In my opinion he is well suited for this position. I know you will join me in congratulating Tim as he leads the Council through leadership and Christian values.

Dr. Mike Sweet



## Outreach @ Marble

Marble's Outreach Team has easy guidelines for anyone interested in starting and directing a service or mission projects.

**How to get started:** If you have an idea for a service project, fundraising for mission, a mission project, or any activity for the community, pick up a **"Marble Outreach Request Form"**. The forms are available in hard-copy from the church office, or you can download a copy from your computer by following this link:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:b85911e5-8382-40d4-9c8a-34722b9b3af9>

Complete instructions are on the form.

Questions? Brian Foster is the Outreach Team Lead: bdfoster1989@gmail.com

## Go "Bake-less" for Mission!

Due to current restrictions, Marble has cancelled this year's in-person bake sale. To reach our mission giving goals, we are doing something different:

**From now until Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**

we are collecting "special donations" we will earmark for local, national and world mission ministries.

Please mark your donation: "Bake Sale". What we collect will help fulfill our ministry in mission and giving goals we historically earn during our annual sale.

Please consider what you would normally spend at the sale, then pray about offering up a similar amount.

**Good News:**

**These "goodies" are Calorie Free!**



## **Blessings in Our Basket – Rod Hill**

These are exceptional times. This year has burdened us with so many challenges; it's hard to remember them all. And our response to each one has tested our intellect, our instincts and our faith. Praise God! The Lord grants us permission to find our own path in these worldly matters with assurance that God is with us whatever happens. Hallelujah! And we folk of Marble have an additional blessing: Each other. In hard times, working with people we love and trust is as good as it gets. Amen

This is why I'm so grateful for other people's leadership in matters of finance. I can get into trouble when matters turn to money. I get focused on one egg and lose track of the rest of the basket. I've been blessed with a life partner who has helped me keep a firm grip on the handle. Thank You God! It's the same with our Church. Right now, our collective basket needs some care.

As Methodists, we contribute every year to needs and missions that are larger than ourselves. It's who we are. Some of them are easy to comprehend, like the pastor's health insurance and pension obligations for those who have served us through the years. Others like African University and our Conference expenses tend to be over the horizon enough that we forget they are there. Another thing that's over the horizon is a wonderful set of funds that we've been graced to manage over the years. Thank you again God!

In this time of exceptional challenge it's a blessing to know that we have options as well. While our giving and expenses are carrying us through, day-to-day, it's good to know that we have a whole basket going forward.

***Stay safe this Holiday season, Rod***

## **Finance Update – Brenda Kempher, Finance Chair**

Greetings! The Finance Committee will have its final meeting of the year on Tuesday, December 15 at 7 p.m. by ZOOM.

This month, please keep in mind that giving is a very important part of showing the love of Christ. Our church uses your gifts to be able to meet our needs, give to our Ministry Shares, and reach out to those in our community. Please prayerfully consider your tithes and offerings this wonderful Christmas season to celebrate the birth of our Lord.

### **Christmas Holiday Office Hours**

***The Church office will be closed the week of  
December 28<sup>th</sup> (12/28-12/31)***

#### **End of year giving:**

***Final 2020 financial donations must be  
delivered to or dropped off at the church  
before 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 31  
to be counted for the year.***

***(You may drop donations off at the church by  
using the mail slot in the Bell Tower door.)***



### **Reaching Our Neighbors**

***During this latest return to “virtual only”  
worship, we have been met with questions  
from you, our neighbors:  
“How can we serve best?”  
“How can we stay connected?”***

***This month we have offered a couple of ideas  
for serving in giving support to Aid in Milan and  
for connecting by joining in the Wednesday  
Virtual Prayer Service.***

***One of the key ways you are needed  
right at this moment, and in this time,  
is by calling our neighbors. Check on each other,  
send a note, make a phone call.***

***If you do, you will gain just as much as you give.  
If you find a neighbor in need and the church can  
lend a hand, please contact the office.***