

Dunes Digest



PASTOR'S NOTES

Happy New Year!

Rev. Lou Grettenberger, Pastor

The new Christian year begins December 1, 2024. We are excited to introduce our worship series: RESTORE. Over the past few years, the losses have mounted. The pandemic, wars and rumors of wars, political mayhem, assassination attempts, acts of terrorism, gun violence in our schools and elsewhere, and the loss of 25% of the United Methodist Church in America. But now, a new year begins.

The arrival of Jesus Christ calls us out of our complacency to the grace-filled work of God. In Jesus Christ, God promised to restore our hope, peace, joy, and love. Through Advent and Christmas, God is inviting each of us to the work of first receiving, and then, restoring hope, peace, joy, and love to a world that hungers for those.

So, this year begins, not with the dropping of a crystal ball, but with a prophet shouting out “Behold the Kingdom of God is at hand.” My translation, “The kingdom of God is so close we can touch it.” And since that is true, we must join the chorus of those who announce the restoration of God’s good creation. In the face of violence and hatred, God is calling us to “restore: hope, peace, joy and love” to our community and to our world.

We are called not to fall back, but instead to allow our historic values to move us forward. Powered by the Holy Spirit, immersed in scriptures, committed in mission to our community and world, we are being called to work for the common good and beloved community. This is a new environment, a kin-dom, that brings hope, provides peace, invites joy, and celebrates love in all its forms.

To move forward this sacred life and call, I will be offering two studies in addition to those Church of the Dunes normally provides:

- I will be leading a 12-week book study using, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* by Marcus Borg, one of my most beloved authors and theologians.
- I will also be leading a time of “Bible Reading and Reflection.” We will start at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, simply reading portions of the text together and then taking time to discuss the meaning and application of the gospel to our lives, We will progress as fast or slow as feels comfortable to the group. This will be an ongoing, drop-in class.

Times and dates will be announced for a start date after January 1st. Please be in prayer regarding your desire to be part of one of these studies.

Happy New Year!
Pastor Lou

Remembrance

Paula Montgomery

died on November 9. Please keep her loved ones in your prayers



Christmas Eve Worship

Tuesday, December 24
7:00 p.m.

Sunday Worship

9:30 a.m.

All are welcome!

Livestream and recordings of services are available on the church's YouTube channel. To find it, search *Dunes Church Grand Haven YouTube*.

Church office hours:

Monday through Thursday
9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Phone:

(616) 842-7980

Email: office@umcdunes.org

United Methodist Church of the Dunes

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Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.umcdunes.org

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Advent begins Sunday, December 1.



JOB POSTINGS

Because of staff retirements and life changes, Church of the Dunes has three current job postings:

Kitchen Coordinator (averages 10 hours per week)

Coordinates food-related functions for church events, conferences, meetings, special food service requests, and other events. Oversees the health and safety compliance of the church's kitchen facilities. Requires a county food safety certification or a willingness to become certified. Related experience preferred. Sunday availability needed.

Communications Lead (20 hours per week)

Responsible for curating, scheduling, and producing content for newsletters, announcements, the church website, digital monitors, social media, church-wide emails, and print materials for the church's ministries and activities. Bachelors degree in communications preferred, other relevant experience may be considered.

Finance Manager (10 -12 hours per week)

Oversees fiscal operations, records and maintains utmost confidentiality about individual giving, prepares financial reports, assists in the budget process, assures compliance with related laws, oversees reconciliations, and manages payroll operations. A four-year degree in accounting or finance and experience in church-related or non-profit fiscal management experience is preferred.

For more information about these positions and application instructions, visit www.umcdunes.org. If you know someone who might be interested, please share this information.

Church Office Hours

Regular Office Hours

Monday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Church Office Closed and No Activities

Tuesday, December 24 & Wednesday, December 25
Tuesday, December 31 & Wednesday, January 1

Christmas Eve Worship is December 24 at 7:00 p.m.

End of the Year Offerings

All offerings received AFTER Sunday, December 29 will be processed and recorded in January 2025.

Calendar Highlights

Sunday, December 1

First Sunday of Advent Worship

9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 5

Candlelight Christmas

*readings and music for the season
featuring a dulcimer and guitar duo*

7:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 14

Cookie Walk and Boutique

*Christmas goodies and hand-crafted boutique items
proceeds go to missions*

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 19

Dunes Concert Series: GHHS Choral Ensembles

7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

7:00 p.m.

GIVING

Christmas Gift Tree for Kids Belong

Church of the Dunes Missions and Social Concerns Commission

The Missions and Social Concerns team is sponsoring a gift tree at church for Kids Belong, a local organization that supports foster and adoptive families. To participate, take a gift tag ornament from the tree located in the weekday entrance of the church, purchase the suggested item, and return it to the base of the tree prior to Christmas. Please DO NOT gift wrap your donations. These gifts will help assure that the Kids Belong foster children have everything they need for a happy Christmas. Some of the items noted on the tree may be things needed to supply the Kids Belong Foster Closet, which ensures families are supplied with needed items as they take in children coming to them with little to nothing. Our generosity is a sign of Christ's love for the little ones.



Art Exhibit in the Ryder Lounge: Paintings by Blythe Smith

Ruth Woodward, Church of the Dunes Visual Arts Committee

Blythe Metternich Smith became a member of Church of the Dunes relatively recently, and is already very involved in the activities of the church. Her first recollection of enjoying art is sitting on a kitchen countertop and "painting" in a paintless paint book. She just had to wet a brush and put it on the picture for color to magically appear. Eighty years later, she says she still loves to paint!

She has spent a lifetime honing her skills, taking art classes in high school and at Western Michigan University. She studied briefly at Kendal, received an Associates of Art Degree from Grand Rapids Community College, and also attended Ferris State University from 1991-1997.

She has attended many art workshops to continue to build and improve her skills. She participated in weekly painting groups in Big Rapids, at the Lowell Franciscan Center, and now is active in the Tuesday Painters here at Church of the Dunes.*

Blythe's stunning paintings of florals and other botanicals are on display through the end of December in the Ryder Lounge. The lounge is located on the main floor of the church building, near the sanctuary.

** All artists are welcome to Church of the Dunes' Tuesday Painters group that meets at 9:30 a.m. (on Tuesdays) at various locations. We typically sketch and watercolor and enjoy plein-air work in good weather. For information and meeting locations, contact Ruth Woodward. For assistance connecting with Ruth, contact the church office.*

MUSIC FOR ALL

Dunes Concert Series

Holiday Concert with GHHS Select Ensembles



On Thursday, December 19 at 7:00 p.m., Grand Haven High School (GHHS) Advanced Women's Ensemble and Choral Ensemble will perform a delightful Christmas and holiday concert to add spirit and festivity to the season. These groups are made up of talented, auditioned singers. Come to enjoy the music of the season! Dunes Concert Series events are free, open to the public, and made possible by an ongoing contribution.



LIVING WELL IN THE SECOND HALF

Finishing Well Ministry December Fun and Logo Wearables in January

Susan Thorpe, Coordinator, Finishing Well Ministry

Matinee Meet-Up: Miracle On 34th Street

Saturday, December 14th we will meet up at the Central Park Players theater inside Central Park Place (formerly the Community Center) at 421 Columbus in Grand Haven. The production of Miracle on 34th Street will be performed at 1:30 p.m. We have Row H reserved for our group; that row is accessible and accommodates wheelchairs. Tickets are \$10. Plan to buy tickets either online at www.centralparkplayers.org or at the door. When purchasing tickets at the door, mention you are with Church of the Dunes and my name: Susan Thorpe. These meet-ups are always fun, so plan to join us!



Church Logo Wearables Coming Soon

Throughout the month of January 2025, Finishing Well Ministry will be taking orders for embroidered clothing, caps, vests, and totes displaying the Church of the Dunes logo. What a great way to share your church home wherever you go. There will be an opportunity to place orders after worship each Sunday, in the Wiltse Center fellowship area, during coffee fellowship time. Many sizes and colors are available. Delivery will be in February 2025. Watch for more information about this fundraising event.

Is there something you especially like about church? Tell someone about it.

WELCOME ADVENT, WELCOME CHRISTMAS

UWF Cookie Walk & Boutique, Candlelight Christmas Event

Ruth Woodward, Church of the Dunes United Women in Faith (UWF)



IT'S TIME TO GET READY FOR THE COOKIE WALK & BOUTIQUE

The Church of the Dunes UWF Cookie Walk and Boutique is rapidly approaching - Saturday, December 14, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. For this to be a successful event, we need help from everyone! It is not too early to start baking and freezing those tasty Christmas cookies. But if you are not a baker, there are other ways you can be of assistance. We will be holding a couple of work bees at the church, to cut out and decorate Christmas cookies. Watch the bulletin for specific days and times. Supplies of flour, sugar, etc. are always needed as well and can be donated. Give these supplies to any UWF board member (Robyn Daane, Ruth Woodward, Gayle Cox, Darlene Graska, Marna Jeffery). And of course, be sure to come out and support us on that Saturday. All proceeds go to support missions for women, children and youth.

A SPECIAL EVENT FOR ALL

Thursday, December 5 is our annual Candlelight Christmas Event at 7:00 p.m. The featured musical performers are a talented dulcimer and guitar duo. After the performance, we will make our way to the beautifully decorated Wiltse Center for some special treats and a time of fellowship. A free will offering will be collected to benefit the Salvation Army.

CONNECTING

If you are not involved in one of the United Women in Faith Circles at Church of the Dunes, we encourage you to check us out. The Craft Circle meets at 10:00 a.m. on the second Thursday of each month, and is working on items to be sold at the Boutique area of the Cookie Walk. Esther Circle meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. and has recently gathered clothing for the women of Hope House. Mary Circle meets on the first Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. and recently visited Hope House to learn more about its mission. Ruth Circle meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. and recently provided decorative autumn blessings buckets for the women of Hope House, filled with mittens, scarves, makeup, and candy. They also had a meeting of book reports, highlighting many of the books on our UWF reading list. It has inspired many to look further at this list. (The book list and many of the books are available in the church library, which is located on the main floor near the nursery.)



Please join us!

This event is open to all, no tickets or RSVPs needed.

CHILDREN GROWING IN FAITH

An Exciting Time for Family Ministries - Help and Prayers Requested

Jodie Freeman, Director of Family Ministries

There is a lot of excitement in Family Ministries. The Sunday School class, blessed with energetic and inquisitive children, has been exploring Bible stories and talking about the words to Christian songs. The classroom has been freshened up and rearranged to include a comfy quiet space, and a space to work on crafts and activities.



As this ministry area continues to grow, there are a variety of needs. Please take a minute to read the list below—if there is something you can help with, please contact me. My business card with contact information is available on the Family Ministries bulletin board or you may contact the church office for assistance.

Sunday School and Nursery Helpers

This is *not* an every week commitment, unless you prefer to help on a weekly basis. Volunteers can sign up for dates that work with their schedules. This role does require completing a volunteer information form and allowing the church to conduct a background check.

Activity and Special Event Helpers

Events and activities for families are being planned for the new year, and will be from 90 minutes to three hours long. Most will happen on weekends. There may be occasional weeknight activities. Volunteers would help with set-up, clean-up, and assisting with fun activities.

Chess Helpers (yes, chess helpers)

Many of the Sunday School children are interested in chess. Volunteers would join us to play this game with the students. You don't need to be an expert—just have a familiarity with the game. We are all just learning.

Gently Used Items

Do you have any of the following items to donate to the Family Ministries program?

- Chess Sets
- A full-size Foosball table
- Old Bowling Trophies
- Legos
- Teacups with Saucers
- Fancy Teaspoons

Please give this some thought and prayer. Family Ministries welcomes your help.

With appreciation and blessings,

Jodie

Anyone who does anything to help a child is a hero to me.

Fred Rogers

Grow in Faith

2024 Advent Studies

Cathy Shick, Adult Education Coordinator

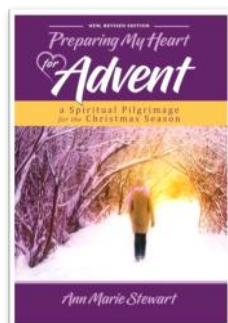
Church of the Dunes is offering three Advent studies this year. Descriptions and meeting schedules are provided below. Please sign up for the classes on the Adult Ministry board near the office or email the facilitator. For assistance in making the connection, contact the church office. If a class has already begun as you read this information, you are still welcome to participate in the remaining sessions.



“Our Hope Has Come”

by Lifeway Women

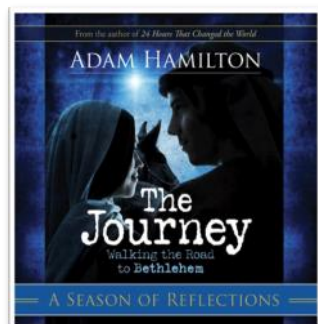
This study takes a closer look at the Christmas story and the hope revealed in the lives of people. We will be reminded that God works on our behalf too. Meet us in Room 13/14 at 1:00 p.m. on the following Mondays: December 2, 9, 16, and 23. The book cost is \$9. Facilitator: Ruth Woodward



“Preparing My Heart for Advent”

by Ann Marie Stewart

This study encourages us to stop and experience Immanuel, “God with us.” Join us as we prepare for Christmas by looking at scriptures, songs, and symbols. We will meet Tuesdays in Room 2 (lower level) at 10:00 a.m. on November 26, December 3, 10, and 17. The book cost is \$11. Facilitator: Cathy Shick



“The Journey - A Season of Reflections”

by Adam Hamilton

This is a book of meditations based on the journey of Mary and Joseph. Along the way we will talk about Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zechariah, the shepherds, and the wise men. Videos of the journey through the Holy Land will be part of the class. The first session was November 20, but you are welcome to join in on December 4, 11, and 18. The book cost is \$10. Facilitator: Cathy Shick

Book images: amazon.com

Additional Bible Studies and Discussion Groups are listed on the next page.

Grow in Faith

December and January Studies and Discussion Groups for Adults

Faith Linked Weekly Discussion Group

Sundays 10:45 a.m.

Bron and Barry Kram, facilitators, Ryder Lounge (main floor)

Drop in as your schedule permits, or attend weekly to discuss current events and topics from a faith-focused perspective. Each session features a different topic.

Faith
Linked

Fourth Monday Reading Group (on the third Monday this month)

“The Red Suit Diaries:

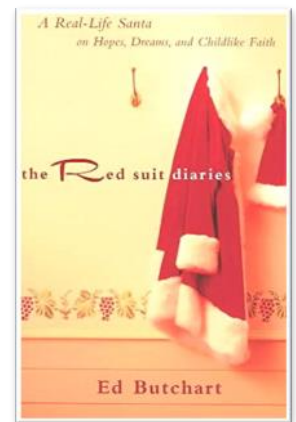
A Real-Life Santa on Hopes, Dreams, and Childlike Faith”

by Ed Butchart

Monday, December 16, 1:30 p.m., at Panera Bread, Grand Haven

Gayle Cox, facilitator

“With warmth, humor, and wonder, Ed Butchart shares his stories as a professional Santa Claus. Deftly combining his Santa persona with his passion for God, Butchart reveals himself as a once-hardened Marine who found Jesus and began to serve others in unusual ways.” To participate, get a copy of the book, read it, and join in the discussion.



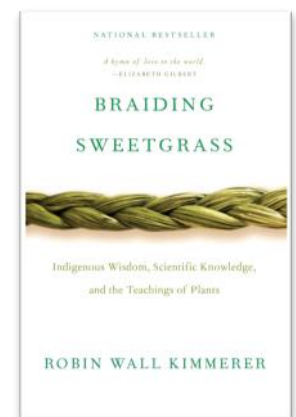
December Sunday Book Discussion Group

“Braiding Sweetgrass” by Robin Wall Kimmerer

Sunday, December 8, 3:00 p.m., Ryder Lounge, main floor

Jill Miller, facilitator

“Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices...For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return.” To participate, get a copy of the book, read it, and join in the discussion.



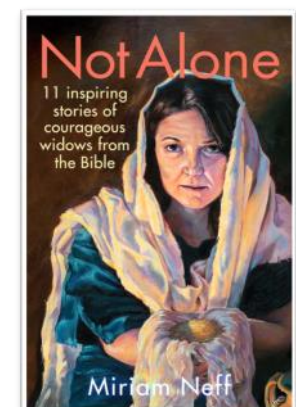
A Bible Study Coming up in January

Not Alone—Eleven Courageous Widows from the Bible, Part 2

Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. begins January 7, meets 4 weeks, Room 2 lower level

Mary Anne Miller, Facilitator

Based on the book by Miriam Neff, this study for women especially speaks to those who have faced challenges on their own. This is a continuation of a study that began in September. If you did not participate in part 1, you are welcome to join in for part 2; please contact the facilitator through the church office ahead of time to arrange for any needed books or materials.



Book summaries and images: amazon.com



COMING UP IN WORSHIP

- DECEMBER 1— HOPE**
Communion
Sunday;
Chancel Choir
in Worship
- DECEMBER 8— PEACE**
Bells of Glory
in Worship
- DECEMBER 15— JOY**
Chancel Choir
in Worship
- DECEMBER 22— LOVE**
Guitar Club
in Worship
- DECEMBER 24— CHRISTMAS EVE**
Candlelight
Service
with communion
7:00pm Worship
Chancel Choir
& **Bells of Glory**
along with
special guests
- DECEMBER 29— CHRISTMAS
SUNDAY**
Carol Sing

Worship Arts Ministry: Notes from the Loft by Megan Horist, Director of Worship Arts

December 2024

JOIN US each Sunday for our Advent and Christmas series: "RESTORE." The arrival of Jesus Christ calls us out of our complacency to the work of God. In Jesus Christ, God promised us hope, peace, joy, and love. This Advent and Christmas, God is inviting each of us to the work of first receiving, and then, restoring hope, peace, joy, and love to a world that hungers for these.

DUNES CONCERT SERIES

The November concert of the 2024-25 season was fantastic! Thanks to everyone who came out and supported this new ministry. Thanks to our new friends, and inspiring performers Ruby John and John Warstler for a terrific night of music! Our next concert will be **Thursday, December 19, at 7:00pm** in the sanctuary. We'll host the Grand Haven High School Advanced Women's and Choral Ensembles. Come out to enjoy some beautiful holiday music, hang out with your friends, and have a great evening together! We hope to see you there!

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP will be **Tuesday, December 24 at 7pm**. This will be a lovely service that will include carols, candles, lots of special music and a meaningful message from Pastor Lou. We hope you'll join us.

See you in church!
Megan

SAVE THE DATE

Dunes Concert Series Presents:
GRAND HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL
Advanced Women's Ensemble
& Choral Ensemble
Thursday, December 19, 7:00 pm
in the sanctuary



FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

Winter Weather Closings at Church

Many years ago, Church of the Dunes established a winter weather closing practice that still works well today:

On normal school days, when Grand Haven Area Public Schools are closed due to weather conditions, Church of the Dunes is closed, and all activities are cancelled. Closing information is relayed to WoodTV 8, and posted on the church's Facebook page.* On non-school days, our pastor determines if activities are cancelled. If a worship cancellation occurs due to winter weather conditions, church staff will convey the information to Wood TV8 to be included in its list of cancelations and closings.

While Sunday worship cancelations are not common, all are strongly encouraged to choose safety first if weather or road conditions are a concern. Remember, worship services are livestreamed for convenient access on [Church of the Dunes YouTube channel](#).

Frequently asked questions:

Are evening activities held if weather and road conditions have improved?

The winter weather closing policy applies to the entire day. If the church has been closed during the day, staff will not have had the opportunity to clear and salt sidewalks, check the work of the plowing and salting service to assure that parking lot conditions at the church are as safe as possible, or to set up meeting spaces. Because Church of the Dunes is a large and active congregation, it is extremely difficult to communicate schedule information on a case-by-case basis. A one-size-fits-all policy helps all to know what to expect and plan their days accordingly.

My group or committee doesn't mind being out in wintry weather. Can we come to the church to meet anyway?

A winter weather closing applies to the entire church property. Unfortunately, disregarding the policy creates difficulties and liabilities for the church.

If the church building is closed because of winter weather, why are there occasionally staff members on site?

Staff members are strongly encouraged to work from home when the church building is closed because of winter weather. Essential staff are permitted in the building on an as-needed basis to perform functions relating to care of the building, and to prepare for upcoming Sunday worship.

When a winter weather closing happens, please stay safe. Maybe you'd like to cozy up with something warm to drink and a good book, a knitting project, or a movie you've been wanting to watch. Please stay safe, and we'll look forward to seeing one another again when the weather improves.

* To find the church's Facebook page, log in to Facebook and search Church of the Dunes.