

Dunes Digest



PASTOR'S NOTES

A Call for Love

Rev. Lou Grettenberger, Pastor

As we enter the month of February and celebrate St. Valentine's Day, we are reminded of the many ways in which love is central to our lives. From the "universal call to love" that Jesus exemplified, to the simple joys of companionship and friendship, I invite you to reflect on the transformative power of love. Love in its fullest expression is personal and deeply communal.

February is a time to celebrate love and reflect on the mutuality of love found in community exemplified in the resilience, contributions, and spiritual wisdom of Black leaders and communities. As we reflect on the history and ongoing struggle for racial justice, we are reminded that true love cannot exist in a world that allows for the marginalization of any group. Whether we call it DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) or "love our neighbor" (and everyone is our neighbor), Christians are commanded to love without restraint and/or categories of hate or exclusion.

The Bible says, "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39). The love that we are called to share is active and engaged. Jesus's love challenges systems of inequality, racism, and injustice that harm our precious siblings. This month, and every month, may our congregation be committed to the work of dismantling these systems of hatred and division— through advocacy, education, prayer, and hands-on service. Together, we must be a prophetic voice and presence in our world.

We should also consider love in the context of healing and reconciliation. Many of us carry wounds, both personal and collective, and this month offers an opportunity to invite healing into our lives and offer it to our communities. The Apostle Paul reminds us in II Corinthians 5:18 that we are called to the "ministry of reconciliation." In 1 Corinthians 13:7, the Apostle Paul reminds us that "love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Love is not naïve or superficial; it is deep and transformative. Our love should be childlike, but never childish.

Love invites us to sit with the pain of the past, acknowledging the wounds caused by both personal and societal harm, while moving forward with a commitment to restoration. Join me in inviting the Lord to help us be agents of healing in our relationships, our communities, and our world. Whether we are forgiving an individual who has wronged us or advocating for restorative justice in our larger society, let's embody the healing love that is at the heart of our Christian faith. May we keep our hearts open to the transformative power of God's love. May we keep our hearts centered on Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate model of self-giving love.

With Love, Pastor Lou

Remembrance

Vern Brower

died on November 27, 2024.

Please keep Vern's loved ones in your prayers.

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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Dates to Note

Brown Bag Food Gathering

February 9, see page 3

Pickleball Clinic

February 11, see page 3

Jesse Ray Concert

February 20, see page 10

Scholarships Due

February 28, see page 3

Kenzie's Be Coffee Date

February 28, see page 4

STAFF UPDATES

Madelyn (Communications Lead)

Hello! My name is Madelyn and I am the new Communications Lead. I am a university senior studying Writing and Business. I have my associates degree in Writing and recently completed a writing internship with a major retailer. Throughout my professional and educational experiences, I have written for newsletters, promotional materials, and catalogs.

I am a West Michigan local who frequents the state and county parks for hiking, swimming, and running. I enjoy coffee, local restaurants (and am open to any good recommendations), and spending time with family and friends. I look forward to fulfilling the responsibilities of this role and serving Church of the Dunes to the best of my ability.

Virginia (Finance Manager)

We welcome Virginia, the new Finance Manager, to Church of the Dunes. Virginia was born into a missionary family and grew up in Jakarta. When her parents retired, they moved to Colorado. There, she met her husband John, and they built an information technology consulting firm that they managed together for almost 30 years. They serviced clients along the Front Range from Boulder to Pueblo, several being prominent nonprofits.

"John and I love West Michigan and living near the lakeshore. And it's a great place to raise our new puppy. We find that people are very welcoming and feel blessed to have made our home here!"

TAKING A BITE OUT OF HUNGER

**Brown Bag Non-Perishable Food Gathering for Love in Action
February 9**

Missions and Social Concerns Commission

It's time for another Brown Bag food gathering. This time, the food will go to the pantry at Love in Action Tri-Cities. Love in Action provides a wide variety of assistance programs for people in need; there is great demand at their food pantries. Donations are always welcome and appreciated.

On February 2, brown paper grocery bags, with a list of most needed items attached, will be available after worship. To participate, take a bag(s), add your choice of items from the list, and bring your bags back to church on February 9. Or, you can use the list provided below and bring the items in the bags provided when you shop. Needed items include: pasta, pancake mix and syrup, canned fruit, coffee, grape jelly, cereal, taco kits, chunky soup, salsa, tea, salt and pepper, 64oz shelf-stable juice, rice, sugar, and ravioli.

**Free Pickleball Clinic**

Tuesday, February 11, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Wiltse Center fellowship area

Instructor: Coach Jaron

Jaron has won multiple medals at the 5.0 level and plays pickleball on the pro tour.

SUPPORTING LEARNERS

Education Grants from Church of the Dunes Memorial Fund

Robert Mann, Chairperson, Memorial Fund Committee

Twice each year, the Memorial Fund Committee awards education grants. Eligible applicants are members and staff of Church of the Dunes, and children and grandchildren of members who have a connection to this church.

One-time scholarships of up to \$1000 may be awarded to each of the individuals selected. Those applying are asked to clearly identify the proposed area of study or coursework, and the college or institution providing the education. A recommendation letter and personal essay of 300 - 500 words are also required. Non-traditional students may apply, and continuing education opportunities are eligible for consideration. Complete instructions are available at www.umcdunes.org/serve. The deadline for applications is 1:00 p.m. on Friday, February 28, 2025. Please note that church office hours are Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Church of the Dunes to Host BOGO Coffee Date at Kenzie's Be Cafe

On Friday, February 28, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Church of the Dunes is sponsoring and hosting a "Buy One Get One Free" coffee date at Kenzie's Be Café in East Town, Grand Haven. On that day, during the café's regular hours, members and volunteers from Church of the Dunes will be on hand to offer customers a coupon for a free brewed coffee with any beverage purchase. You are encouraged to come by to enjoy a beverage, greet people, and tell them about your experiences in the Church of the Dunes worship community.



Kenzie's Be Café provides meaningful employment for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If you've already been there, you know what a jewel of the community it is. Kenzie Be's is operated by a non-profit organization that "believes that there is a place for everyone in the workforce. While we provide employment our goal is to provide job skills and life skills training so that our BEristas are able to find further employment within our community."

This event supports the café by bringing in as many as we can from Church of the Dunes to purchase a beverage and maybe something to eat too. This is a great opportunity to support a good cause and connect with members of the community and tell them why we like our church so much.

CRAFTED WITH CARE

Craft Circle Continues Sewing Project for Hope House

Ann Antaya, Church of the Dunes Craft Circle

Craft Circle will meet in Room 2 (lower level) on Thursday, February 13 at 10:00 a.m. Co-chair Annette Allen wrote, "At January's meeting we had a good start on our project to make quilted dresser scarves for the women of Hope House. We will continue this popular project at our February meeting and will need many helping hands. There will be some machine sewing, but more importantly we will need people to fold, turn, and clip the edges so the scarves can be finished. This step takes time, so your help is appreciated. Please join us for this fun community project."



Craft Circle meets the second Thursday of every month at 10:00 a.m.





Worship Arts Ministry: Notes from the Loft

By Megan Horist, Director of Worship Arts

February 2025

WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR!

Everything is back in full swing at Church of the Dunes for the winter season! There are many ways to get involved in worship. You can play bells, learn guitar, sing in the choir, sing and play praise songs, offer special music as an instrumentalist or vocalist, serve behind the scenes on the Tech Team, or read liturgy. We'd love to get you involved! There are also opportunities for children to light candles or read for worship. Interested? Please connect with Megan Horist to see where you might serve in worship.

MUSIC REHEARSAL SCHEDULE 2025

- **Tuesdays 7 p.m.**—Bells of Glory in the Loft
- **Wednesdays 6 p.m.**—Guitar Club in the Sanctuary
- **Wednesdays 7 p.m.**—Chancel Choir in the Loft

DUNES CONCERT SERIES

The first 2025 concert of this series is scheduled for February 20, at 7:00 p.m. For more information, see page 10.

THANK YOU!

I would like to thank all those who helped with worship for Christmas Eve, the Sundays following Christmas, and Epiphany Sunday. From music, to communion, to cutting and writing on stars, to decorations. Everything was so beautiful. Thank you!

I hope to see you in church soon!

Megan

COMING UP IN WORSHIP

FEBRUARY 02— Communion
Sunday
Chancel Choir
in worship

FEBRUARY 09— **Bells of Glory**
in worship

FEBRUARY 16— **Chancel Choir**
in worship

FEBRUARY 23— **Special Musical**
Guests—
Dianne Prieditis
& Marna Jeffery
Moment for
Mission:
Momentum Center



SING TO THE LORD A NEW SONG;
SING TO THE LORD,
ALL THE EARTH."

PSALM 96: 1



Grow in Faith

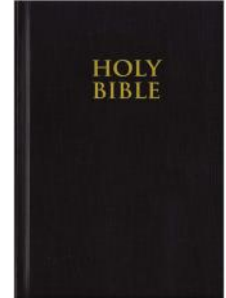
February Bible Studies and Book Discussion Groups

“The Sermon on the Mount”

Tuesdays, 10:00-11:30 a.m., begins February 4, 4 weeks, Room 2 (lower level)

Cathy Shick, facilitator

Join us for this study on The Sermon on the Mount as we observe, interpret, and apply Jesus’ instructions on how we are to live the Christian life. Please bring a Bible. Sign-up sheets are located on the Adult Ministries bulletin board, near the church office (main floor).



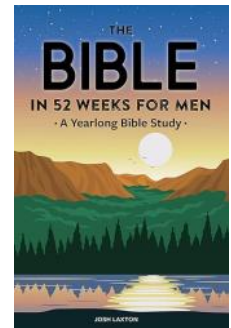
“The Bible in 52 Weeks for Men - A Yearlong Bible Study”

by Josh Laxton

Sundays, 10:45-11:45 a.m., begins February 9, Room 14 (lower level)

Richard Cole, facilitator

Using the Bible to apply God’s lessons to everyday life is an integral part of being a Christian. With in-depth lessons and practical applications tailored to our everyday lives, we can cultivate a richer connection with God and God’s teachings over the course of a year. Books will be provided at no cost.



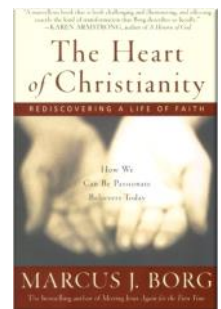
Sunday Afternoon Book Group “The Heart of Christianity”

by Marcus Borg

Sunday, 3:00 p.m., February 16, Ryder Lounge (main floor)

Jill Miller, facilitator

Re-discover a life of faith as we explore what we believe as Christians about God and doing the “right things.” The book offers insight into navigating challenging times as a Christian and a greater understanding of our love for God and God’s love for us. Sign up on the Adult Ministries bulletin board, located near the church office (main floor). Participants are asked to obtain their own copy of the book.



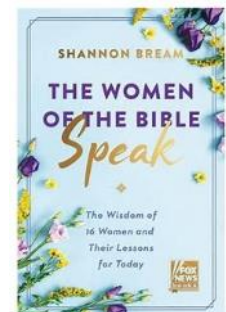
Fourth Monday Reading Group “The Women of the Bible Speak”

by Shannon Bream

Monday, 1:30 p.m., February 24, at Panera Bread in Grand Haven

Gayle Cox, facilitator

“People unfamiliar with Scripture often assume that women play a small, secondary role in the Bible. But in fact, they were central figures in numerous Biblical tales. It was Queen Esther’s bravery at a vital point in history which saved her entire people. The Bible contains warriors like Jael, judges like Deborah, and prophets like Miriam.” To participate, get a copy of the book, read it, and join in the discussion.

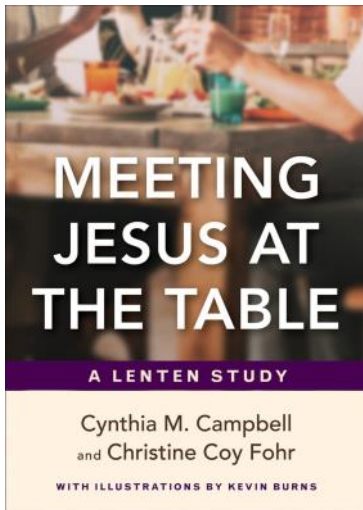




Grow in Faith

Lent Studies

Church of the Dunes is offering two Lenten studies this year. Descriptions and meeting schedules are provided below. To sign up for these classes, contact the facilitator or use the sign-up sheets on the Adult Ministries bulletin board located near the church office. For assistance in making the connection, contact the church office.



“Meeting Jesus at the Table”

by Cynthia Campbell and Christine Coy Fohr

Wednesdays, 5:45 – 7:00 p.m., begins February 26, meets 7 weeks

Ryder Lounge (main floor)

Ruth Woodward, facilitator

“The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus sharing meals with disciples, friends, even tax collectors and Pharisees. Whether multiplying bread to feed a whole crowd, relaxing with his inner circle, or telling curious elites stories about even greater banquets, Jesus imparts wisdom as he shares the wine and grants forgiveness as he distributes the fish.” Books will be available for purchase in the upcoming weeks through the facilitator.



“Altar’d”

by Susan Kent

Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., begins March 11, meets 6 weeks

Room 2 (lower level)

Cathy Shick, facilitator

From the beginning of time God's people have built altars to mark the places where God gave directions, spoke, or gave his blessing. It is the place where people surrendered their offerings to God. There is a promise of restoration and transformation when we embrace surrender. Books will be available February 23 during coffee fellowship hour. Book fee is \$12. If the book fee is an obstacle, scholarships are available.

CONNECT FOR KIDS

February Update from Family Ministries*Jodie Freeman, Director of Family Ministries*

Family Ministries is off to a nice start for 2025 as we dive into our new curriculum, “Be Bold!”

In January we began this new curriculum. The class sessions include learning and adventure. “Be Bold” focuses on scriptures that teach us about acceptance of self and others, respect for other’s thoughts and struggles, community, and God’s incredible love for us.



During this journey we are exploring some tough questions like, “is it okay to sometimes have moments of doubt?”, and “how can I forgive when I don’t feel like it?”

Family Ministries has an invitation for you! We are calling it “the other side of the net.” Nets are so important symbolically when we think about Jesus and his earthly ministry. Remember how Simon Peter first met Jesus?

With that in mind, think about our Sunday morning coffee fellowship time after worship service. This is such a wonderful time to come together and recharge our batteries before we head into a new week. If you have never attended or have not been in a while, please consider adding this to your Sunday routine. While there, you will notice the big net between the tables where we sit and enjoy coffee and a lot of wonderful food. On the other side of the net, you will see our Sunday School friends engaged in various activities. We are adding a few activities that will be taking place every Sunday. We recently added chess, checkers, Uno, Othello, and more. If you have never played chess, or it’s been a while and you need a refresher, we have some good news for you! We have some Sunday School friends who are excellent teachers and would be happy to help you learn. We also are going to be coloring lunch bags for the ongoing need for Kids’ Food Basket. This might sound familiar because we have decorated bags for them in the past, and Kids Food Basket has been featured with our Mission Moments. Absolutely no drawing ability needed, just a desire to help. Come on over and check it out! Be Bold!

Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.

~ 1 Peter 4:10 ~

family⁺ministries



United
Women
in Faith

FUNDRAISING, FELLOWSHIP, AND FAITH

United Women in Faith Celebrates Successes and Looks Forward to 2025

Ruth Woodward, Church of the Dunes' United Women in Faith

Happy New Year from the UWF! 2024 was a busy year for Church of the Dunes' United Women in Faith. We wanted to share updates on a few of our projects. First, we were able to pay our entire pledge to the Western Waters District of the UWF and have once again completed the UWF five channels of giving. Completing this means that we have sent money to the District for the following purposes:

- Special Mission Recognition
- Gifts in Memory
- Gifts to Missions
- World Thank Offering
- Call to Prayer and Self Denial

Church of the Dunes' UWF is one of only a handful of churches that accomplishes this goal on a regular basis. Beyond that, we have donated to more than 20 other missions. Our "Fall is for Fowl" drive to purchase chicken meat for local pantries was a huge success. We are grateful for the generous response; we hoped to raise \$1,000 but received over \$1,600. Thus far, we have purchased and delivered chicken to the Salvation Army food pantry, the People Center food pantry, Calvary Christian food pantry in Fruitport, Hope House, and Harbor Hall.

We were pleased with the success of our other projects, as well. Even though the Candlelight Christmas event had to be cancelled due to weather, your generosity allowed us to send \$500 to the Salvation Army. UWF and Ruth Circle were able to sponsor four teenagers through the Community Cares Program prior to Christmas. Our Cookie Walk and Boutique raised almost \$2,400 which we will decide how best to donate at our next board meeting.

We are looking forward to exciting opportunities in 2025. It is a UWF Christmas Bazaar year. It is never too early to start thinking about creating items for this special event. And, if you are not already participating in one of the UWF circles, we invite and encourage you to get involved. For more information about circle meeting schedules, please contact the church office.

Blessings to you all!

A gift opens the way and ushers the giver into the presence of the great.

~ Proverbs 18:16 ~

PAYING IT FORWARD

The People's Center Russ' Fundraiser*Church of the Dunes Missions and Social Concerns Committee*

The Missions and Socials Concerns Committee invites you to support the People Center's fundraiser at Russ's restaurant February 10 through February 15. Using a special coupon available at church, diners at the Grand Haven Russ' can ask that 20% of their total order go to the People's Center. The coupon is valid Monday, February 10 through Saturday, February 15. Funds raised will support the People Center's work to feed our hungry neighbors, provide traditional housing, and a clothing pantry for those in need. Coupons are available at the Welcome Center (main floor) of the church which is located at the back of the worship space.

**Dunes Concert Series Presents Jesse Ray****Thursday, February 20, 7:00 p.m., Sanctuary**

"The Reverend" Jesse Ray presents a unique blend of rockabilly blues. He offers a dynamic mix of energetic originals, soulful ballads, and classic covers of legends like George Jones and Johnny Cash. Armed with his electric guitar, harmonica, foot drums, and captivating vocals, "The Reverend" Jesse Ray is a one-man rock 'n' roll, Americana, and blues powerhouse that any fan of traditional American music will not want to miss. Jesse is also frontman for the band "Jesse Ray and the Carolina Catfish" and has completed several nationwide tours, releasing a total of eight live and studio albums. This concert is free and open to the public. General seating, doors open at 6:15 p.m.



WINTER WEATHER CLOSING INFO

On normal school days, when Grand Haven Area Public Schools are closed due to winter weather conditions, Church of the Dunes is closed, and all activities are cancelled. Closing information is relayed to WOOD-TV 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-TV 8 to be included in its list of cancellations and closings.

* Church staff are not able to control how long closing information remains posted on WOOD-TV.

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