

Dunes Digest



FROM THE PASTOR

Relationship Road: Love and Acceptance

Rev. Lou Grettenberger, Pastor

Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

³⁰ “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and will all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. ³¹ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as your self.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

You have probably all heard of the Trinity, traditionally defined as “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” I find it interesting that in grappling with the notion of the Divine, the conclusion of early theologians was that the definition involved a triangle of interwoven relationships. Somehow, the what and who of God could only be described with the metaphor of relationships. We find a connection between a heavenly parent and an earthly child. We find a Spirit that is mysteriously expressed in the relationship between the two.

Similarly, we find a Trinity of relationships in “The Great Commandment” found above. “Love the Lord your God” has an inferred “you.” (You) love the Lord your God, with everything you’ve got! Don’t stop there. Love your neighbor with your whole being—as much as you love yourself. This text infers that you do love yourself, because Jesus says to love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. Some of us struggle even with our relationship with our self (our ego); bathed in negative thoughts and self-loathing, we struggle to love ourself.

So, how do we break the cycle? It starts with a reciprocating love with our God. God loves us first and best, and we are invited to love God back. God’s love is proof that we are loveable—we deserve love. So then, we are given the capacity to love ourself. If we are given the gift of loving ourself as much as God loves us, then we can eventually grow to love our neighbor as much as we love ourself.

In Jesus parabolic teaching he says, *“And the King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”*

— Matthew 25:40

Our relationship with others is a reflection of our relationship with our God and ourself.

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Remembrance

Connie Saylor

died on February 8, 2025

Please keep her husband John in your prayers.

Sunday Worship

9:30 a.m.

All are welcome!

Livestream available at 9:30 a.m. on the church's YouTube channel.

Recordings of the services are also available there. 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

717 Sheldon Road
Grand Haven, MI 49417
www.umcdunes.org

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My prayer for Lent is that we will be growing in all three of these relationships. Our series title is, "Relationship Road." The Road to Kindom living is paved with healthy relationships with our God, ourself, and our neighbors—and remember that everyone is our neighbor.

- Pastor Lou

Mark Your Calendars

Important Upcoming Dates

- March 5 - Ash Wednesday
- March 9 - New Members Welcomed
 - March 20 - Spring Begins
 - April 13 - Palm Sunday
- April 17 - Maundy Thursday
 - April 18 - Good Friday
 - April 20 - Easter Sunday



Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday, March 5, 6:00 p.m.

On March 5th, the sanctuary will be open from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. to allow for self-led prayer and reflection for Ash Wednesday. Pastor Lou will be present for communion and the imposition of ashes. All are welcome.

CREATING AND REMEMBERING

Soul Box Making with Craft Circle*Ann Antaya, Church of the Dunes Craft Circle*

Craft Circle teams up with the Gun Violence Prevention Group on Thursday, March 13 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2, downstairs in the church. We will be making “Soul Boxes” and materials will be provided. Craft Circle co-chair, Robyn Daane, explains:

“It’s an educational opportunity through art to have people experience the impact of the number of deaths by guns. Soul Boxes are origami boxes made thoughtfully and purposefully to honor a victim of gun violence. End Gun Violence Michigan has a goal to make and collect 1406 Soul Boxes, recognizing the victims in our state. Val Martin (head of the Church of the Dunes Gun Violence Prevention Group) will be leading us through this very important experience.”



Craft Circle welcomes everyone. Fun and fellowship without the formality of meeting minutes or dues provides a relaxed environment for everyone. We encourage drop-ins.

WARMING HEARTS AND SOULS

Valentines Chili ‘Hugs’ Fundraiser*Jill Miller, United Women in Faith*

Ruth Circle thanks the congregation for supporting our Valentine ‘Hugs’ mission fundraiser. Seven Hope House women joined us in making twenty-five Valentine Hugs meals that raised money for missions as well as enough chili, corn muffins, and cookies to provide a meal for the twenty-five women and men at Hope House and Harbor Hall. We had a good time working together and getting to know each other.

CARE YEILDS RESULTS

Brown Bag Food Gathering Generosity*Diane Gordon, Church of the Dunes Missions and Social Concerns Commission*

Thanks to everyone for the overwhelming generosity for February’s brown bag food gathering. On the right is a picture from the drop-off of all the food we collected on Sunday, February 9th for Love in Action Tri-Cities. Filling this many carts at the Love in Action warehouse was unusual and a blessing for them. Their director said demand is continuing to increase, and they are grateful for Church of the Dunes’ faithful giving.



MARCHING INTO THE NEW YEAR

Early Spring Updates from Finishing Well and Adult Ministries

Susan Thorpe, Coordinator, Finishing Well Ministries

Quite a winter has passed through West Michigan, and we look forward to a glorious spring! We have been busy working on a few things for this spring and summer to bring us together:

- Stay tuned for upcoming information on a travelogue presentation event this spring.
- This summer, we will again have the popular “Healthy Meals for One or Two” program. More information coming soon.
- *June 29 or July 13* at 2:00 p.m. - a Whitecaps Baseball Game. The cost is \$21 a person. At this time, Dale Zurakowski, our talented event planner, has sent out emails to anyone that has attended these games in past years to determine the best date for the event. If you are new to our events and are interested, please let Dale know your preference on either of the two dates. Contact the church office for help in making the connection.
- September 10 - Mark your calendar for a paddleboat trip down the Grand River! The cost will be \$20 per person.
- This fall, the Possible Sacred Aging Seminar will return with relevant topics on aging. More information to come!



Finally, a wrap-up on the logo embroidered items: fifty-five pieces were sold thanks to all of you! This was a fun project. Thanks to Carol Leinonen who arranged it all!

Adult Ministries

Our Care Cards program for college students and military families will again be sending greeting cards and gift cards to these individuals at Easter time. If you have a family member that fits this profile, please share their address with us! Contact Susan Thorpe.

We are interested in creating a social group for the 18 to 55 year olds at Church of the Dunes. No long-term commitments or meetings: just a time to gather, perhaps have a bite to eat (always good, right?). If interested please contact Susan Thorpe. If help is needed in making the connection, contact the church office.

Easter Flower Order Forms Available Soon

On Easter morning, a Resurrection Garden of flowering and green potted plants decorates the worship space. These plants are ordered by individuals within the congregation, purchased in bulk, and brought to the sanctuary and displayed. Order forms will be available at the end of March; more information will be available in the coming weeks. Your flowers may be picked up after worship on Easter Sunday (Resurrection Day), April 20. As is church tradition, flowers may be given in memory or honor of a loved one.

GIVING BACK, GIVING FORWARD

Growing Opportunities with Family Ministries

Jodie Freeman, Director of Family Ministries

The year 2025 is off to a great start! It's hard to believe that the Lenten Season is already here.



Our Sunday School friends have been busy decorating Bucket Drums, attending a 3-hour "Camp Out" in the Wiltse Center and continuing the **Be Bold** curriculum. In March, we will be talking about the journey of Lent. We will also be getting together for some more "Youth Group" fun.

Activities will always be available on 'the other side of the net' in the Wiltse Center (main floor) during fellowship time after the worship service. Please consider joining us for some fun every now and then.

Art classes are under way. If you missed the sign-up and start for "Introduction to Acrylics, no worries as there will be other opportunities in the future. We also will be starting "Acrylics Too" in April. This class will offer a variety of art mediums and while having taking Introduction to Acrylics will be helpful, it is not necessary.

Interested in classes, or volunteering with our Sunday School Friends? Please feel free to contact Jodie.

"Every child you encounter is a divine appointment" – Wes Stafford

family⁺ministries

Aloha Church of the Dunes!

On Sunday, February 16, Family Ministries hosted a Hawaiian vacation themed coffee fellowship time. There was a vacation photo station, a lemonade stand, and leis for all. Thanks to everyone who participated and to the Family Ministries Sunday School friends and volunteers for organizing the event.

Coffee fellowship time takes place every Sunday after the service.





Worship Arts Ministry: Notes from the Loft

By Megan Horist, Director of Worship Arts

March 2025

LENT BEGINS MARCH 5

Jesus taught us to “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind**’ and, ‘**Love your neighbor as yourself.**” (Luke 10:27) This is how Jesus answered when asked for a summation of the law. As we journey through Lent, we will do so by examining three relationships. We must love God first. We can’t love others unless we love ourselves. We must love God and others, because God first loved us. Join us as we travel “**Relationship Road.**”

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

We will once again have mid-week worship experience for Ash Wednesday. On Wednesday, **March 5th from 6:00—7:00 p.m.**, please join us in the sanctuary for a quiet time of reflection, communion, and imposition of ashes. This is a great way to start your spiritual journey through Lent.

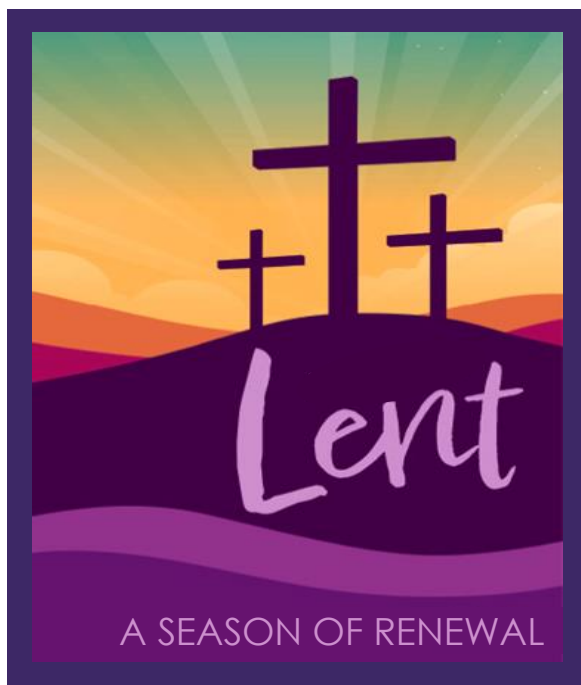
YOU’RE INVITED

Since March 30 is the fifth Sunday in March, our **Celebration Choir** will be singing, and you are invited! If you would like to join Celebration Choir this month, please join us for 2 rehearsals **Wednesdays March 19 and March 26 at 7:30 p.m.** in the choir loft. I hope to see you in the loft!

Megan

COMING UP IN WORSHIP

- MARCH 02—** Communion
Sunday
CHANCEL CHOIR
in worship
- MARCH 09—** LENT 1
BELLS OF GLORY
in worship
- MARCH 16—** LENT 2
CHANCEL CHOIR
in worship
- MARCH 23—** LENT 3
Mission Moment:
Humanity for Prisoners
- MARCH 30—** LENT 4
CELEBRATION CHOIR
in worship



Grow in Faith



March Classes and Discussion Groups for Adults

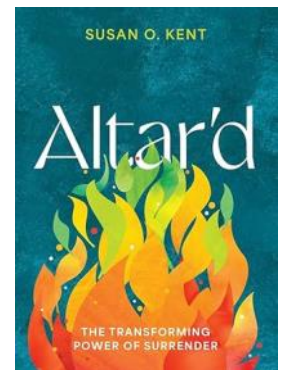
Lenten Study

“Altar’d” by Susan Kent

March 11, Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m., 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 blessing. It is the place where people surrendered their offerings to God. There is a promise of restoration and transformation when we embrace surrender.

“In the midst of a world filled with chaos and disappointment, pain and death, there is a promise of restoration and transformation. However, it isn't found at the end of our lives, but at the end of ourselves. It is found when we embrace surrender.”



Fourth Monday Reading Group

“Vera Wong’s Unsolicited Advice for Murderers” by Jesse Q. Sutanto

March 23, 1:30 p.m., Panera, Grand Haven, Gayle Cox, facilitator

This group meets on the fourth Monday of each month at Panera in Grand Haven. In inclement winter weather, the meeting may be held on Zoom. To participate, get a copy of the book, read it, and join in the discussion.

“A lonely shopkeeper takes it upon herself to solve a murder in the most peculiar way.”



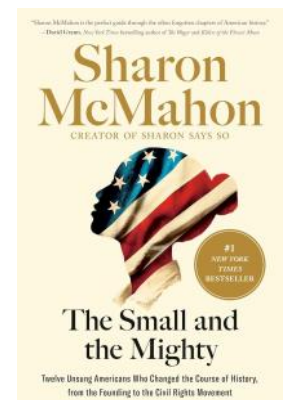
Sunday Afternoon Book Group

“The Small and the Mighty” by Sharon McMahon

March 30, 3:00 p.m., Ryder Lounge (main floor), Jill Miller, facilitator

The Sunday Afternoon Book Group meets every 2-3 months. Most of the books selected are non-fiction and pertain to current social and cultural issues. To participate, get a copy of the book, read it, and come to church for the discussion.

“The most remarkable Americans are often ordinary people who didn't make it into the textbooks. Not the presidents, but the telephone operators. Not the aristocrats, but the schoolteachers.”



DUNESMEN PANCAKE SUPPER

Fat Tuesday Celebration

The Dunesmen will host a “Fat Tuesday” Pancake Supper on Tuesday, March 4 from 4:30-6:00 p.m. in the Wiltse Center (main floor). The event is free, and no reservations are required. A free-will offering plate will be available. All are welcome to come and enjoy pancakes and sausage fresh off the griddle!



COMMUNITY AND CHEER

Dunes Concert Series Presents: GOTAK

Thursday, March 13, 7:00 p.m.

Sanctuary, Church of the Dunes

Come celebrate St. Patrick's day with GOTAK! GOTAK is an Irish Music group at Grand Haven High School. Their music is a perfect way to get into the St. Patrick's Day spirit with the whole family. This concert is free with general admission. Doors open at 6:15 p.m. Concert begins at 7:00 p.m.

ADULT PICTURED ROCKS KAYAKING TRIP

Led by Grace Outside and Dan Duncan

Grace Outside, a ministry of Michigan Area United Methodist Camping, is offering an adult kayaking trip along Pictured Rocks and the shores of Lake Superior. Kayaks, camping gear, and meals are provided. The camp allows campers opportunities to “explore backcountry trails, camp in tents, enjoy Christian community, and grow closer to God”. For pricing and more information, visit graceoutside.org.

