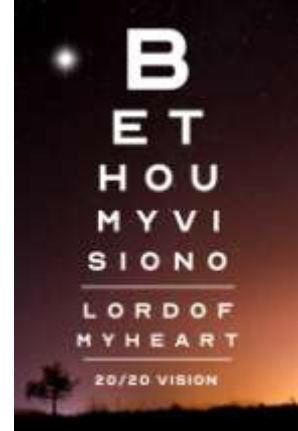


## **LHUMC Worship Planning Retreat Meeting Preparation**

Friday, Sept. 11 from noon – 7:00 pm  
Saturday, Sept. 12 from 8:30 am – 1:30 pm  
Lake Harbor UMC in Fellowship Hall  
Last updated 7/29/20

### **Yearlong Theme**

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.



- 2020: 20/20 Vision. Seeking God’s Vision for Ourselves, Our Church, Our Community, and Our World.
- 2019: Love God and love neighbor.
- 2018: HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE are found in Jesus alone.
- What do we need to focus on in worship for the next year to accomplish our mission?
- How do we make it known to our members? Hallway art? Hands-on item?
- How does the theme encourage spiritual formation and help us carry out our mission?
- Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations/Living: radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity.

### **Possible 2021 Themes:**

Related ideas:

- What’s Next? 20... 21...
- Reflections
- Love All Your Neighbors
- Still Blessed (Related article: “The Blessing’ Sung around the World: 100 Virtual Choirs Spread Worship Anthem,” July 30, 2020, “Christianity Today. Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9EK8dAXl6I>)

### **Spoken Needs**

What are people saying that they need? As you think about the conversations you’ve had with people both within and outside of your church, remember the struggles, challenges, curiosities, and desires that both church members and neighbors have expressed.

- Pandemic related:
  - **When are we going back to church?**
  - How has the pandemic changed our lives, views, beliefs?
  - How can we stay safe?
  - How will this affect the church? Further decline or great awakening? (related article: “A Coronavirus Great Awakening?” Wall Street Journal, 3/27/20)
  - Change needed to revitalize the Methodist Church. Change is challenging, but I believe needed to bring young adults raised by parents who stopped attending church to the practicing faith family. (Jean Kelly)
- In the news: Racism. Black Lives Matter. Protests or Riots? Social justice. Connection to the Beatle’s song, “Revolution.” **The total amount of news and its negativity can overwhelm us. Attacks on religious freedom.**
- How to stay sane until the November elections is over.
- Don’t forget the invisibles – the childless, the never married, etc. – the demographic that doesn’t fit a typical niche in a family centered church.
- Reaction to “invisibles” from Jean Kelly: Not sure what is meant by not fitting a typical niche in a family centered church. Although those factors are disappointments to me in my life, have tried to be a very good Aunt and an active person in the church family. It makes me sad to be thought of as “invisible” Not sure how to process that. I do see churches as family centered - the family of god. All God’s children, each with their own joys, sorrows, talents, and challenges in this life. Inclusion, which I think is something LHUMC does well, is probably a better label for this topic.
- Continue to tackle the hard stuff. Seekers don’t want the fluff, they want to hear and see that we are doing the hard work around hot issues. Maybe having some anti-racism classes offered at church. Some resources are listed under “series ideas” below. Brave Conversation small group formation.
- Politics of Jesus: Jesus was/is political, not partisan. How is that related to righteous indignation?
- I **struggle** greatly, at this time, with those who call themselves Christians and continue to hold on to their racist beliefs and attitudes. It's hard not to judge, but yet if we do, we are as bad as they are. I struggle with a president who speaks and acts in such un-Christian ways and I struggle so much with understanding why good people, close friends, Christian friends support him. To be willing to be open and listen and try to work to bring people together is a huge challenge, yet it's what God asks us to do. The problem is some of us do not want to come together. We would rather be right. The struggles continue. My desire is, of course, an end to all the madness, and a world where all will be willing to work and live in peace.

**Key:**

Ideas in black text are new in 2020.

Ideas in **brown text** are left from prior retreats.



- One of the Spoken needs that has come up in my family is the deep divide with politics among the family. It is there between my siblings as well as among our large extended family - not sure how we will reconcile to ever have another reunion following the November election. (Jean Kelly)
- Grief
- Gratitude
- Money/wealth
- Destructive behavior
- Break down of the family. Where are our family values? Could we learn anything from old shows?
- Why do nice people seem to have so many problems/issues in life? Why do bad things happen to good people?
- We are told to not judge others. Can we judge their actions? At some point we need to decide whether something is good or bad, right? So then, in essence, aren't we judging?
- Angels, Satan, and demons.
- God's grace and mercy: What are they? Are they different? <https://clearlens.org/what-does-the-bible-say-about-grace/>
- Christian doctrine (Pastor Mary)
- How do we truly follow Jesus?
- Problems associated with aging and declining health:
- Evangelism: Begins with relationships

### **Unspoken Needs**

Unspoken needs are the things people aren't talking about, but they need. You are in the trenches doing ministry. You see needed growth areas before the average church member, and are building relationship with people far from God.

- Religion and social values, especially abortion and opioid use.
- Learning to listen to both sides of an issue versus "wearing blinders"
- How do we help each other through life's rough patches?
- Taking responsibility when things are hard.
- End of life planning

## Useful Stuff

### Questions to explore:

- What 2020 series generated the most discussion? January's Star Words. Prophets – Hosea (pastoral care issues).
- Are there any female prophets? I'm sure these women existed, but considering who recorded the books of the Bible, they've been overlooked, ignored, or boxed off into the stereotypes – subservient helper, wife, daughter, or sister, or the classic label of the harlot.
- Interactive sermon – however that may occur – on a book that the congregation reads (or listens to)
- Where has Pastor Mary gotten the most “push back” on sensitive topics? Religious extremism.

**Articles:** Visit <https://lakeharborumc.org/2020/08/september-11-12-2020-worship-planning-retreat/> for a list of interesting articles.

**Play:** “Hamilton.” Related article: “The Gospel Takes Center Stage in ‘Hamilton’”

### Comics:

**Hand-out:** List of bible verses to read in different

**Video:** “Brutally Honest Valedictorian Regrets being Top of the Class”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=392&v=lp0MtiacHKM&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=392&v=lp0MtiacHKM&feature=emb_logo)

### Stray stuff:

- Vacation Bible School
- Inspirational images and articles

### Books:

- The Five Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts by Gary Chapman
- The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss by James Kemp and related series <https://storyboardingchurch.wordpress.com/2019/03/25/the-gospel-according-to-dr-seuss/> and “Summer of Seuss” by Rev. Danyelle Ditmer
- A New Kind of Christianity by Brian McLaren examines ten questions that he feels are essential for postmodern Christianity to re-imagine.

## Series Ideas

Armed with a lot of perspective on spoken and unspoken needs, start to ask questions like: What Scriptures address these needs? What topical series could address these needs? From which book of the Bible could we teach? What creative series titles or “hooks” could we use?

**Women of the Bible** (in leadership positions). Just not the usuals- the multiple Marys, Martha, Elizabeth, Esther, Hagar, Ruth , Naomi, etc. or women in the usual roles- wife of, daughter of, sister of. Women who were their own person. Related series: Female Prophets – Deborah, Huldah, Noadiah, Miriam, Abigail, Anna, Hannah

**Anti-Racism** (The Work We Need to Do). Jesus wasn't a white man. White fragility. Not saying anything is complacent. Resources: <https://www.wgvu.org/shaping-narratives/>, <https://ethnicdiversity.org/>, <https://ethnicdiversity.org/programs/workshops/>

**\*God's People: A Biblical Response to Racism.** Breaking down the walls of racism has to be an intentional act. We need to love with purpose because only God's love will break racism down.

Series with an asterisk (\*) indicate that the idea is from churchsermonseries.com.

- Related top: Learn about Tu B'Av, the Jewish holiday of love, perhaps with a speaker from the synagogue.
- Related activity: Have a book club sharing of Love Does by Bob Goff, an author who believes in love that does not stop at thoughts and feelings, but is convinced that loves takes action.

**Brave Conversations.** How to engage in tough conversations and still be friends.

**Our New World!? God Is Still There for Us!**

**\*Our New Normal.** God is with us in the disorienting situations we find ourselves in whether due to a global pandemic, a new stage of life of our own choosing, or a sudden change by chance, we discover new rhythms of life.

**It Took a Pandemic to...** – get Walmart and Target to close for Thanksgiving; get families and kids outside, playing together again; get families to cook and eat dinner together; find out what is truly essential. Overall theme: God can bring incredible things out of horrible times.

**Community.** Resource: May/June 2020 "Today: Refresh, Refocus, Renew" devotional from Jean Wasserman.

**\*The (Not So) United States of America.** We believers need to stand united while the rest of the nations seems to divide over differences. We need to love like Jesus in our fracture world. Related sermon: "Follow Me." Am I really following Jesus? What does that look like on a daily basis?

**What Are You Doing for God?** Spreading His Word. Living the Word. Doing for Others.

**God's Forgiveness.** We are saved by grace, but still judged when we die.

**Beguiled by Beauty** by Marcia McFee. In this worship series we will dwell with the God of Divine Goodness, deeply in love with us, and practice ways to return that love as we fall more

deeply in love with creation and with one another.

[https://jgxrhlhfm.pages.infusionsoft.net/?inf\\_contact\\_key=e350921734ed09b7472d51437a37184e680f8914173f9191b1c0223e68310bb1](https://jgxrhlhfm.pages.infusionsoft.net/?inf_contact_key=e350921734ed09b7472d51437a37184e680f8914173f9191b1c0223e68310bb1)

Focus on one whole gospel.

**Back to the Bible.** Learn about some of the lesser known books of the bible and their significance.

**Ask Anything!** Please explain, for example, How is the Holy Spirit a person? How do you explain “grace” to someone. Questions would need to be written in advance.

**You Asked for It** – answering written questions from the congregation

**Book of Revelation.** Related articles: “Preach Apocalyptic Texts, Now,” Feb. 5, 2020, “Christianity Today”; “He Holds the Scroll of History” July 13, 2020 “Preaching Today”

**\*Are We in the End Times?** Are we to use Revelations as a guide through difficult times? What does Revelations reveal about God’s plan for us?

Mission Month

**\* On a Mission Every Day.** We are not talking about a trip, not an organization, not something just happening in another country, but something that happens whenever, wherever YOU are...

**Related resource:** [A Field Guide for Everyday Mission: 30 Days and 101 Ways](#) by Benn Connelly and Bo Roberts

**\* Sending the Saints.** Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi carries a lasting message that encourages and mobilizes the church, even today. What does it take to be a saint? Are you a saint?

**\* Soul Detox.** Every day, we are faced with “pollution” that threatens our faith by defining our emotions and our behaviors. Ultimately these toxins may damage our relationship with God. What are these toxins that assault us, even subconsciously, on a daily basis? What is necessary for us to do to remain clean, pure, and focused on God’s holiness?

**\* Empowered.** (Pentecost...The Holy Spirit, The Comforter has Come...) This series “challenges our faith to use this gift of the Holy Spirit. What did Jesus promise us about the Spirit? In what ways are we suing the spirit that God has poured out?”

**Systemic theology** – heaven, hell, born again

**The Elephant in the Room:** Something that will take us into General Conference. The United Methodist’s stand on gay issues. What is our response to people who quote the bible regarding homosexuality? If you say you believe in the bible, period, how can you then pick and choose what you believe? I know where I stand, but does that mean I am a “bible picker”? God knew us

before we were formed and he doesn't make mistakes, so what does God expect of me that I don't already know?

**We All Have a Story to Tell** – Hearing from members about how they started going to church. What moved them?

**Harry Potter Meets Jesus** sermon series from Leverington Church in Roxborough, Pennsylvania (see 6/22/19 *Grand Haven Tribune* article) <http://levpres.org/harry-potter-meets-jesus/> and <http://levpres.org/harry-potter-really/>

Marcia McFee's **Sacred Earth, Sacred Work** <https://ny163-145ecc.pages.infusionsoft.net/>

**Prayer:** How to pray. The Lord's Prayer. Larry's book on prayer

Old Testament series:

- "People We Don't Know Well"
- Battles of the Bible
- Armor of God
- "The Original Top Ten List: The Ten Commandments"

Fear/Anxiety series:

- "What Keeps You Up at Night?"
- "Know Fear vs. No Fear": Proverbs 9:10 the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom
- "Survive or Thrive?"
- "Overwhelmed": So many of us are overwhelmed by things that keep us from living the life God wants for us. [https://whchurch.org/sermon\\_series/overwhelmed/](https://whchurch.org/sermon_series/overwhelmed/)

God series:

- "Distorted Images of God"
- "What Does God Want from Me?"
- "Children of God"
- "God's Invisible Agents": When angels show up.
- "Patience of God." In this age from high speed internet to fast food we desire and are accustomed to instant gratification, but God is patient.
- "The God Who...Sees, Hears, Knows, Understands, Delivers"; "The God of ...His Word, the Howling Wind, Amazing Grace."

Jesus series:

- "Turning the Tables": Many of Jesus' words/actions in the New Testament seem violent... and have been used to justify some people's violence.
- "Names of Jesus"

Bible:

- "Biggest 'Buts' of the Bible"

- “Heroes of the Bible: How God Prepares Us to be His Champions”

New Testament series:

- Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- “Come to the Table”: Foundation and historical views of Communion

Contemporary issues series:

- Character under Construction
- Youth in America Today: Concluding with the testimony of a teenager
- Loving the Unlovable
- In This Together (TWOTP video – Loving Our Way Forward)

## Seasonal Series Ideas

We also need to identify ideas for specific series that we do every year. For example, we know we will celebrate Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter every year. We also know that every fall we’ll have a Stewardship Campaign.

### ADVENT

The stories behind Advent and Christmas hymns

A **Star Word** series with (manger?) words that reflect the season of preparation – come, prepare, rejoice, behold.

The history of Christmas and how it has been observed in the church throughout history.

**Promise of Advent in Unparalleled Times** webinar series by Adam Hamilton. Register for the series here: [https://amplifymedia.com/the-promise-of-advent/?utm\\_source=email&utm\\_medium=advent&utm\\_campaign=series\\_promo](https://amplifymedia.com/the-promise-of-advent/?utm_source=email&utm_medium=advent&utm_campaign=series_promo)

**Away in a Manger** by the Skit Guys. Scripture: Isaiah and Luke. Uses five classic Christmas carols/hymns. [https://skitguys.com/videos/away-in-a-manger?utm\\_source=Skit+Guys+News&utm\\_campaign=742a0ad40d-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2019\\_08\\_21\\_01\\_59&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1f8e8a4026-742a0ad40d-26165634&mc\\_cid=742a0ad40d&mc\\_eid=c7d26fab5b](https://skitguys.com/videos/away-in-a-manger?utm_source=Skit+Guys+News&utm_campaign=742a0ad40d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_08_21_01_59&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1f8e8a4026-742a0ad40d-26165634&mc_cid=742a0ad40d&mc_eid=c7d26fab5b)

**What Child Is This?** by the Skit Guys <https://skitguys.com/videos/what-child-is-this>

**Advent Conspiracy** focuses on giving to others

**The Best Christmas Ever**

**Christmas Uncluttered/Simple Christmas/Love Came Down**

**BC – Before Christ: Fulfilled Promises** (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Micah 5:2; Jer. 23:5)

**This Changes Everything.** How did Jesus’ birth change Mary, Joseph, the world, and me and my future?

**Pursuing the King** <https://www.gracewaymedia.com/products/25980-pursuing-the-king>

**Take Time to Breathe** [http://brentwoodchurch.org/breathe\\_devotional/](http://brentwoodchurch.org/breathe_devotional/)

- Book: [The Greatest Gift: Unwrapping the Full Love Story of Christmas](#)



- Devotional: Good News of Great Joy

**Advent: The Arrival.** 1) Make Room 2) Planning – Celebration don't just happen.

**Chaos of Christmas:** Chaos today at Christmas (and other times of the year too) and around Jesus' birth

### **Christmas at the Movies**

- Christmas movies bring joy, hope, and laughter
- Sermons – Greatest story ever told through Christmas movie classics

**Home for Christmas** – Nothing brings out the “fun” in dysfunction more than a trip home for Christmas

**Who Is This Jesus?** – Isaiah 9:6-7

### **Let There Be Joy**

**He's on His Way** – image → ultrasound of baby with crown on head

**All I Want for Christmas Is YOU** – John 3:16

### **Waiting for Jesus**

- Gospel stories preceding Jesus' birth
- Culture that seems to be allergic to the concept of waiting

**Great Expectation.** Topic: Hope. Visuals: Blue/silver/white, outdoorsy look.

### **The Divine Interruption**

- Set ideas: Snow covered trees, park benches, Victorian lamp post
- Color scheme: Blues and purples
- Mary's Life Interrupted
- Joseph's Expectations Interrupted
- Bethlehem Interrupted: Jesus' Arrival
- Shepherd's Livelihood Interrupted
- Life Interrupted Today: Jesus' Arrival Still Interrupts Life Today

**It's a Wonderful Life** – weekly movie clips (very) & short dramas/reflection (despair/hope)

Advent: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/147352219037905033/>

- “The Peace Jesus Brings” – Luke 2
- “God's Protection and Delight” – Zephaniah 3: 14-20
- “Refining Love of God” – Malachi 3: 1-6
- “Power of Hope” – Hebrews 6: 13-20

**Sock & Underwear** <http://www.marionfumc.org/multimedia-category/2013-advent-series/>

- “Not What You Want, but What You Need”

**Gift Exchange? Gift Return? Christmas Is Not Your Birthday** by Mike Slaughter  
<http://www.ministrymatters.com/product/978142672735>

**Gifts** <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/1968/sermon-series-gifts>

**The Voices of Advent** video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MplnfUwy5X8>

## LENT

**The Grace of Les Miserable** based on the book by Matt Rawle. Synopsis: In the six-week study The Grace of Les Misérables, author and pastor Matt Rawle dives into six ideals found in the story—grace, justice, poverty, revolution, love, and hope—each represented by a character in Hugo’s story. As these imperfect and relatable characters interact, we can see how these ideals work together (perhaps even in spite of each other) out in the world. Related activity: See the film as one of our movie selections for this year. <https://www.abingdonpress.com/product/9781501887109/>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRzM8ES\\_yas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRzM8ES_yas)

**Selah: Life in a Minor Key.** <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/selah-life-in-a-minor-key>

**A series about hunger** – nutritional (food), spiritual, emotional, connections – as it relates to the kinds of hungers the apostles were dealing with in their years traveling with Jesus and what we know is coming in Holy Week and Easter.

Marcia McFee’s **Listen: Hearing that Still Small Voice and Finding Your Own**  
<https://ny163.infusionsoft.com/app/linkClick/35118/deede239b4cd4f1d/2150912/6363dd03155de88b>

**Twenty-four Hours that Changed the World** by Adam Hamilton

**When God Becomes Small** by Phil Needham

**The Living Stone** by Ministry Matters <http://www.ministrymatters.com/livingstone/>

**Journey of Stones** by Steven Molin <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/528328600027404471/>

“A Prayer for Lent” by Steelhousemedia – Lenten Prayer by St. Ephrem

“Reflections of Lent” series by the Skit Guys

Final Week: Life Is Hard, but Grace Is Here

## STEWARDSHIP

- “Celebrate”: Preaching a Stewardship Series? Throw a Party Instead! (Not a series)