

REFLECTIONS FROM PASTOR MARY IVANOV



It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more. These words from Dr. Suess reminded me of our focus throughout Advent – how **our presence is the best gift we can offer**. As we move into the new year, I pray that focus continues as we **share the LIGHT of the WORLD and the Good**

News of Emmanuel.

See you on Sunday, *Pastor Mary*

P.S. The Pioneer Resources group that meets at church had a special visitor, so **I got a picture with the Grinch!**

Reminders and opportunities for the new year:

On behalf of our Lay Leadership Committee, **thank you to those who have served faithfully during 2023**. And **thanks to those who have said “yes”** to serving on teams and committees in 2024. Your partnership in mission and ministry is a blessing!

Our Prayer Chain is one way to be more intentional about praying for others. Contact the office at **Office@LakeHarborUMC.org** if you want to be included on the **E-mail Prayer Chain**.

OFFICE HOURS are Monday – Thursday from **9:15 a.m.-4:15 p.m.** The office is closed Friday and Saturday. The office phone is **231-798-2181**. If you leave a message on the weekend, **it will NOT be received until Monday**.

Snowbirds: Please update your contact information with the office!

E-mail your info to Office@LakeHarborUMC.org or call us at 231-798-2181.

If you're on Facebook, make sure to CONNECT and SHARE what's going on:

- Lake Harbor United Methodist Church page (**livestream Sunday worship**)
- Lake Harbor UMC – closed group
- Lake Harbor Youth Group – page
- LHUMC Children's Ministry – closed group



❄️**Lake Harbor UMC Weather Policy:** If there's an activity scheduled in the evening, and the weather looks bad, call the church office (231-798-2181). A decision will be made by 3:00 p.m. if events are cancelled.

ONLY Tuesday Bible Study will automatically be cancelled if Mona Shores Schools are closed.

Fellowship Time is scheduled after worship services on **Sun., Jan. 14 and 28**, and **we're looking for people to serve coffee and refreshments**. Please **Sign up** at the Welcome Center.

January Worship News by Karen Booth

“My Story – Faith in Film 2024” - 2024 Worship Theme: “Following the Jesus Way”

Epiphany is a word derived from the Greek for “manifestation” and is usually used as a reminder that Jesus is God’s revelation for the whole world. But we also use “epiphany” to describe those moments of deeper understanding and insight – like an “a-ha!” moment. Though our faith in Jesus Christ is grounded in Scripture, the arts, including literature and films, profoundly influence how we think about and understand God. Stories connect to the human experience and help us to grow our faith.

We’ll look at four films with the **overall themes of identity, discovery, and managing expectation (our own and those of others)**. All four movies can be streamed on a variety of platforms and will be shown in their entirety at church for free.

January 7, 2024: “My Story – Following the Jesus Way”

Scripture: Mark 1: 4-11

Synopsis: We all have faith stories. Today some will members share theirs.

January 14, 2024: “See for Yourself”

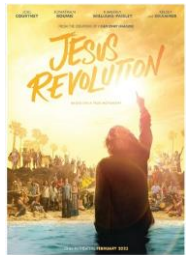
Scripture: John 1: 43-51

Film: “Jesus Revolution” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aulzCJ7BxtE>)

In the 1970s, Greg Laurie and a sea of young people descend on sunny Southern California to redefine truth through all means of liberation. Inadvertently, Laurie meets a charismatic street preacher and a pastor who open the doors to a church to a stream of wandering youth. What unfold is a counterculture movement that becomes the greatest spiritual awakening in American history.

Free showing in the sanctuary: **Sunday, January 7 at 4:00 p.m.**

Synopsis: Our tendency to separate ourselves from others on the basis of categories we create is sin and denies us the opportunity to see God’s grace in other and God’s love for the whole world. God calls us to see faith, hope, and love in others – and be strengthened as a community of faith.



January 21, 2024: “We Belong Together”

Scripture: I John 4: 17-21; Galatians 3: 26-29

Film: “Elemental” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXzcyx9V0xw>)

Elemental is a story set in Element City, where fire, water, land, and air residents live together. The story introduces Ember, a tough, quick-witted and fiery young woman, whose friendship with a fun, sappy, go-with-the-flow guy named Wade challenges her beliefs about the world they live in.

Free showing in the sanctuary: **Sunday, January 14 at 4:00 p.m.**

Synopsis: Differences in cultural identity and experience are a part of our lives. Learning more about one another is a blessing. Differences aren’t a reason to fear or separate ourselves from each other. Rather, seeking to understand others is a part of embracing the world God loves.



January 28, 2024: “In the Real World”

Scripture: Genesis 1: 1-2, 31; Proverbs 31: 1-9

Film: “Barbie” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pBk4NYhWNMM>) Barbie and Ken are having the time of their lives in the colorful and seemingly perfect world of Barbie Land. When Barbie suffers a crisis that leads her to question her world and her existence, and when she and Ken get a chance to go to the real world, they soon discover the joys and perils of living among humans.

Free showing in the sanctuary: **Sunday, January 21 at 4:00 p.m.**



Synopsis: The formation of identity and the search for meaning and purpose is a shared human experience. We contemplate both the meaning of life and the reality of death, and we seek truth and wisdom about who we are and who we can become. Ultimately, we rest in knowing that we belong to God who offers us salvation in Christ and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Worship Connections Teams

Worship Connections Team meetings are open to everyone. Karen Booth leads the Worship Connections Team which meets most Mondays at 1:00 p.m. at church. Please contact Karen (231-798-8431, 231-557-1069 or kwbooth@comcast.net) for more details. Vicki Zuker leads the Celebration Team. Please contact Vicki (231-759-8848 or zukerr@comcast.net) for more details.

Worship Connections Calendar by Karen Booth

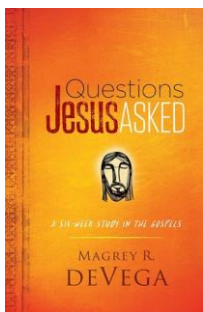
Tues., Jan. 2	1:00 pm	Work Session in the Sanctuary
Sun., Jan. 7	4:00 pm	Free showing of "Jesus Revolution" in the sanctuary
Mon., Jan. 8	1:00 pm	Work Session in the Sanctuary
Thurs., Jan. 11	7:00 pm	Celebration Worship planning
Sun., Jan. 14	4:00 pm	Free showing of "Elemental" in the sanctuary
Mon., Jan. 15	1:00 pm	Worship Connections Meeting
Sun., Jan. 21	4:00 pm	Free showing of "Barbie" in the sanctuary
Mon., Jan. 22	1:00 pm	Worship Connections Meeting
Sun., Jan. 28	4:00 pm	Free showing of "The Hill" in the sanctuary
Mon., Jan. 29	6:00 pm	Brainstorming Potluck - tentative
	7:00 pm	Brainstorming for Lent & Easter- tentative
Sun., Feb. 4	3:00 pm	Un-Hanging of the Greens
	5:00 pm	Pizza for the Workers



"Questions Jesus Asked" Based on a book by Magrey deVega
February 18 – March 31, 2024 (5 weeks of Lent, Holy Week, Easter)

Tentative brainstorming date: January 29, 2024

Jesus was fond of asking questions, many of which cut right to the heart of what it means to be human. Author Magrey deVega explores **six of the most provocative questions Jesus posed** to others and guides us in answering them for ourselves. More information about brainstorming as well as each week's Scripture readings and message will become available in the coming weeks.



MUSIC MINISTRY at LHUMC: "God gave us music that we might pray without words."

"And the Glory, the Glory of the Lord"... What a joyous, beautiful, and spiritual Advent season the hand bells and choir ensemble provided! **A very heartfelt thank you** to all who participated. As we approach this next calendar year, please **consider this a personal invitation to join either our hand bell choir or vocal ensemble - or both**, and add you gift to the music ministry of Lake Harbor.

Vocal Ensemble rehearses on **Wed., Jan. 10 and 24 from 6:30-8:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary.

Hand Bell Choir resumes on **Sun., Jan. 7 at 6:00-7:30 p.m.** in the music room.

Please contact Diane Thompson at 231-750-5153 or diane.sj.thompson@gmail.com for more info!

PRAISE TEAM rehearses on **Saturdays at 10:00 a.m.** Contact Michael Boersma at 231-670-6467 if you're interested in joining them.

“Lord, Hear our Prayers...”

When you can't put your prayer into words, God hears your heart.

Praying with our Lake Harbor UMC family...

In My Father's House...Jim Young passed away on Dec. 4, 2023. He was the fiancée of Linda Rousell and “Papa Jim” to her kids and grandkids. We pray for God's comfort for Jim's family and friends.

Congratulations to Kathleen & Ryan Grace, on the birth of their daughter, Noelle Claudia, born on Dec. 14, 2023. Proud grandparents include Jim & Karen Grace. We ask continued blessings on their family.

WOMEN'S PRAYER GROUP meets on **Sat., Jan. 13 from 9:30-10:15 a.m.** at Rose Emmons's home (5474 McDowell St.). We welcome all with a heart for worship through prayer and reflection. Come join us!

Our Monthly Prayer Service is **Wed., Jan. 31 at 6:00 p.m.** in our sanctuary. This is intentional time to lift up our prayers to God and to pray for our congregation, community, and world – and to remember the words of Jesus: *where two or three are gathered in my name, I am with them.*



GriefShare offers help and encouragement after the death of a loved one. We begin our next 13-week session on **Mon., Jan. 8**, and we meet on **Mondays at 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

through the first week of April. More information is at www.griefshare.org. Please share this with family, friends, or neighbors.

INTENTIONAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT

January/February Upper Room devotionals (both small and large print) are available at church.

Devotional readings are also **posted on our Facebook page** every day. This is great way to nurture your spiritual health! **You can access an audio recording of the Upper Room daily devotional at 1-877-600-7218.** It's free and easy to do!

Tuesday morning Bible study meets at **10:00-11:30 a.m.** in the Lounge – and on Zoom. See you on Jan. 9!

Men's Bible Study meets on **Tuesdays (Jan. 9, 16, 23 & 30) at 7:00 p.m.** in the Library. We're starting a new study called "Life Lessons from Romans" by Max Lucado, copies are available from Mike on January 9.

Saturday Sisters Bible Study will meet at **10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.** as we begin an 8-week study by Sarah Young on *Following God's Direction*. New members welcome! Start 2024 studying God's word and sharing with others as we grow in our faith! We meet at Rose Emmons's home (5474 McDowell St.).



The January Series is a FREE 15-day award-winning lecture series that takes place each year at Calvin University. The series aims to cultivate deep thought and conversations about important issues of the day, to inspire cultural renewal and make us better global citizens in God's world. Join us **from Mon., Jan. 15 through**

Fri., Feb. 2, 2024! Frauenthal Center's **Beardsley Theater** is a remote location, where you can view the **January Series at 12:30 p.m. daily.** This is an excellent opportunity to learn! Go to:

<https://calvin.edu/january-series/speakers/>

Social Justice Issue: Celebration Worship chooses a **prayer focus each month** related to social justice – **how our faith connects to important social issues.** We begin with prayer, and we're called to action. In January, our focus is **Human Trafficking.**



CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS...

January birthday blessings to our Sunday School friends:

Lyanna Robbins 1/1

Lachlan Kaczanowski 1/20

Olive Kaczanowski 1/20

Axton McNergney 1/21

Josiah Boersma 1/22

Asher Loomis 1/23

Sunday School resumes on **Jan. 7 at 10:15-10:45 a.m.** for **kids and youth**. We hope you had fun with your Advent paper chains. Post your pictures on our Facebook page - we'd love to see them! **Thank you** to all the families and teachers who helped fill stockings for Kids Belong families. They were so excited to receive such fun blessings!



Our **Share the Joy event** was so full of joy! People of all ages mingled and worked together making Lego creations that portrayed a part of the story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. Everyone made a Christmas globe decoration to take home or share with someone else. We painted joyful tree ornaments and shared continental breakfast together. It was so neat to see all the generations engaging with each other.



Lake Harbor Youth Groups

5th-8th grade at 6:00-7:00 p.m. **9th-12th grade** at 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Youth will meet on **Wednesdays: January 10, 17, 24, and 31**



Thank you so much to all our cookie lovers! From bakers, decorators, gift givers, and especially our cookie eaters, we thank you for helping make our 2023 Cookie Walk a success! We had a great variety again this year. What a fun and delicious way to raise money for our 2024 Mission Trip!



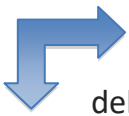
Our Christmas projects were a huge success! We adopted 3 families.

We had so much fun shopping, wrapping, and delivering gifts, but more importantly we shared hope and love to families in need!

Watch your E-mails for exciting mission trip news and details regarding the Sr. High Winter!

I pray you are having a great Christmas season and looking forward to everything the New Year brings. Thank you for all your gifts and support this year! I am so blessed and look forward to another year of ministry with you all! PEACE AND LOVE JIMMY!

Youth Director Jimmy Epplert's Contact Info: cell # (231) 750-9707, peaceandlovejimmy@gmail.com,
Facebook = Jimmy Epplert **Jimmy is available** for meetings, hangouts, or small group gatherings.



Missions Corner

Thank you for participating in mission giving during the holiday season. We

delivered stockings to Kids Belong, gifts to children through Prison Fellowship Angel Tree, MAP Teen Town, gifts to MAP Teen Town, and items to the chaplain's office at Muskegon County Jail. It was one way for us to be present with others in need, and we're grateful for your generosity!



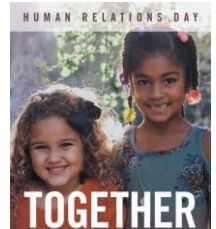
Supper House: We serve on **Tues., Jan. 2 at 3:45-5:30 p.m.** with a team of 6 people to serve guests. **If you're planning on serving, call Sheryl Thompson at 231-286-7680** so we can plan accordingly.

Our January Noisy Offering will support Lake Harbor's **Shoes for Shores**. In the middle of winter, kids are often in need of snow boots, and our Shoes for Shores mission needs to be ready.



January MAP Food Pantry items: Canned Fruit and Paper Towels

Human Relations Sunday is January 14. We are called to make an impact in communities where people struggle because they don't have the tools or resources to reach their God-given potential. Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens.



Servants are needed at **MAP Clothes Closet** on **Tues., Jan. 16 and Thurs., Jan. 18 from 12:15-2:00 p.m.** If you're willing to help, call the Office at 231-798-2181. **Men's clothes, housewares, and plastic shopping** are always needed and can be left in the MAP box by the main doors in the sanctuary.



Thank you for your generosity in giving to **our Christmas offering** that will support both Family Promise and Mujila Falls Agriculture Center in Zambia!



Membership, Nurture & Outreach (M.N.O.) News

We filled and delivered **33 goodie bags** to our homebound members and friends early in December.

A huge Thank You on behalf of our homebound and care facility members to all those who donated and sorted the goodies and personal care items as well as those who delivered the Christmas care packages in December. The beautiful (and very full!) bags were greatly appreciated by all who received them. This annual holiday project is such a great way to remind those we don't see in church that we remember and love them!

Blessings, Pastor Mark Erbes, Congregational Care Coordinator



Lunch Bunch meets on **Tues., Jan. 9 at 12:30 p.m.** at **Driftwood Café at Tanglewood**. Everyone is invited! Sign up on the Welcome Center. It's a great way to see friends and meet new people!



Our Care Team meets on **Wed., Jan. 31 at 11:00 a.m.** We're always happy to welcome new members, so please join us!

Muskegon Methodist Ministries invites you to their quarterly meeting on **Tues., Jan. 30 at 6:00-8:00 p.m.** at Central UMC. Dinner is provided. Please contact Pastor Mary if you'd like to attend.

Members on the move... Please update the office if you're moving or changing contact information.

Jeff Stone

3060 Maple Grove Rd.
Apt. 334
Norton Shores, MI 49441

Theresa Stone

1125 Robbins Rd.
Room 217
Grand Haven, MI 49417

Dave Lorenz

Lorenzd1@outlook.com



Mission for Area People

MISSION FOR AREA PEOPLE wants to thank you, one of our church partners, for your ongoing faithfulness in walking alongside us as we extend help and hope to so many families in our community. Without your help as volunteers and with financial contributions we could not serve the over 3000 people in our community this year. We often say, "small agency - big impact." That's because of you. From all of us at MAP to all of you, we wish you a blessed Christmas and we look forward to working with you again in 2024! Susan Simonson



Women's Group, I want to thank all of you and the men too for serving the nice luncheon at Greg's service. You are my extended family and very much appreciated. Renee Hoadley



Thank you so very much for the wonderful Christmas Goodie bag. We enjoyed all of the thoughtful gifts and goodies. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and love throughout the coming year. With Love, Nolan & Sandy Throne



Thank you for the Christmas goodie bag; everything was so delicious. Thank you for thinking of me. Donna Broersma



Thank you so much for the beautiful arrangement of candy, cookies and assorted items. It was so nice of the church and makes you feel you're not forgotten. Thanks, June Hilton



Merry Christmas and a great New Year to all. What a wonderful gift to receive the Christmas Goodie bag; all the sweet stuff was so delicious. Thanks to all those who put the bags together and to the delivery drivers. I miss seeing you in church. God bless all of you. All My Love, Freda Barefoot



Thank you so much for the generous gift cards and Christmas socks for Robin & Jared. You are so thoughtful to remember them at the holiday season. Blessings to you, Renee Hoadley



From our FINANCE Team: Thank you for your faithful giving this year! We're so grateful for God's faithfulness in leading us in generosity. **At the end of November 2023,** our total income for General Fund was \$350,311 with expenses of \$338,073. We've met all of our financial obligations and are able to support mission and ministry locally and globally. Because of our Faith Commitments for 2024, **we're confident in approving a working budget** of \$395,453 for 2024, which is approximately a 2% increase over our 2023 budget. A copy of the proposed budget – both a numbers budget and a narrative budget – will be available at the beginning of January.

It's not too late to offer your Faith Commitment, and we're grateful for everyone who has pledged their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. It's a blessing to all of us as we love and serve God together.



Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account or processed using your credit card or debit card. Electronic giving offers convenience for you and much needed consistency in giving. You can set up your donations on our website or if you'd rather, stop by the church office for assistance.

To set up your electronic donation on our www.lakeharborumc.org:

- Click on "Give" button
- Click on "Create Profile" button
- Follow onscreen instructions.

Use this QR code to connect to online giving.



It's easy and stress free – and can help us to be more consistent in our giving, which blesses our church.



COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES

La Leche League, the breastfeeding group for parents, meets in the LHUMC nursery on **Tues., Jan. 16 at 11:00 a.m.** Questions? Contact Mary Swisher at 231-777-3238 or text 231-215-4145.

We're grateful to offer meeting space to **Girl Scouts, Pioneer Resources, LARC, and other groups too!**

Sunday Servants:

Thanks for making our worship services meaningful, memorable, and accessible!

Serving Jan. 7 at 9:00 a.m.

Worship Leader: TBD

Ushers: Jim & Karen Post, Peggy Tully

Computer: Fred Yonkers *Camera:* Pat Yonkers

Sound: Ruth Pyman *FB Host:* Jill McMahon

Counters: Cyndi Barefoot, Allen Winslow

Serving Jan. 14 at 9:00 a.m.:

Worship Leader: TBD

Ushers: Fred & Pat Yonkers, Kathy Mertz, Rod Moon

Computer: Larry Kasmauski *Camera:* Lisa Kasmauski

Sound: Gary Cooper *FB Host:* Jen Cooper

Counters: Bev Layman, Mudgi Cavender

Serving Jan. 21 at 9:00 a.m.:

Worship Leader: TBD

Ushers: Mark Rousell, Bob Keim

Computer: Luka Ivanov *Camera:* Derek Mertz

Sound: Rob Mertz *FB Host:* Ivan Ivanov

Counters: Ed Baranowski, Mike Layman

Serving Jan. 28 at 9:00 a.m.:

Worship Leader: TBD

Ushers: Dave Stamy, Adam & Ruth Pyman

Computer: Karen Booth *Camera:* Jean Kelly

Sound: Dave Booth *FB Host:* Ivan Ivanov

Counters: Madonna Borgerding, Jim Cavender

Serving Jan. 7 at 11:00 a.m.

Worship Leader: Dirk Fuller

Greeters: Sheryl Thompson & GL Bates

Computer: Skyler Bosch *Camera:* Aiden Bosch

Sound: Bob Bosch *FB Host:* Jill McMahon

Tear down: Jimmy & Niki Epplert

Serving Jan. 14 at 11:00 a.m.:

Worship Leader: Brad Hilleary

Greeters: John Colella & John Thompson

Computer: Jim Grace *Camera:* Vicki Zuker

Sound: Karen Grace *FB Host:* Niki Epplert

Tear down: Laura Dean, Kelsey Boss

Serving Jan. 21 at 11:00 a.m.:

Worship Leader & Tear Down: Chris Beaudoin

Greeters: Jill Warren & Jill McMahon

Computer: Julie Fuller *Camera:* Jay McMahon

Sound: Arianna Davros *FB Host:* Michelle Frazier

Serving Jan. 28 at 11:00 a.m.:

Worship Leader: Rose Emmons

Greeters: Jan Pascavis & Jean Kelly

Computer: Brian Mosley *Camera:* Jason Colella

Sound: Pete Thompson *FB Host:* Ruth McPhail Ubaldo

Lake Harbor United Methodist Church

4861 S. Henry St.
Norton Shores, MI 49441



www.lakeharborumc.org

(231) 798-2181

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

The Work of Christmas
by Howard Thurman