

The Belltower

LaPorte United Methodist Church
2071 Grafton Rd., Elyria, OH 44035

Phone: 440-458-5717

Email: laporteumc@laportechurch.org

Office Hours: Mon - Thurs: 9:00am - 2:00pm; Friday: 9:00am - Noon



February & March, 2024

Do not be afraid—I am with you! I am your God—let nothing terrify you! I will make you strong and help you; I will protect you and save you.

Isaiah 41:10

I was having lunch with a pastor recently and as we talked about our plans for 2024 we became aware of the distress and worry in a nearby couple's conversation. It was obvious that they were fearful of what 2024 would bring. They discussed politics, illness and deaths of friends and family members, work, the economy, and other areas of concern. It was evident that they were very fearful and concerned for what lies ahead for them, for our country, and the world in this year. However, the only console they seemed to be able to muster for which to find assurance was, "*Well, we will get through it somehow, we always do.*" As I silently prayed for them I began to wonder if they were persons of faith, Christians of any measure.

I, and I am sure many of you also, share the concerns this couple were voicing. It is a troubling and distraught world we live in these days. King Hezekiah wrote Isaiah 41:10 as he and Israel felt abandoned and helpless after the war and no amount of self-help seemed to comfort them or change their distress. As humans and Christians we face this cold world and it often brings real situations of fear and helplessness. What Israel and King Hezekiah found out by the prophet Isaiah was that God had a message for them, one of hope and security even in the most dire of times. We can find this hope in multiple verses of God's Word and Isaiah 41:10 can assure us as it did Israel.

Very soon we will encounter Ash Wednesday, Lent, and the incredibly early Easter. These times are replete with images and points of reflection of how God sustains His people. During Lent our sermon series is titled "God's Promises: From the Garden to the Cross." Each Sunday of Lent we will focus on a major promise that God has made with humanity. In all of these abundant promises we find His unyielding love for His people.

My friends, in all of this, may we remember Isaiah's words and know we can live in this world without fear and terror of what may occur; that His promises are secure and He will keep us and protect us, and save us! Let us all face 2024 with wild abandon and certainty of faith, for God is always with us!

Blessings, Pastor William

SAVE
the
DATE



LAPORTE UMC
200TH
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION

SATURDAY SEPT. 13, 2025 -
SUNDAY SEPT. 14, 2025

2071 GRAFTON RD. ELYRIA, OHIO



LaPorte Missions News

Cheryl Smith, Chair
missions@laportechurch.org

Serving God Through Serving Others

ST. PAULY USED CLOTHING SHED THANK YOU

Happy New Year! We're excited to share with you the impact your clothing shed made over the last year...30,506 pounds of clothing were donated to your shed in 2023; this was enough to clothe an estimated 5,620 people all over the world; based on this volume of clothing, your organization received \$1,220. Thank you so much for everything you, your volunteers, and your communities do to support the clothing shed program!

~The Team at St. Pauly Textile, Inc.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SAMARITAN'S PURSE

We are beginning a year-long project of collecting items for Christmas shoeboxes. Each month focuses on specific items for them. Remember that items must fit in the box.

MONTHLY COLLECTIONS

January - hats, scarves, gloves
February - accessories (sunglasses, watch, tote bag/purse, hair bows, etc.)
March - quality crafts
April - stuffed animals
May - hygiene items
June - toys
July - clothing items
August - school supplies
September - games
October - letters & photos
November - donations for shipping
December - pray for children receiving boxes

CHANGE FOR CHANGE COLLECTION



The children are collecting Change for Change the last Sunday of every month. February

& March's collections will go to LOVE, Inc. of Lorain County. Thank you so much for helping our children collect change each month. God bless your generous giving and those who are receiving.

Thank you so much for the donation of blankets for our Cornerstone babies. It is appreciated! God bless! ~Loretta at Cornerstone Pregnancy Center



MIDWEST MISSION TRIP

November 3 - 8, 2024

You are invited to join a team heading to Midwest Mission Distribution Center in Pawnee, IL, November 3-8. Mission volunteers make the work happen! Midwest Mission has only seven full-time and three part-time staff members. The mission volunteers do 100% of the assembly and preparation of items for distribution. They assemble kits, build desks, repair bicycles and sewing machines, sort and count materials, stuff mailings, sew, unload donations, assist with maintenance and meet the day's needs. Whatever your abilities, there is an important job that needs you! Work will be prioritized and set up each day based on the most pressing needs of the volunteers. There is space for 16 team members; 7 have already committed to going. The cost is \$350 per person (housing, food, Center fees). The first team meeting will be SUNDAY, APRIL 14 at 2:00pm. Please let Mary Eddy know by the end of February if you feel God's call to join the team.

PLASTIC BAG GROCERY COLLECTION

We are collecting plastic grocery bags to make "plarn". It is used to make sleeping mats for the homeless. Please place your donation in the container by the mission cabinet. Thank you so much for helping us help the homeless. If you have any questions, see Mary Eddy or Cheryl Smith.

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST HELP

It is getting difficult to stay within the monthly budget for our Community Breakfast! Give a donation or become a monthly breakfast sponsor and we will match the budget of \$100.00! If you have a desire to help our community enjoy a homemade breakfast once a month, consider this outreach opportunity. See Cheryl Smith if you have any questions!

Thank you so much for all your contributions, support, and prayers for the mission outreach work of LaPorte. May God continue to bless you as you bless others.

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

Merry Christmas to all and a very Happy New Year. Jim & I appreciate all your prayers, cards and phone calls. Jim is home and on the way to recovery. I'm back in treatment after surgery, with several scans in January to see where I go from here. You are such a blessing to us.

~Sherry & Jim Rimstadt.

SECOND HARVEST VOLUNTEER OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

For the past 10 months, a group of volunteers from LaPorte UMC has been donating time to assist Second Harvest. Second Harvest, a part of the Feeding America National organization, has the goal of eliminating the food insecurities of people in Crawford, Huron, Erie, and Lorain Counties. They accomplish this through distributing millions of pounds per year of healthy food through mobile food pantries, senior box programs, soup kitchens, shelters, and supplemental programs. For every dollar donated, five meals are provided.

Please prayerfully consider joining the team for this opportunity. We have established a regular schedule for the first Wednesday of the month, between 1:30pm and 4:00pm. We are also considering trying one evening a month to better fit working members.

Second Harvest is at the Nord Center, Baumhart Road, Lorain. Tasks include assembling pantry boxes, senior boxes, school "backpacks" and fresh fruits/vegetables bags, as well as inspection and sorting of donated food.



Come join the group and enjoy that feeling of helping the less fortunate while enjoying fellowship with your friends from LaPorte. Carpooling is available.



Pickleball Schedule February & March

Come join the fun! We meet Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm and Saturdays at 10:00am.

February 3, 6, 10, 17, 20, 24 & 27
March 2, 5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 26 & 30

The history team of the 200th anniversary committee needs your help in getting our history shared. If you would like to share memories, print the form included with the newsletter or fill out the form at

<https://forms.gle/7paP8MpivC5kcLXB6>

and return it to Dave Van Arsdale or in the hanging folder on the bulletin board across from the Sunday School Office.

We are also looking for photos of the church or church activities throughout the years. If you would like to share photos or have any other questions, please see Ethan Greenly or Dave Van Arsdale.



Additionally, will be raising money for the celebration and other activities during 2025. Be on the lookout for information soon about fundraisers and other ways you can support the committee.

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to provide altar flowers for 2024, for a special occasion or no reason at all, please sign up! The flower sign-up is located on the bulletin board in the Narthax.



Beth's Recipe Box...

Caramel French Toast

Courtesy of the Doubleday Inn, Gettysburg, PA

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup butter
2 T light corn syrup
8 slices thickly sliced or diced Italian bread
6 eggs
1 1/2 cups milk
1 t vanilla
1/8 t salt

In a saucepan combine brown sugar, butter, and corn syrup. Bring to a full boil, reduce heat to medium and simmer until thickened (approx. 2-3 minutes). Pour mixture into a greased 9x13 inch baking dish. Place bread evenly in pan. Beat eggs and add all other ingredients. Pour over bread. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

In the morning bake, uncovered, 45 minutes in a 350° oven, until light brown. Serve with warm syrup. Serves 8.

Birthdays

February

4 - Charles Bruce
6 - Wilma Reck
11 - Debra Warden
12 - Alexa Atkinson
13 - Sheree Vajda
17 - Madeline Babel
21 - Matthew Smith
23 - Jane Herrmann & Daniel Rich
27 - Carrie Atkinson
28 - Nancy Reed
29 - Cindy Smith



March

2 - Linda Cowie
4 - Russ Gardner
6 - Ray Stevens
16 - Neal Gimben
18 - Carol Brisbin
19 - Alyssa Atkinson
22 - Greg Atkinson
23 - Laney Haddix
26 - Jan Hessler & Joe Saylor



SHROVE TUESDAY Pancake SUPPER



The men of LaPorte UMC
invite you to their annual
Shrove Tuesday Pancake
Supper February 13, 2024
from 5:30-7:00 pm

Ash Wednesday Services

All are welcome, as we
begin the season of Lent, to
our Ash Wednesday Service
on Wednesday, February 14,
at 7:00pm.



Mark Your Calendars:

Swiss Steak Dinner & Dance - May 11
Chinese Auction & Dinner - October 5

General Schedule

Please check weekly announcements for updates.

Sunday

8:00am Men's Study
8:00am Coffee Hour
8:30am Community Breakfast (last Sunday of the month)
9:30am Adult Sunday School
Sunday School for all ages (in library)
9:30am Youth Discipleship
10:15am Choir Practice
11:00am Worship Service
12:00pm Faith & Fellowship Meal (1st Sunday of the month)
3:00pm Methodist Youth Fellowship Meeting
(1st & 3rd Sundays of the month)

Monday

10:00am Stephen Ministry (1st Monday of the month)
5:00pm 6:18 Prayer Service
7:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry (3rd Monday of the month)

Tuesday

Wednesday

9:30am Ladies' Bible Study
1:30pm Second Harvest (1st Wednesday of the month)

Friday

Saturday

7:30pm - AA

10:00am - Pickleball

LaPorte Fellowship Activities

Wednesday, February 14 at noon

Wednesday, March 13 at noon

Thank you to all who have attended and those providing lunch! You are a blessing! All are welcome to attend as we continue to watch and discuss Season 3 of *The Chosen*. On February 14, we will be watching Episode 6, and March 13, Episode 7. If you would like to help with lunch or have questions, please see Cheryl Smith



Our Faith & Fellowship Tureen lunches are held the first Sunday of each month. Upcoming dates are **February 4 & March 3**. Everyone is invited to attend - bring a guest or two! Bring a dish to share and your table service. Beverages are provided.

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Invite a friend or two for breakfast and have them join us for worship - **February 25 & March 31**, from 8:30am to 10:00am. If you are interested in helping with the meals or have questions, see Jon & Rachel Kisilewicz.



LENTED SERMON SERIES: GOD'S PROMISES: From the Garden to the Cross

During Lent and Easter we will explore the promises of God to His people. These promises start with the promise to Adam and Eve in Garden of Eden and stretch to the Cross, and prove God's unfailing and forgiving love for us.

ASH WEDNESDAY: 02/14/2024 7:00 P.M. SERMON TITLE: TAKE HEED

In Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21 we are reminded to not do things for the attention of others. What we do, we should do for and to God not for the benefit of others.

1ST SUNDAY OF LENT – 02/18/2024 SERMON TITLE: GOD'S PROMISES TO NOAH

God makes promises to Noah, with a sign "for all ages to come" (Gen 9:8-15). The psalm reminds us that God's ways "are love and truth to those who keep [his] covenant" (see Ps 25:10).

2ND SUNDAY OF LENT – 02/25/2024 SERMON TITLE: GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

Abraham offers his son Isaac to God, willing to sacrifice his only son. Because he obeys God's command, he receives his son and confirmation of an amazing blessing that extends to all the nations of the earth (Gen 22). "I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living," reads the Psalm response. Obedience leads to life, not death.

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT – 03/03/2024 SERMON TITLE: GOD'S PROMISES TO MOSES

God brings his children out of slavery in Egypt and gives them the Ten Commandments: laws to help them live as His children (Exodus 20). Then Psalm 19: the law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing, and trustworthy! The Ten Commandments are, in fact, "the words of everlasting life."

4TH SUNDAY OF LENT – 03/10/2024 SERMON TITLE: CALLED TO GOD'S PROMISE

God sends prophets "early and often" to call his people back to his promised love. They refuse and are sent into exile, and then the Lord draws them out to return and rebuild (2 Chr 36). "Let my tongue be silenced, if I ever forget you!", we respond with Psalm 137, along with the exiles in Babylon.

5TH SUNDAY OF LENT – 03/17/2024 SERMON TITLE: GOD'S NEW PROMISE

As the people head into exile, Jeremiah announces a day when God will make a new promise with them and write it on their hearts! (Jer 31:33-34). "Create in me a clean heart", we reply with Psalm 51.

PALM SUNDAY – 03/24/2024 SERMON TITLE: ENTERING GOD'S PROMISE

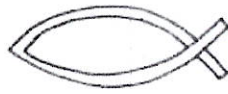
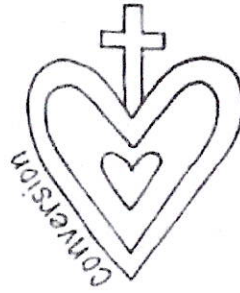
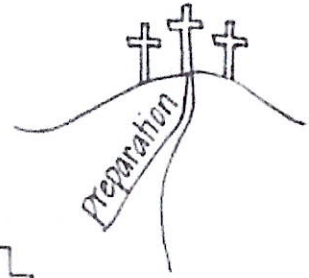
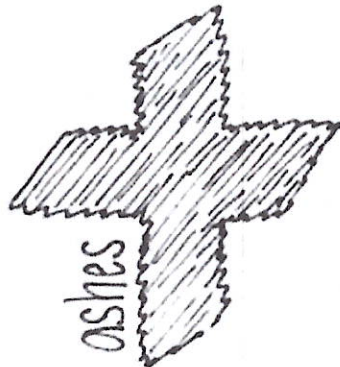
Old and New are drawn together in the words of Isaiah, who says "I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard..." (Isa 50:6). Then, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" – Jesus himself takes up the refrain from Psalm 22. Everything in the Old finds its fulfillment in the New, and we enter Passion Week reliving our baptism into his death and awaiting the glorious resurrection.

MAUNDY THURSDAY- 03/28/2024 7:00 P.M. SERMON TITLE: THE BREAD IS READY

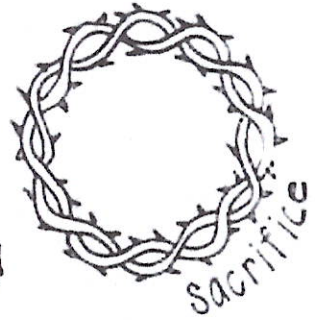
In John 13:1-7, 31-35, we read the account of the Last Supper which reminds us of the importance of humility, selflessness, and service to others.

GOOD FRIDAY – 03/29/2024 MOVIE: A RESURRECTION THEMED MOVIE Join us in the church sanctuary at 7 P.M. to watch a movie centered on the Resurrection. This movie is a fictional account of the Resurrection through the curious eyes of a Roman guard. It is extremely moving and worth your time! (Note: Not the same movie as last year!)

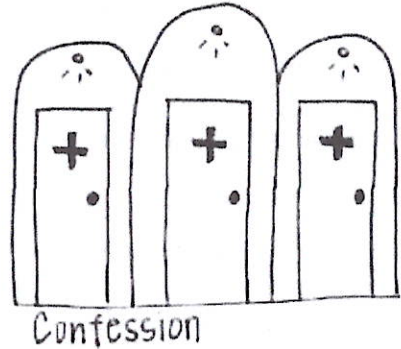
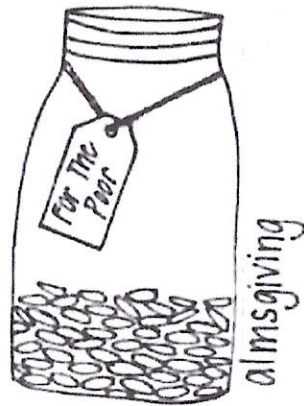
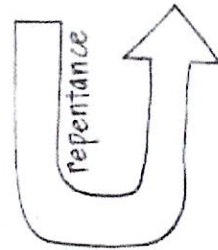
EASTER SUNDAY – 03/31/2024 SERMON TITLE: FULLFILLED PROMISES This Sunday marks the celebration of Christ raised from the grave! In that, it speaks to all the promise of God coming to fulfillment. Join us as we celebrate the risen King!



Lent



40
forty days



LaPorte UMC Memories

Share your memories with us so that we may pass them on to future generations!

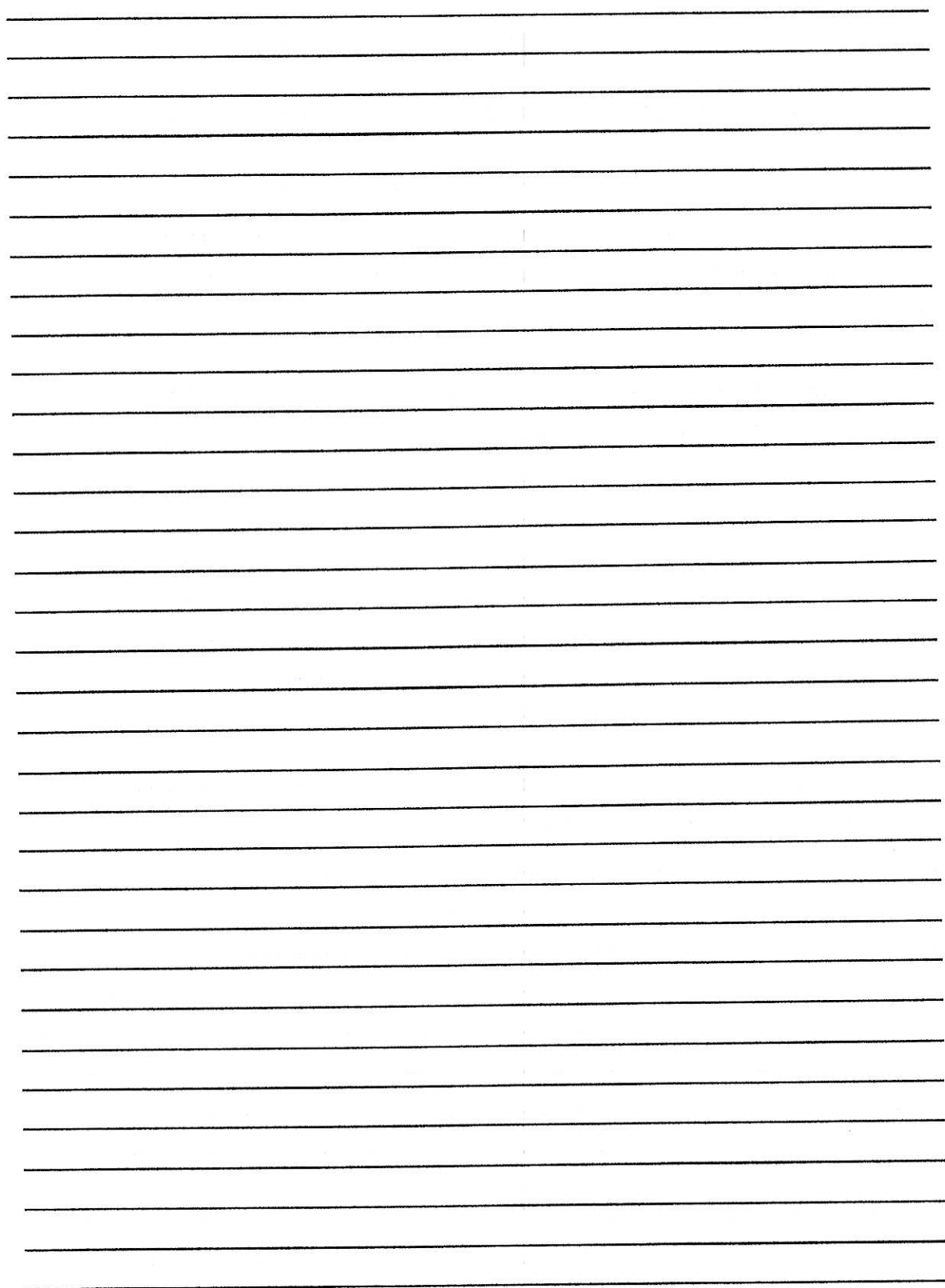
Name: _____

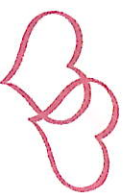
We would love to get any photos of the church you may have - old church building photos, events, people, etc. If you would like to share photos with us, please leave your email or phone number so we may get in contact with you: _____

Are there any special people from LaPorte UMC who have made a big impact on your life? If so, tell us about them and their impact on you: _____

Tell us about the pastors who have served during your time here. How they have impacted your life, what they were like, and any funny stories you may have: _____

General Memories - feel free to tell us anything you remember about your time at the church (More room on the back of the page): _____





February 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>LaPorte United Methodist Church</i> 2071 Grafton Rd, Elyria, OH 44035						
4 Communion 12pm Tureen Lunch 3pm MYF	5 10am Stephen Ministry 6pm Community Prayer Svc. @ LaPorte	6 6:30pm Pickleball	7 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study 1:30pm Second Harvest	8 7:30pm AA	9 10am Pickleball 12:30pm 200 th Anniv. Mtg.	3 10am Pickleball
11	12 5pm 6:18 Prayer Service	13 5:30pm Shrove Pancake Dinner	14 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study 12pm Fellowship Act. 7pm Ash Wed. Svc.	15 7:30pm AA	16 10am Pickleball	17
18 3pm MYF	19 5pm 6:18 Prayer Service 7pm Prayer Shawl	20 6:30pm Pickleball	21 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study	22 7:30pm AA	23 10am Pickleball	24
25 8:30am Community Breakfast	26 5pm 6:18 Prayer Service 7pm Leadership Team Mtg.	27 6:30pm Pickleball	28 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study	29		

EVENTS

Faith & Fellowship Tureen Lunch
February 4 following morning worship

Shrove Pancake Dinner
February 13 at 5:30pm

Fellowship Activity
February 14 at 12:00pm





Ash Wednesday Service
February 14, at 7:00pm

Community Breakfast
February 25, from 8:30am to 10:00am



March 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
LaPorte United Methodist Church 2071 Grafton Rd., Elyria, OH 44035						
Communion 12pm Tureen Lunch 3pm MYF	3 10am Stephen Ministry 6pm Community Prayer Svc. @ Belden	4 6:30pm Pickleball	5 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study 1:30pm Second Harvest	6 7	1 7:30pm AA	2 10am Pickleball
UMCOR Sunday 10	11 5pm 6:18 Prayer Service	12 6:30pm Pickleball	13 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study 12pm Fellowship Act.	14 15	8 7:30pm AA	9 10am Pickleball 12:30pm Worship Team Mtg.
17 3pm MYF 	18 5pm 6:18 Prayer Service 7pm Prayer Shawl	19 6:30pm Pickleball 	20 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study	21 22	22 7:30pm AA	23 10am Pickleball
24 	25 5pm 6:18 Prayer Service 7pm Leadership Team Mtg.	26 6:30pm Pickleball	27 9:30am Ladies' Bible Study	28 7pm Maundy Thursday Svc.	29 7pm Good Friday Movie 7:30pm AA 	30 10am Pickleball
31 Easter 8:30am Community Breakfast						

EVENTS

Faith & Fellowship Tureen Lunch
March 3 following morning worship

Good Friday Movie
March 29 at 7:00pm
in the Sanctuary

Fellowship Activity
March 13 at 12:00pm

Community Breakfast
Easter morning, March 31, from 8:30am
to 10:00am

Maundy Thursday Service
March 28 at 7:00pm