

MAYFLOWER

News

DEC 2020 | JAN 2021

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29 - 10:30am

ADVENT BEGINS!

Be inspired this Advent with daily Mayflower Meditations by email.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1 - 7:00pm

CHAMBER MUSIC AT MAYFLOWER

A FREE Livestream Virtual Concert (This program will not be recorded)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 - 10:30am

CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Livestream during Virtual Worship

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20 - 10:30am

CHRISTMASTIDE

With this traditional service, we welcome a choral quartet during worship with a recorded video link of Mayflower choirs singing this beloved anthem.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE AT MAYFLOWER

5:00pm - Live Family Nativity

- Front Steps of Mayflower

7:00pm - Night of Silence

- Livestream Virtual Service

11:00pm - Night of Silence

- Virtual Service VIDEO REPLAY

A LETTER FROM JONATHAN

Dear Mayflower Members and Friends,

The COVID pandemic has impacted our lives in a myriad of ways including complicating much of the communication from church. As an attempt to improve the flow of information, I am writing to focus on a subject that has beleaguered Mayflower during this time of pandemic – the reopening of the church.

Moderator Jim Rogers and I had developed a three-stage reopening plan for August 2020, and the details were released in an August “News to Use” email and announced in late August and early September livestream worship services. However, many people missed the message and many members were left confused. Furthermore, COVID-19 has resurged in the Grand Rapids area overwhelming hospitals, disrupting schools, and upending our lives. This not only added to the disarray, it forced us to abandon the reopening plan just as it was being implemented. Many members are frustrated, lonely, and angered because the church remains closed.

The REVISED Three-Step Plan Jim and I have worked out will be based on state guidelines and best practice models for church reopening from sources like *Christianity Today* and the Kent County Health Department. The hopeful phased reopening is planned as follows:

STEP ONE Protocols for Entry – These procedures include mandatory masks, temperature checks, social distancing, and limited accessibility once inside the church. Members are to enter and exit at an assigned door and arrive at staggered times. After a gathering, the area used by members will be sanitized by either the members of a small group or a professional cleaning company specialized in remediating the COVID-19 virus. (We also studied the air circulation patterns inside the building to determine if there was a more efficient method of improving air quality.)

STEP TWO Small Group Entry – As suggested in models from best practices, reopening will begin with small groups. The church will provide sanitized seating and tables and the group will sanitize the area at the end of the meeting.

(Continued on Page 6)

MAYFLOWER: A BEACON OF HOPE

While we are all missing our in-person worship time, we need to find new ways to be inspired. With the services online, I enjoy the flexibility of attending when my schedule allows. I lace up my walking shoes, put on my headphones and go for an hour walk to attend the services.

A nighttime walk along Reeds Lake Blvd with the Mayflower steeple lit up is a

wonderful backdrop for the beautiful music and the Word of God. A daytime walk can inspire me through God’s beauty of nature.

Finding gratitude in these strange times can bring peace and comfort.

Thank you Mayflower for still offering a service that can bring JOY!

~ Kathy Wynsma, member

MAYFLOWER Music

Advent in Troubled Times

As we begin a new church year amid a pandemic, it has never been more clear that Advent is a time to balance the complicated mess we live in with the joy in the world we hope for.



CHAMBER MUSIC AT MAYFLOWER

Join us for a virtual concert on **Tuesday, December 1 at 7pm** as we celebrate Beethoven's 250th Anniversary with musicians of the Grand Rapids Symphony conducted by John Varineau

POSTPONED!
Until 2021

The FREE livestream program includes Beethoven's Octet for Winds in E-flat, Op. 103

To enjoy this free concert, or for more information, please visit www.MayflowerChurch.org



GIAN-CARLO MENOTTI
Amahl and the Night Visitors

Mayflower Christmas Cantata
December 13 - 10:30am
A virtual presentation during Sunday Worship featuring Mayflower Chancel and Youth Choirs and Grand Rapids Symphony musicians

Ben Zuzelski, Amahl
Emily Smith, Mother
William Potts, Kaspar
Bill Bokhout, Melchior
Joshua Ledesma, Balthazar
Ryan Potts, Page
Scott Bosscher, Director
Alex Petty, Producer

Streaming online at MayflowerChurch.org through December

MAYFLOWER Congregational Church
Grand Rapids Choir of Men & Boys

Children's Book available. Michele Lemire, Illustrator

Sunday, December 20 CHRISTMASTIDE

Following a long-standing tradition, we will feature the anthem *This Christmastide*. Because we cannot safely bring our choirs together, the anthem will be sung by a quartet during the livestream service. There will be a link available for you to enjoy a video, created over several weeks, where our Children's, Youth, Handbell and Chancel Choirs will be featured.

Music of this season embodies painful brokenness and hopeful joy. It is often contemplative and it expresses our sorrow and our joy. This year has been difficult on so many levels, yet we are comforted with the knowledge that there are better times ahead.

Until we can safely meet and sing together, your music staff has worked hard using music as a means to stay connected, to feel comforted and hopeful. Here are some things to look forward to:

§ **Sunday morning livestream virtual worship services at 10:30am** offer a variety of music and musicians to support the message of the day: children and ukuleles, Bach cantata arias, solos, duets, quartets, string instruments, oboe, horn. Many of these works heard on Sunday morning are later posted on our YouTube channel, and we invite you to share and enjoy them over and over.

§ **Hymns continue to be available to our members.** Please let us know if you would like to pick one up, to more fully engage in our virtual worship services, and as an additional resource for daily devotions with your family.

§ **In 2003, Mayflower choirs recorded a CD, *The House of God*,** which includes many favorite anthems. As a way to stay connected to Mayflower's music and to enjoy choral singing, which we all long for, the CDs are available for anyone who would like them – for yourself or a friend. Just let us know and we can make arrangements for you to pick them up.

Let us travel through this season with grace, with anticipation, and with hope for a time when we can join our voices in song once again.

~ Dr. Julia Brown, Director of Music

Sign-up to receive emails for Advent Daily Meditations

at mayflowerchurch.org/news/events

This Advent season, we have compiled written devotionals, poems, videos, music and artwork as an encouragement for each day.

CHANCEL CHOIR

Scott Bosscher, Director

Holiday traditions run deep at Mayflower, especially at Christmas. Our challenge in this difficult period of separation was to select a project for our Christmas Cantata which would *safely* bring together as many Mayflower members across all age groups as possible. Mounting a theatrical production such as *Amahl and the Night Visitors* allowed us to do just that.

Twelve players from the Grand Rapids Symphony along with many of our Mayflower Choir members plus youth dancers, all in Biblical costume, played, sang and danced with incredible beauty and joy. May God continue to use Mayflower Church in profound ways.

CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

Abby Brooks, Director

As we move into winter, the children's choirs had a wonderful fall outdoors. This winter, we will focus on different activities to continue the children's musical development, and the 3rd-5th grade students will continue with ukulele. We will also try turning our favorite Bible verses into chants.

MAYFLOWER

Faith Formation Journey

Mayflower's Christian Education Team has prepared meaningful ways for families to experience the anticipation of Christmas during this Advent season.

BIBLE BEGINNINGS, BIBLE ALIVE & BRIDGE STUDENTS!

Check your mailbox for special Christmas crafts and Sunday school lessons as well as the 2020 Advent Calendar. We wish for this time to be filled with moments of wonder and joy as we journey towards Bethlehem.

MIDWEEK HOUR!

Christmas is coming to Midweek! As Advent begins, the Midweek Hour will include music and ukulele classes that joyfully ring out Christmas cheer with a grand celebration of Christ's birth on Wednesday, Dec. 16th with caroling outside and a hot chocolate bar.

ADVENT ALIVE DRIVE-THRU!

A favorite Christmas event at Mayflower through the years. And even though we are unable to gather together in person, the tradition can go on, it will just look a little different.

**SUNDAY, DEC 6
12-1PM**

UNDER THE PORTICO

29UP Group will be under the portico delivering Christmas crafts to you as you drive-up. You and your children can then take these crafts home and enjoy an afternoon of holiday cheer!

All are welcome!!



CONFIRMATION UPDATE

Watch for an email in January regarding Confirmation classes for 8th graders.



MAYFLOWER *Outreach*

Covid-19 won't stop Mayflower from making Christmas wishes come true!

DROP OFF / PORTICO BIN – 9:00a-2:00p WEEKDAYS



**DOING THE
MOST GOOD™**

DONATE NEW COZY THROW BLANKETS

Your gift helps rescue Christmas for the most vulnerable. With more people facing poverty this upcoming season, your generosity is needed more than ever.

GIVE A FINANCIAL GIFT ONLINE:

www.salvationarmyusa.org/usn/brighten-the-holidays

MEL TROTTER MINISTRIES

DONATE NEW OR GENTLY USED COLD WEATHER GEAR!

Coats, Hats, Mittens, Scarfs, Socks, Thermals

Hundreds of people who are experiencing homelessness and hunger come through our doors every day. We are constantly in need of items to care for individuals and families in crisis.

GIVE A FINANCIAL GIFT ONLINE:

www.meltrotter.org/give

Bethany

CHRISTIAN SERVICES



ARE YOU ABLE TO SPONSOR A FAMILY?

Bethany is organizing this Outreach Opportunity directly.

Sign-up for Family Wish List at:
mayflowerchurch.org/programs/outreach

Donors should plan drop-off at designated Bethany office **ONLY** on Fridays and Saturdays in December
– *not at Mayflower please* –

HOUSEHOLD GIFT BASKETS

DROP OFF / PORTICO BIN – 9:00a-2:00p M-F by Dec. 23

This was a huge hit last year! LET'S DO IT AGAIN!

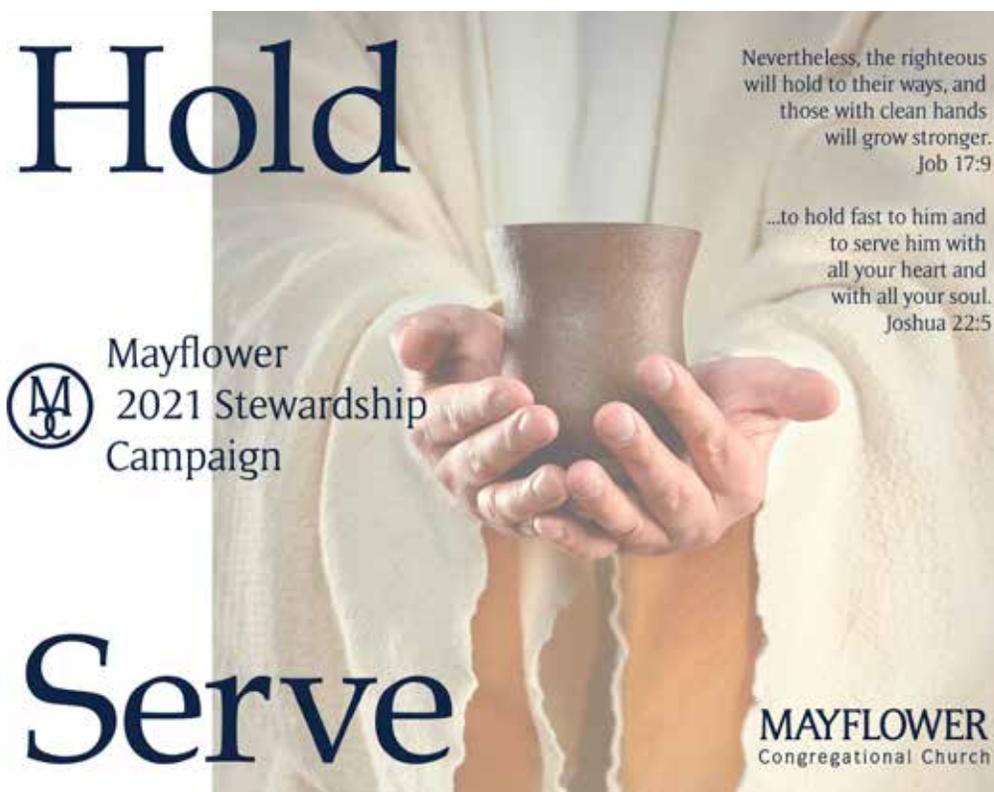
Load up a new Laundry Basket with items like: Laundry Detergent, Personal Hygiene Items, Sanitary Products etc. Our hope is that we can provide a gift basket for each sponsored family.

***Help us stay true to
Mayflower's tradition of
"adopting" needy families
at Christmas time!***

GIVE A FINANCIAL GIFT ONLINE:

www.bethany.org/get-involved/donate

2021 ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



Prayerfully
consider
helping
Mayflower
“Hold Serve”
with your
commitment
for 2021

~ Ken Goodson, Past Moderator,
2021 Stewardship Chair

As you can, please continue to help Mayflower get through 2020 by keeping your promise to the Church and fulfilling your pledge commitments for the year.

We pray those who are able “Hold Serve” and pledge the same amount you committed this past year.

If you are experiencing financial stress due to the COVID crisis, please take a sabbatical from giving this year.

TO PLEDGE ONLINE:
mayflowerchurch.org/support-2/pledge-form

FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Mayflower’s 2020 Budgeted Stewardship Pledges were \$1,059,667. In August, this number was revised to \$729,549 based on uncertainty regarding COVID-19 and our transition to a new pastor. A significant amount of this reduction is moving outreach from 15% to 4%. Mayflower received pledge commitments this year totaling \$854,564, however, through October we have received \$598,449.

The last two months have been deficit months; however, as of today, the Church is still showing positive YTD net income of \$41,160. In a COVID year, this is fantastic. Most expenses have been actively managed lower this year as we search for a new Pastor and communicate through streaming services and support.

The body of the church is more important now than ever. If all members fulfill their 2020 pledge commitments, Mayflower will be able to meet its obligations and increase our expected outreach.

The next month and a half will be critical for Mayflower to achieve its revised forecast in 2020.

~ Blessings, Paul McMahon, Church Treasurer

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

At the end of October we thanked our wonderful Beth Shimko for her many years of kind service as she entered a well-deserved retirement. We are so happy to welcome Amy Hermen as our new Office Administrator.



Amy has impressive experience as a court reporter and more recently as coordinator of the box office at Calvin University. She is well in the swing of things, keeping our office humming!

~ Susan K. Jones, Committee Chair

SENIOR PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Progress is being made on our Search for a new senior pastor.

After meeting with our consultant from Vanderbloemen Search Group, the Search Committee met and put together a profile of Mayflower, the characteristics and experience we want in a candidate, as well as some basic information about the community.

In addition, a video, with Rev. Ruth Bell Olsson as the narrator, has been created to depict the spiritual direction, programs, people, outreach and beauty of Mayflower. All of these elements were put together for the job posting which has now launched. It appears on the Vanderbloemen website as well as Mayflower's website and social media platforms. The sourcing, screening and interviewing of candidates will begin by Vanderbloemen. They will work on sifting through the

applicants, checking in with our committee in about a month to give us a status update on who has been applying and where they believe we are in the process.

FIND MORE DETAILS ONLINE:

mayflowerchurch.org/news/pastor-search-update

The Search Committee is grateful for the prayers of the congregation and most optimistic that we will start to move quickly once the posting is complete. Rest assured that the time and effort that went into creating an accurate and compelling picture of Mayflower to entice the person with the right heart and spirit to lead Mayflower is an important part of the process.

Now we wait for God to touch the heart of our future leader to bring him or her forward.

~ Ginger Young, Committee Chair

INSPIRE US!

***Email us your thoughts at:
portal@MayflowerChurch.org***

MAYFLOWER: A BEACON OF HOPE

How are you finding gratitude this season?

"Even though I can't come to church in person, this is what I am doing instead to feel God in my life..."

(Share your thoughts to lift and give hope to others while we are all looking for ways to cope and engage in this trying time.)

A LETTER FROM JONATHAN

(STEP TWO continued from Page 1)

We started in October with the Monday Women's Bible Study groups. They followed all the protocols and sanitized the area before leaving. This was successful, so we expanded and allowed the Pastoral Search Committee to hold meetings in the atrium or chapel under the same conditions. This was to be followed by allowing our least at-risk population, our youth, to use the Youth Room and Fellowship Hall for Elevate on Sunday evenings and Midweek on Wednesdays. Now that COVID-19 is surging at a higher level than ever in Kent County, we are making schedule decisions day-by-day.

STEP THREE Sanctuary – Finally, we planned to reopen the sanctuary for a limited number of people. Entry was based on the safety and sanitization protocols with staggered arrivals and departures. Members would reserve a spot in worship. Once again, the resurgence of the COVID-19 virus has delayed these plans.

The Church Council plans to open as soon as safely possible, and we hope you understand. They, along with your interim ministerial team, keep track of the COVID cases in the area, hospital conditions, and other data provided by the state. Please feel free to contact me with your own helpful input or to add your voice to the conversation.

I know this is a frustrating time, yet staff, Council, members, and friends are all praying for patience, peace, and God's presence as we enter this Advent season in spirit, if not yet in body.

~ In Christ, Jonathan White, Interim Senior Pastor

COVID UPDATE

All in-person events are tentative until further notice during the COVID-19 crisis with updates posted on Facebook.

Safety protocols, including masks, will be required to attend events as directed by our COVID Task Force Team and Executive Council.

If you, or a family member, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, or you exhibit any of the symptoms associated, or have recently tested positive for COVID-19, please refrain from attending any Mayflower event until you have been through the proper time of quarantine.

**Join the Fun with these groups!
Stay tuned for more engaging activities**

For updates, visit mayflowerchurch.org/news/events

MAYFLOWER Events

29UP GROUP

Sunday, December 6 from 12-1pm, please join us in celebrating Advent Alive by driving up to the Portico to receive some fun and festive crafts to decorate your home for the upcoming season. Enjoy the hot cocoa bar to warm you up!

In January, the 29UP group will host Sledding, Sips, and Steamy Cocoa on the hill in front of church for families and friends to join in some fun. Stay tuned for the date when the snow turns the hill white!

49UP GROUP

Christmas Party "Home for the Holidays"

Saturday, Dec 19 - 5-6pm on Zoom
Singles and couples ages 50 and up
(no upper age limit)

RSVP for the link!

Get on the 49UP Email List:
sjones9200@aol.com

We will plan other Zoom Parties until we can meet again in person!

69UP GROUP

We are eagerly awaiting the go-ahead for resuming group activities.

Several plans are in the making, including the possibility of renting a theater at Celebration Cinema for a private screening of one of the great classics...pop and popcorn included.

We also look forward to more of our popular wine and appetizer gatherings when COVID-19 is behind us!

BIBLE STUDIES

New members are always welcome!

MONDAY MORNING Men's Bible Study - 7:30-8:30am

Leader: Jonathan White (jonathan@mayflowerchurch.org)
Location: Meeting on Zoom

MONDAY MORNING Women's Bible Study - 9:30-10:30am

Leader: Ruth Bell Olsson (ruth@mayflowerchurch.org)
Location: Meeting on Zoom

MONDAY EVENING Men's Bible Study - 5:00pm

Leader: Eric Britcher - 616-498-6002 (debrit2@comcast.net)
Location: Fellowship Hall - Salvation Army Fulton Heights

MONDAY EVENING Women's Bible Study - 5:00-6:30pm

Leader: Heather Libich / Susan Jones (sjones9200@aol.com)
Location: Meeting on Zoom

TUESDAY Retired Men's Bible - *Not Currently Meeting*

Leader: Harold Montgomery (hmonty37@gmail.com)

THURSDAY MORNING Women's Bible Study - 10:00-11:30am

Leader: Shari Graham (shari.graham@comcast.net)
Location: Meeting on Zoom

FRIDAY MORNING Men's Bible Study - 7:00-8:00am

Leader: Harry Matthews (harry747@att.net)
Location: Hall Street Bakery

FIND MORE DETAILS ONLINE:

mayflowerchurch.org/programs/bible-study-groups

PRISCILLA CIRCLE

Priscilla Circle is comprised of women who enjoy fellowship and helping support the church through service. Normally this group would decorate the church for Christmas, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will not be doing so this year.

Hopefully we can resume activities in 2021 such as offering bake sales and selling "The Treasures of Mayflower" notecards to raise funds for future church renovations. *Additional members are always welcome to continue to help maintain and promote the well being of Mayflower.*

CONGREGATIONAL CARE COMMITTEE

The committee is busy creating and sending cards to people on the Prayer List. One way Mayflower extends Congregational Care is through the **Friendly Visitor** program. Our group of "visitors" maintains a connection with church members who are homebound or experiencing various challenges.

If you would like to become a "visitor" or know of someone who would welcome a call or a visit, or would like to create greeting cards, please contact Murry Idema (ridema58@gmail.com).



ELEVATE continues on a week-to-week basis. Watch for weekly emails to provide updates on when and how we'll meet.

Follow ELEVATE on both Facebook (@mayflowerccyouth) and Instagram (@mayfloweryouth) during Advent as we participate with the #AdventWord Global Advent Calendar by creating daily posts.



MORE MAYFLOWER HIGHLIGHTS:

[MayflowerChurch.org/News/Highlights](https://www.mayflowerchurch.org/News/Highlights)

MORE MAYFLOWER EVENTS:

[MayflowerChurch.org/News/Congregational-Events](https://www.mayflowerchurch.org/News/Congregational-Events)

MORE MAYFLOWER WORSHIP SERVICES:

[MayflowerChurch.org/Streaming-Sermons](https://www.mayflowerchurch.org/Streaming-Sermons)

HELP

Our pastors are coordinating resources for both those who need help, and those who can help others in need of assistance regarding food, medicine, and comfort.

Find this button on the homepage at

www.MayflowerChurch.org

to connect with us if help is needed.

2345 Robinson Road, Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616-459-6255 - Office@MayflowerChurch.org



FACEBOOK

[MayflowerCongegationalChurch](https://www.facebook.com/MayflowerCongegationalChurch)
[MayflowerFaithFormation](https://www.facebook.com/MayflowerFaithFormation)
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INSTAGRAM

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YOUTUBE

[MayflowerChurchGR](https://www.youtube.com/MayflowerChurchGR)
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[MayflowerFFJ](https://www.youtube.com/MayflowerFFJ)

Sign-up to receive the Mayflower News weekly email at [MayflowerChurch.org](https://www.MayflowerChurch.org)!