



# HARVEST TIMES

HARVEST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 14305 Covenant Way, Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202 941-907-7333 | JANUARY 2018

We were in the car on the way to the assisted living facility. “Whatever you do, don’t preach about heaven,” said the woman. “They’re getting too close to it, they don’t like talking about it.”

I trusted her opinion, and her husband who was driving, because they had been doing ministry much longer than me. I was just a wet behind the ears seminary student, getting ready to preach for the first time to a group of about thirty residents. Still, something sat uneasy in me as I thought about her directive.

I had not prepared my sermon for that day on the hereafter, so the congregation was safe. But why should I avoid a topic so central to Christian theology? Was it true that the people did not want to explore what is to come, or were they being underestimated? Had a false assumption been made that these folks were too weak, too timid, too in love with this world to dream of the next?

The woman was right though; I should not preach about heaven to this group. Not because they couldn’t handle it, but because they knew far more about it than me. They knew more because most of them had been part of the coming Kingdom of God for twice as long as I had been alive. They had not only read what the scriptures had to say, they had prayed thousands of times, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” They had experienced heaven coming down to earth in many ways.

There is certainly some mystery about what heaven in eternity looks like, but it is not nearly as mysterious as we have been led to believe. In Revelation 21:9–27, John describes the holy city coming down to earth: the walls, the gates, the foundations, the jewels covering it, the brightness of its light, and the residents of it. The faithful worshippers at that retirement home had long ago started living in heaven. They had not yet experienced its full glory, but they had a foretaste. In fact, I believe you’ve probably tasted more than you realize.

May the Lord bless and keep,

Pastor Michael



## WORSHIP AT HARVEST

14305 Covenant Way  
Lakewood Ranch

**Sunday 9 AM**  
Traditional Worship

**Sunday 10:30 AM**  
Contemporary Worship

**Sunday 5 PM**  
Harvest Youth Group

We are called by Christ to offer hope by graciously welcoming people, intentionally growing disciples, and generously serving others locally, regionally, and around the globe.

## WANT MORE?

[facebook.com/harvestumc](https://facebook.com/harvestumc)

[harvestumc](https://instagram.com/harvestumc)

[harvestumc](https://twitter.com/harvestumc)

[welcometoharvest.org](https://welcometoharvest.org)

[info@welcometoharvest.org](mailto:info@welcometoharvest.org)

# HARVEST TEAM

Rev. Michael Pestel  
Lead Pastor

Rev. Katie Pestel  
Pastor

Rev. Jennifer Potter Buff  
Pastor

Jillanne Conelias  
Sprouts CDC Associate Director

Reed Conley  
Director of Worship Arts

Terry Cox  
Executive Assistant to the Pastors

Carin Doddroe  
Facilities and Guest Readiness Director

Dan Funk  
Comptroller

Alan Hensley  
Custodial Manager

Mike Kennedy  
Director of Discipleship

Molly Lawson  
Director of Community Engagement

Logan Lundstrom  
Accompanist

Steve Maldonado  
Tech Booth Coordinator

Bonnie McElravy  
Children's Minister

Faith McHale  
Interim Choral Music Director

Ginny Scott  
Youth Minister

Cindee Shevlin  
Sprouts CDC Director

Paul Tassler  
Communications Director

Dan Whissell  
Associate Worship Leader

Staff can be reached via email at  
firstinitiallastname@welcometoharvest.org  
(example: jdoe@welcometoharvest.org)

# HARVEST YOUTH

## Sunday, January 7

This will be our Sunday night gathering to kick off 2018!

## Sunday, January 14

This night will be called Sunday Night Live! The entire night will be for both youth AND parents. We will share information about our 2018 happenings

**Harvest Youth is for students in grades 6-12. For more information visit [hyfive.org](http://hyfive.org)**



# SMALL GROUPS

## WINTER SMALL GROUPS Start January 24

*Covenant Bible Study: Living The Covenant* (9 weeks)

*Make a Difference: Following Your Passion and Finding Your Place to Serve* by Jim Harnish (7 weeks)

*Sabbath Keeping: Finding Freedoms in the Rhythms of Rest* by Lynne Baab (6 weeks)

*What the Prayers of Jesus Tell Us About the Heart of God* by Shane Stanford (6 weeks)

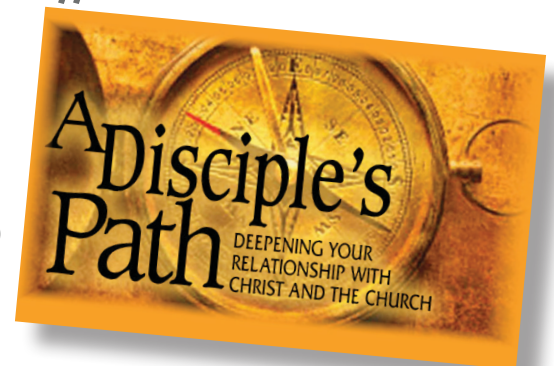
More info and to register: visit [welcometoharvest.org/groups](http://welcometoharvest.org/groups) or Hospitality Hub 1.

## A DISCIPLE'S PATH

January 21–March 4 // 9–10 AM

*A Disciple's Path* is a great opportunity for those who have recently arrived at Harvest, especially those who are considering church membership. After the group concludes, you'll have the opportunity to join Harvest. Participation in *A Disciple's*

*Path* is not limited to those who want to become church members. If you're new to the faith or have been part of the church for a long time, we guarantee you'll learn new things and rediscover some you may have forgotten. RSVP/Questions: Mike Kennedy at [mkenedy@welcometoharvest.org](mailto:mkenedy@welcometoharvest.org) or 941-907-7333.



# HARVEST KIDS

## January BIG IDEA

What are your new year's resolutions? This month we are learning about commitment, which is making a plan and putting it into practice. We are working together to practice making commitments and sticking to them as we learn what it looks like to live for God, talk to God, and hear from God. Let us help you stick to your new year's resolutions!

Make note of our memory verse this month as a daily reminder for you in this New Year! Matthew 19:26 says, "With God, all things are possible."

Have you made a New Year's resolution to read your Bible more? Keep in touch on the Harvest Kids Facebook, or check out some resources at the Harvest Kids classroom to find plans to do as a family to learn more about God this year by reading scripture every day!

If you are interested in being a part of the Harvest Kids fun, consider joining the Easter Egg Hunt Team or the VBS Team! Be a part of planning, preparing and making these events extra special for our community! Email [bbarrow@welcometoharvest.org](mailto:bbarrow@welcometoharvest.org) for more information.



# HARVESTERS IN MARCH

## GO ON AN ARCHITECTURAL JOURNEY

Harvesters will hit the road again on Thursday, March 7 as they travel by motor coach to Lakeland to tour the Frank Lloyd Wright designed buildings on the campus of Florida Southern College. As the largest single-site collection of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture in the world, the campus is home to 10 buildings and two additional structures designed by Wright.

The Harvesters will enjoy a 2 ¼ hour walking tour led by an experienced docent. The motor coach will leave Harvest at 9 a.m. for the 10:30 a.m. tour. Cost for the day is \$45, and is non-refundable.

Following the tour, the Harvesters will travel to downtown Lakeland for lunch at Harry's Seafood Bar and Grille. Cost of lunch will be on your own.

**Registration begins on January 9, and our registration deadline is February 1.** Seating capacity on the motor coach is limited to just 55 people, so register early! More info and registration is available at [welcometoharvest.org/harvesters](http://welcometoharvest.org/harvesters).

If you have questions, contact Bob and Mary Stark at 231- 564-0677.





Disney movies have entertained us for almost 75 years. This new messages series looks at the Gospel themes in four popular Disney movies – themes that come straight from the teachings of Jesus. Whether you are 4 or 94, join us for a look at the Gospel message in a brand new way, through the images and music of Disney.

## VITAL SIGNS

The people of Harvest are sowing seeds of faith,  
growing together in Christ

- < 38 people responded to the invitation to read with a Falkner Farm student at McNeal Elementary
- < In October, Harvest donated 100 Amazon Fire 7 kids' tablets to McNeal Elementary to help Falkner students become better readers. Our goal is to enhance the education of Falkner children by providing access to technology that will help ensure they have opportunities for success alongside their peers
- < Our annual Advent Dinner held to benefit Samaritan Counseling Services raised \$8,603.72
- < 24 children and their families from the Bayshore area were treated to a Christmas Party at Lee Middle School
- < Our Christmas Eve offering to benefit Habitat for Humanity and ongoing ministry in the Bayshore community is at \$19,753.83
- < Worship attendance on Christmas Eve was awesome: 3 PM, 398; 5 PM, 567; 7 PM, 249; 9 PM, 405 for a total of 1,619

People are giving generously! You can see our financial picture at [welcometoharvest.org](http://welcometoharvest.org).  
For a full report of our Missional Vital Signs, go to [tools.flumc.org/yearly.asp](http://tools.flumc.org/yearly.asp).