

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

**BEGINNING 1/3/24**

7:00 p.m. - Adult Choir

**BEGINNING 1/10/24**

6:00 p.m. - Adults: "The Power of Vulnerability" by Brene Brown, led by Helen McGrath

**BEGINNING 1/17/24**

6:00 p.m. - KidsHaven  
6:00 p.m. - Youth

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**Letters to My Church**



Jakob Topper  
Senior Pastor

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.

In the last year, we moved to a new location and restarted many of our focuses and programs. We hit the ground running, established mission teams, created systems to fill and fund those teams, and made a monumental shift in our Missions work. For years, our focus was survival. How do we endure a pandemic, afford to keep our doors open, and work through conflict together? For a season we were necessarily self-centered, but that changed when we sold our building, created our endowment, and moved into our new location.

The new locale itself afforded us opportunities to feed and clothe unhoused persons and vulnerable teenagers from the high school. We responded faithfully by creating a food pantry, a team for high school outreach, and building a partnership with Food and Shelter for Friends. These are just three of the many things that became passion projects central to our congregation's mission

in the world and our understanding of ourselves within the last year.

When John sat down to write his gospel, he wisely borrowed the opening words of Genesis to use as his own, "In the beginning..." Almost as if to say, "Let no one misunderstand what is happening: the Jesus movement isn't a new, anti-Jewish movement as some suggested. It is the Jewish story continued and expanded into a new world." Likewise, NorthHaven's restart was an opportunity to move forward by moving back to the fundamentals of our mission and vision. NorthHaven was founded as an inclusive & progressive congregation in Oklahoma with strong mission values. Over the years, other good values arose and competed for primacy, as is unavoidable and necessary, but when given the opportunity to use our energy freely, without untenable financial burdens, NorthHaven once again committed itself to the values upon which it was founded: inclusion, mission, and community.

(continued on page 2)

-NorthHaven-

An inclusive family of Christ followers,  
inspiring, challenging,  
and equipping each other  
to participate in God's great story.



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(Continued from page 1)

2024 is the 20th anniversary of NorthHaven's birth. In the Bible, 40 is a symbolic number that means whole or complete, as in finished. To say the Israelites wandered for 40 years in the wilderness is to say they wandered until their wilderness season was completed—until it was finished. There's poetic beauty in the fact that we're experiencing a congregational rebirth at NorthHaven at the 20 year mark. We are not finished. God still has work for us to do, but we are closing the door on one season of our shared life together just as we're opening another one. Our future is full of possibility.



within it. We can simultaneously see how far we've come as a congregation and see that our origin story and core values are still playing themselves out within us today. That's something to be proud of and to celebrate.

We've moved mountains to be where we are today, and each day, we see a little more clearly why our efforts to endure and to survive were so important. There are still people who need NorthHaven to welcome and celebrate them. There are people who need NorthHaven to feed and clothe them. There are people who need NorthHaven to be an inclusive family of Christ followers just to prove that it can be done and there is still hope for the church.

We're beginning to look ahead at how to celebrate our 20th anniversary. What we've endured and what we've accomplished in our time together is no small feat, and celebrating victories together is essential when times are as tough as they've been. The anniversary gives us the opportunity to take stock of how the world has changed and how NorthHaven has evolved to respond to it and minister

I'm convinced that the world needs NorthHaven more today than ever before. People long for authentic connection and community, and NorthHaven can provide that with meaning and purpose to boot. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, so pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send workers into the fields. (Matt. 9:37-38)

- January 5: B. Don Steveson
- January 9: Neal Hardin
- January 10: Emmy Hollingsworth
- January 12: Capri Foreman
- January 12: Brad Moore

- January 19: Mary Hardin
- January 22: Michael Boles
- January 23: Zac Stevens
- January 28: Maria Gray



### Happy New Year

THIS CHRISTMAS MARKED THE 4TH YEAR WE HAVE BEEN ENTRUSTED WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF NORTHAVEN. WE HAVE LEARNED SO MUCH WORKING WITH THE YOUTH AND CHILDREN AND ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024!



### Winter Gear Drive

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF JANUARY THE YOUTH WILL BE COLLECTING WINTER GEAR TO GIVE TO FOOD AND SHELTER.



### Intergenerational Events

WE HAVE A LOT OF GREAT INTERGENERATIONAL EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2024! THE FIRST ONE IS TRIVIA NIGHT! JOIN US ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31ST FOR A FUN EVENING!



IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU NEED, PLEASE CALL/TEXT/EMAIL/ US!  
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