



The Portage Presbyterian Church

December, 2023

"The Church is a people - and we are the Church!"



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and peace!

"Holiday House" @ PPC - Dec 2



PPC's Presbyterian Women Group will be hosting a "Soup and Bake Sale" on Saturday, December 2 - from 9:00-11:00 a.m.



A choice of Soup (*Beef Barley or Chicken Noodle*) will be available in "quart jars to go."

There will also be a delicious assortment of homemade breads - cookies - bars - pies - candy - and ??? available as well.

What a great way to "prep" for the upcoming holiday season - and help support the work and projects of PPC's Women's Association at the same time. *See you there!*

"Greening of the Church" Worship - Sunday, Dec 3

On Sunday, December 3 we share a unique and inspirational worship experience we call "The Greening of the Church."

The "Greening of the Church" worship service is a time of "preparation" as we decorate the church for Advent and Christmas. We will explore the "meanings" of the many symbols with which we associate Advent and Christmas - we will sing Christmas hymns - and we will celebrate the Lord's Supper with a "singing liturgy."

Come and see - and even more - come and experience the joy of Advent as we "get ready."



"Christmas Worship" in A Barn - Sunday, Dec 10



Mark and Beth Heinze and their family have again invited *US* to share in this most unique and inspirational worship experience "in a barn."

Come and experience a "back to the future" **Christmas** as we gather with the animals to sing - hear the Christmas story from the Scriptures - and reflect on the real reason for this season.

We will gather at the Heinze Family Farm (*W10027 Hwy 127*) @ 5:00 p.m.

be sure to "spread the word" - invite family, neighbors & friends!

"Longest Night" Worship - Thursday, Dec 21

Some of us walk into Advent tethered to our unresolved yesterdays – the pain still stabbing, the hurt still throbbing. It's not that we don't know better; it's just that we can't stand up anymore by ourselves. On the way to Bethlehem, God gives us a hand...." (Ann Weems)

We will once again offer a "Longest Night" worship service here at PPC.

The "Longest Night" service (also called a "Blue Christmas" service) is a worship experience which is offered for those in our community who may find that Advent and Christmas is a more difficult time because of losses, changes, fears and upheavals.

This is a more quiet and reflective service, which includes the "lighting of the blue candles" as a part of the experience.

Those who share in this service are invited to take part in as much or as little of the service as they need to. Sometimes just a "space and place of quiet" is important too!

If you find that this type of service may be important for you this year, please come.

Or if you know of someone for whom this service would be important - please invite them.

Our "Longest Night" worship service will be offered on Thursday, December 21 - beginning @ 6:00 p.m.



Christmas Eve "Candlelight" Worship



We will share a Christmas Eve "Candlelight" worship service on **December 24 @ 5:30 p.m.**

A worship experience of Scripture - Song - Prayers - and lighting Candles will be shared in the sanctuary.

"O come let us adore Him!"

Christmas Day Worship - Sunday, Dec 25

PPC will be sharing a **Christmas Day Worship Service** of "Scripture and Song" on **Sunday, December 25** - beginning @ our normal worship time of 10:05 a.m.

FREE Christmas Day Dinner Plans Are Made

This will be the 25th year the Portage Presbyterian Church has provided a free mid-day dinner for people in our community - on Christmas Day!

With the health and safety of our church and the community in mind we will again offer our Christmas Dinner through **pick ups and delivery only**. Deliveries will be made only in the city of Portage.

Our menu will be: turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, vegetable, cranberry and rolls along with bars and/or cookies for dessert.

Reservations for pick up or delivery can be made by calling the church office at 608-742-6006 or Nancy Schaper at 608-742-7242 and leave a message and we will contact you back. **Reservations must be made by December 22nd.**

We are in need of help that day so if you are available to help please call Nancy. We will also need cookies and bars so call Nancy if you can donate dessert or have any questions.



Community "Cookie Baking" Opportunity Again This Year!

On Saturday, December 16 - PPC "extends an invitation" to our church community, our neighbors and their families to come and "bake Christmas cookies."



- For those who have never baked cookies before, we will provide directions.
- For those who do not have a place to bake cookies, we will provide the facilities.
- For those who need "ingredients" for their cookies, we will provide what is needed.
- For those who need a special time spent together with their family, we will provide an unforgettable experience - maybe even a new "family tradition."

If you would like to come and help our "neighbors" to bake cookies, please contact the Church Office.

We will also be looking for those who would be willing to provide "ingredients."

If you would like to help (or have questions) please contact the Church Office.

Be Sure to watch the bulletins - emails - Facebook for more details!

["A Community Christmas Cookie Baking" opportunity](#)

2023 Advent Worship "Theme" - "Do Not Be Afraid!"

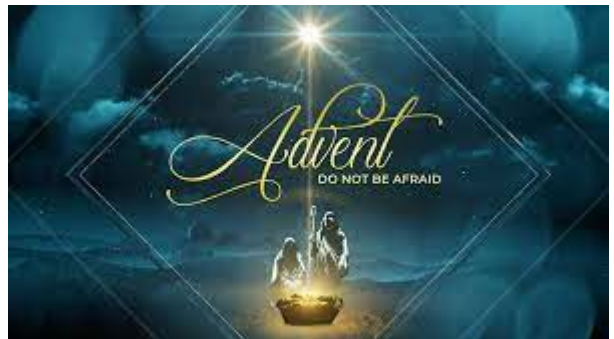
During our Advent worship services, we will be focusing on the theme of "Do Not Be Afraid!"

One of the most prevalent messages we find throughout the Scriptures is God's message to God's people to "**not be afraid**" (along with the commandment to love and the promise that God really does abound in steadfast love and faithfulness).

In the Scripture accounts of Jesus' birth, we discover this "message" shared a number of times - to different people - in a variety of places - yet the same message!

During our Advent services this year, we will further explore this message of "**Not Being Afraid**" and those to whom the message is given: Zechariah - Mary - Joseph - Shepherds - **and US!** Yes, US!

Come as we explore this Advent message - and the hope that it brings to God's people - then and NOW!



Sunday - December 3 - "Traditional" Worship - 10:05 a.m.

First Sunday of Advent

The "Greening of the Church"

We will share the "Lord's Supper" during the service.

Sunday, December 10 - "Traditional Worship" - 10:05 a.m.

Second Sunday of Advent

"Do Not Be Afraid? - Zechariah"

Micah 5:2-5 Luke 1:5-25

Sunday, December 10 - "Christmas Worship In A Barn" Service - 5:00 p.m.

Sunday - December 17 - "Traditional" Worship - 10:05 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent

"Do Not Be Afraid? - Mary"

Isaiah 11:1-9 Luke 1:26-38

Thursday, December 21 - "Longest Night" Worship - 6:30 p.m.

A Worship Experience for those who find Advent and Christmas a difficult time!

Sunday, December 24 - "Traditional" Worship - 10:05 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

"Do Not Be Afraid? - Joseph"

Jeremiah 1:4-10 Matthew 1:18-23

Sunday - December 24 - "Candlelight" Worship - 5:30 p.m.

"Christmas Eve" Worship

"Do Not Be Afraid? - Shepherds (and US)"

Isaiah 9:2-7 Luke 2:8-20

Monday, December 25 - "Christmas Day" Worship - 10:05 a.m.

A Service of Song and Scripture

IF you would like to receive the "weekly worship materials" -
the Sunday Worship Bulletin & Children's Bulletin -
by email- please contact Pastor Dave.

"Reverse" Advent Calendar



You are invited to participate in an Advent experience unlike any other -
a **"Reverse" Advent Calendar!**

During each day of Advent, the "calendar" will have an item which will be
donated to the Portage Food Pantry.

You may collect your items and drop them off at the
church during the week - or you may choose to wait and bring your
items all at one time.

We will be collecting "food items" until Christmas Eve.
We will have a "special dedication" of our Advent gifts on Christmas
Eve.

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Dave.

The **"Reverse Advent Calendar"** is available at the church and will be
included with the December newsletter. If you would like an "extra calendar" to share with
others, we can email or mail one to you!



Advent Devotionals are now
available! You may pick them up on Sunday
mornings in Parry Hall. Or you may stop by the
Church Office during the week.

If you would like to have a devotional
mailed to you, just contact the Church Office.

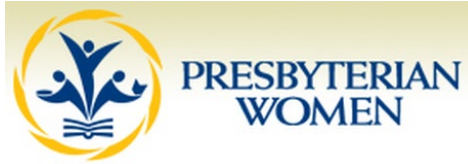
"Special Music" - During Advent & Christmas?



Anyone "out there" who may be interested in sharing
"Special Music" during **Advent and Christmas?**

This could be *"vocal"* - *"instrumental"* - *"ensemble"* or *"other
ideas"* you may have!

Contact Pastor Dave if you would like to participate!



Don't forget the annual Holiday House will be held on Saturday, December 2nd from 9:00 - 11:00 in Parry Hall.

We will be putting in a Scrip order so that you have your gift cards just in time for gift giving. Please have your order to Elaine by December 2nd. There are order forms on the table in Parry Hall.

Our popular *Mission Chicken Soup Mix* is always available for purchase on Sundays in the sanctuary, in the church office during open hours, or by contacting Glenda Day. If you've never tried it, give it a try. You won't be disappointed!

Our next meeting Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 2nd. at 9:00 at Dino's.

From the "Deacons"

Just a reminder - all "*loose offerings*" (*coins and cash*) - on "Communion Sundays" - will be given to the Deacons to help support their ministries to and through this church community.



PPC "volunteers" to "stock the shelves" at the Food Pantry on the 3rd Wednesday of each month - **December 20** - usually @ 6:00 p.m. or so. Volunteers are always welcome to come and help this community resource provide a necessary program for those in need in our community. Please contact Pastor Dave if you are planning to come and help, in case there is a change in the schedule

Come and help make a difference in the community!

Just a reminder - there is a "Little Food Pantry" in front of Westminster Center. Anyone can place items in this box - and we receive donations from PPC folks as well as those from the community..

If you would like to make donations to the "Little Food Pantry" please feel free to provide dry goods and non perishables not affected by the temperature.



New Directions 4-H club is a very active group of young people from the area that meet together to share ideas, work on projects and learn great leadership skills.

The New Directions 4-H club meets @ PPC on the 3rd Sunday of each month, beginning @ 4:00 p.m.

PPC is pleased to be able to support the efforts of 4-H and the New Directions Club by offering a meeting space and support for their good work.

Jen Martens serves as the advisor for the New Directions Club.



Here are some of the "more recent adventures and experiences"
for PPCs Scout Units!

Pack 70

Making plans for "Lock In" @ PPC on December 8-9

"Rechartering"

Crossover 2/25/24

Troop 7070

All new crossovers on track for Scout rank
Cabin campout @ Moon Lake
Working on "Snow Base" plans in 2024
Crochet meeting went well
Looking into Pottery merit badge and one of the Citizenship merit badges
Movie night coming up after Thanksgiving
"Rechartering"

Troop 70

Celebrated "TWO" Eagle Courts of Honor recently - Congratulations Lukas and Blake!
Plans for "Lock In" @ Parks and Rec building for lock-in /cookie making for service project
Working on "Snow Base" plans in 2024
"Rechartering"

Keep up the great work, Scouts!

Important "Information and Activities" Around Portage

"Sharing Supper" Information!

On Monday, December 18 - from 5:00-6:00 p.m. - Portage's "Sharing Supper" will be serving the community meal - @ **Bartels Middle School**.

"Sharing Supper" is organized around the idea that it is good for people to come together - in community - to "share a meal" - along with conversations. Different organizations and groups in the Portage area provide the meals each month - ordinarily on the last Monday of the month.



"Kwik Trip" Car Wash Cards are still available!

For **\$36.00 / card**, you will receive 5 - yes, that's right - 5 "Ultimate" car washes (normally a cost of \$50.00)

If you would like to purchase a "Kwik Trip Car Wash Card" - contact Pastor Dave.

for the work and ministry here @ Portage Presbyterian Church

You may choose to ...



Mail it to the Church Office

or

Drop it in the "mail slot"



or



Use the "online giving" option on "PPC's Website"

or

scan the "QR Code" which will take you to the "Online Giving" Portal



Your financial support for the work and ministry of God in and through the Portage Presbyterian Church is greatly appreciated!

"Together" - we continue to share God's "Good News" in many ways
and YOU are helping to make this possible!



[To Contact The Portage Presbyterian Church](#)

Phone: 608-742-6006

Church Office email: office@portagepresbyterian.com

Pastor Dave email: pastordave@portagepresbyterian.com

Website: www.portagepresbyterian.com

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/Portage-Presbyterian-Church-155581354519952

Serving God and God's People
With "Energy, Intelligence, Imagination and Love"

Ruling Elders / Session

Moderator - Pastor Dave Hankins

Clerk of Session - Alex Harvey

Kevin Foster (2023)
John Crammond (2023)
Tara Bandekow (2023)

Alex Harvey (2024)
Rhys Brenner (2024)
Lee Roundy (2024)

Larry Day (2025)
Jarrett Foster (2025)
Nancy Schaper (2025)

Deacons

Moderator of Deacons - Laura Brenner

Secretary - Judy Taylor

Treasurer - Joyce Meredith

Judy Taylor (2023)
Laura Brenner (2023)
Glenda Day (2023)

Tammy Foster (2024)
Lynne Warren (2024)

Peggy Alf-Sechtig (2025)
Joyce Meredith (2025)
Liz Bellmore (2025)

Looking Ahead ...

Annual Meeting -
Sunday, January 28, 2024

