



# The Portage Presbyterian Church

March, 2024

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



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



Repairers of the Breach – Fixing What’s Broken

*“In a broken and fearful world  
the Spirit gives us courage  
to pray without ceasing,*

*to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,  
to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,  
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,  
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.”*

~from “A Brief Statement of Faith” of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

How do we heal the brokenness and fear in the world when it seems so pervasive?

How can we share hope in a world that is so conflicted?

Our political brokenness. Our cultural brokenness. The brokenness of our climate.

Even brokenness between and among religious communities.

That is not to mention the brokenness we feel in our own lives, and the lives of those we know and love. Physical and emotional and yes, even spiritual brokenness.

All of that brokenness coupled with fear — fear of the other, of the unknown, of the future.

How?

Brokenness is the human condition. But it is not acceptable to God, so it should not become acceptable to us.

In Isaiah 58, God, through the voice of the prophet, calls us to be repairers of the breach. For Isaiah, the primary breach was between God and God’s people. That breach takes on human form in oppression, injustice, hunger, homelessness, affliction.

Isaiah 58, which culminates in our One Great Hour of Sharing theme, is a veritable litany of how we are called to repair brokenness. Read the entire chapter. Note what we are called to do: shout, announce, loose, undo, break, cover, house, and share. We are called to repair brokenness by putting our faith in action — pray, welcome, unmask, hear, work. Give. The opposite of faith, it has been said, is not doubt, but fear. Doing the work, sowing the seeds through our giving that will transform prayer into action — goes a long way to transform fear into hope.

That work can look like many things — offering shelter in the face of natural disaster, providing economic support in the face of poverty, and providing food in the face of hunger. If we answer the call to be repairers of the breach, we will, by God's grace, be led into a new season of justice, freedom and peace. For when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

You may share an offering for the "One Great Hour of Sharing" by using the "white envelopes" - and checking "OGHS." Thank you!

## "Readers" during Lent and Holy Week?

If you are interested in serving as a "Reader" during Lent (on Sunday mornings) and/or Holy Week (Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Early Easter or Late Easter services), please contact Pastor Dave.

## Looking Ahead to PPC's "Holy Week" Worship Schedule



### Palm Sunday - March 24

Worship @ 10:05 a.m. - with the Lord's Supper  
There will be a "Donkey Walk" as a part of the Palm Sunday experience

### Maundy Thursday - March 28

Worship Services @ 12:15 p.m. (noon time) & 6:30 p.m.  
The Lord's Supper will be served with both worship services.



Good



### Friday - March 29

Tenebrae ("Service of Shadows") - 7:00 p.m.

### Easter Sunday (Early) - March 31

On the Wisconsin River Levee (near the Tamarack) - 7:00 a.m.



### Easter Sunday (Later) - March 31

Easter Morning Celebration - 10:05 a.m.

## RIP - Medical Debt - *"The results are in ..."*

In 2024 John Knox Presbytery raised over \$30,000 and sent it to RIP Medical Debt. We just found out the results...**\$3,906,533.98** in medical debt was wiped out for 2,167 families in North Carolina, Indiana, Texas and Idaho!

Hmmm...how to explain what almost \$4 million looks like? It's like taping \$20 bills end to end for about 18 miles...from Postville to Waukon...or from Reedsburg to Wisconsin Dells ... or from Portage to Baraboo.

What an amazing ministry!

## Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday, March 3 - "Traditional" Worship Service - 10:05 a.m.

*Third Sunday of Lent*

*John 2:13-22*

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

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

*Fourth Sunday of Lent*

*John 3:14-21*

Sunday, March 17 - "Informal" Worship Service - 10:05 a.m.

*Fifth Sunday of Lent*

*John 12:20-33*

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

*Palm Sunday*

"Palm Sunday Walk" following worship

Thursday, March 28 - Maundy Thursday Service

*Worship @ 12:15 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.*

Both Services will be in the Sanctuary -

Both services will include the Lord's Supper

Friday, March 29 - Good Friday Service

*"Tenebrae" Service @ 7:00 p.m.*

This is a worship experience in which the sanctuary will get progressively darker as we make the "journey" with Christ to the cross.

Sunday, March 31 - Easter Sunday

7:00 a.m. - *Easter SonRise Service - @ the WI River Levee (near the Tamarack)*

10:05 a.m. - *Easter Celebration - in the Sanctuary*

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

Some Sad News

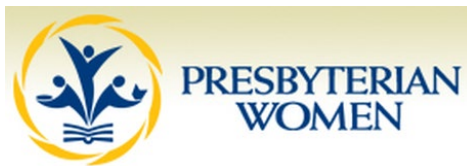


We received the news that **Sandy the Donkey**, who has been with us on Palm Sunday for many years, has passed away.

Sandy was such a "gentle soul" who would travel from Westfield with her family to participate in our annual Palm Sunday "Donkey Walk." She greeted young and older alike, seeming to enjoy all of the attention (and the occasional palm branch).

We will miss Sandy this year!

And we thank the Winkler family for making this special Palm Sunday experience a tradition to remember.



The Women's Association will be meeting on Saturday, March 2nd - 9:00 @ Dino's. Come join us for breakfast and fellowship as we discuss our missions for the coming year. **Hope to see you there!**

Help! The Women's Association is in great need of 8-10 oz jars with lids for the Mission Chicken Soup Mix. Thank you in advance.

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!

## 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 - **March 20** - usually beginning @ 6:00 p.m. 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.



We shared a great "Scout Sunday" experience with Our Scout Units!

There was a "Crossover" Ceremony with Webelos Scouts on Feb 25 -

As Scouts, we know how fortunate we are to have a warm meal every night — whether around the campfire or at the kitchen table. And we know that not everyone is so lucky.



Scouting for Food takes place on two consecutive weekends in March. On the first weekend, Saturday March 2nd, Scouts distribute door hangers to let their neighbors know about the food drive. This is where we need the most manpower.

On the second weekend, Saturday March 9th, Scouts revisit those houses to pick up donations. This is done by driving around.

On March 9th, the food is then delivered to the local Portage St. Vinnie's pantry and then distributed to families in need.

For the PPC community - if you would like to be a part of this collection - *you can "bring your food donation" to the church / church office "after March 2" and "NO LATER THAN" March 8!*

Continue to Make It A Great Year, Scouts!

### "Decorating the Sanctuary" with Flowers for Easter

We are inviting everyone to "help decorate" the Sanctuary with "flowers" for Easter Sunday.

You can "choose" the kind of flowers you would like to bring (*Easter Lilly, Spring flowers, etc*) - to note if you want the flowers to be given "in memory of ..." or "in honor of ..." - and bring them to be displayed on Easter Sunday.

You can then take the flowers with you any time after Easter - or you can choose to have the Deacons deliver them to some of the folks who have difficulties getting out.

**"Oh, We Get By - With A Little Help From Our Friends!"**



For the month of February, Harlan's class at John Muir Elementary School was participating in the "Do Good Wisconsin - Cereal Box Domino Challenge."

- ✓ Schools are competing against schools their size to collect the most boxes of cereal.
- ✓ Awards will be given out to the school to collect the most boxes of cereal.
- ✓ After the event - all cereal collected will be donated to "The Markets" - pantries available for students in elementary, middle and high school

While his initial goal was "30 boxes of cereal" - it was apparent after the first Sunday that he was going to have to "change his goal" - which he did - "**each Sunday**" - because of the generosity of this church community and others - and because of Harlan's enthusiasm. The "cereal drive" at PPC concluded on Sunday, February 25 - and Harlan has collected a total of **233 boxes of cereal**.

Way to go, Harlan!!! ... and way to go PPC and friends!!!

**Important "Information and Activities" Around Portage**

Important "Sharing Supper" Information!

On Monday, February 26 - the Portage community shared its' final Sharing Supper. "Sharing Supper" began at the Rusch School cafeteria and moved to the middle school as the number of friends coming to share increased.

However, with the increasing costs, the difficulty finding "sponsors" and volunteers the organizing committee made the difficult decision to close it down.



"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.



It is "easy" **to make a "financial" offering**  
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](#)

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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

Alex Harvey (2024)

Larry Day (2025)

Tara Bandekow (2026)

Rhys Brenner (2024)

Jarrett Foster (2025)

Nancy Beasley (2026)

Lee Roundy (2024)

Nancy Schaper (2025)

Kathy Raimer (2026)

Deacons

Moderator of Deacons - Peggy Alf-Sechtig

Secretary - Liz Bellmore

Treasurer - Joyce Meredith

Peggy Alf (2025)

Glenda Day (2026)

Tammy Foster (2024)

Joyce Meredith (2025)

Vickie Kastner (2026)

Lynne Warren (2024)

Liz Bellmore (2025)

Joyce Oehlhof (2026)

A "Thank You" from Nicky!

Thank you all so much for the prayers the cards and the phone calls. I can't thank you all enough for all of your words of support, love, calks and encouragement. I think right now the darkest of the days have seemed to stop, and my days are turning more into good days than bad days, so I feel like I'm turning the corner and I'm seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. However I'm still taking it one day at a time and some days actually only one minute at a time. Please keep all of your praying and words of encouragement coming because I can feel it and I need it. I know that there's a long road of recovery ahead of me, and all of your praying is certainly being felt. Like the sun on my face I welcome it and I can't thank you enough for all of your support. I appreciate each and every one of you.

*Thank you, Nicky Cross*