



The Portage Presbyterian Church

November, 2023

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



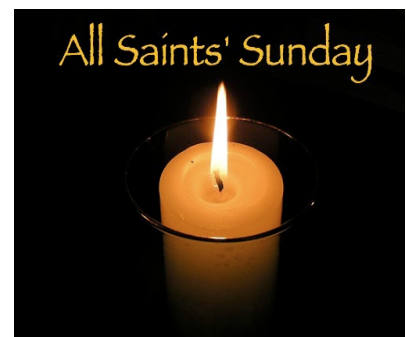
Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and peace!

"All Saints Sunday" - November 6

On Sunday, November 5th, the PPC community will gather to "remember" and to "celebrate" with family and friends the lives of those with whom we have journeyed - who have passed away over the past year.

Family and friends will be invited to "light candles" to give thanks to God for the lives shared.

The "All Saints Sunday" worship service will be held in the sanctuary. For those who may be unable to attend "in the sanctuary" we will do our "live video" of the service.



Election of New Church Officers - October 1

At the "congregational meeting" on Sunday, October 1 the following were elected to serve as Ruling Elders (*beginning in January, 2024*) - **Tara Bandekow, Kathy Raimer and Nancy Beaseley.**

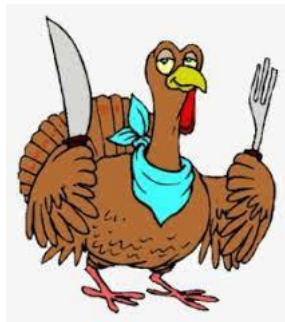
The following were elected to serve as Deacons (*beginning in January, 2024*) - **Glenda Day, Vickie Kastner and Joyce Oehlhof.**

Congregational Representatives elected to serve on the 2024 Nominating Committee - **Donna Mohr, Debby Capener and Fred Taylor.** We will need at least one additional person (*who is not presently serving as an Elder or Deacon*) to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Thank you to the 2023 Nominating Committee members for your faithful and diligent ministry.

"Harvest Dinner" - It Won't Be Long Now!

Be sure to mark your calendars for **Saturday, November 11** - for PPC's Annual "Harvest Dinner!"



Once again, we will be having a "Drive Thru" meal **experience**. We will be serving our famous turkey dinner with all the fixings and pie like always - **they will just be "carry out only!"**

We will be serving from 4:30-6:30 p.m. You will drive into the back parking lot (off Conant Street) where you will be met by someone who will collect your money for the meal and give you directions on where to go for your meal (you will remain in your car)

The cost is (*once again*) - \$15.00 per person!

We will need 50 pumpkin and apple pies donated by our church community.

Sign Up sheets are on the kiosk in Parry Hall or by contacting Nancy Meekma (608-742-5026) or Nancy Schaper (608-742-7242).

Also looking for "volunteers" to work on November 11 too!

"Live Nativity" Planning?

Anyone who would be interested in helping to plan - or would like to participate - in a "Live Drive Thru Nativity Scene" this December - should be in touch with Pastor Dave ASAP!

All ages are welcome! There is "a part" for everyone!

Come and be "a part" of this unique and inspirational "gift to the community."



"Decorating" For Advent - Sat, Nov 25

We will be "decorating the Church" for Advent - on **Saturday, November 25** - beginning @ **9:00 a.m.**

All ages and skill levels are encouraged to come to help get everything ready. Hope to see you there!

"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 are interested - or have questions!



We are seeking folks who may be interested in playing "Handbells" during Advent and Christmas this year. Whether you have "rang bells" before - or would just like to give it a try - let us know. **Everyone is welcome to share in this music ministry.**

We will need to find a time for rehearsals beginning in November.

So, if you are interested - or have questions, please contact **Kathy Hankins** (608-742-2752) or email (dknshankins@charter.net). Thank you!

Upcoming Sunday Worship Services

Sunday, November 5 - "Traditional Worship" Service - 10:05 a.m.



23rd Sunday after Pentecost

"All Saints Sunday"

*"We will share the "Lord's Supper" during the service.
The "Bread" and "Cup" will be served in the pews*

Sunday - November 12, 2023 - "Informal" Worship - 10:05 a.m.

24th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, November 19 - "Traditional" Worship - 10:05 a.m.

25th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday - November 26 - "Traditional" Worship - 10:05 a.m.

"Christ The King" Sunday

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.

The "Bread" and "Cup" will be served in the pews

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 December 24 - 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"** will be available at the church by the first Sunday of
Advent (*December 3*) and will also be included with the December newsletter.

Events Committee - Updates and Information

PPC's "ADOPT A KETTLE"

Once again PPC has answered the call of the Salvation Army to "ring the bells" for
their annual Kettle Drive in Portage. We have "Adopted" a Kettle" at Festival Foods on
Saturday, November 18th from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Please call Nancy Schaper at
608-742-7242 to volunteer to ring. The 8:00AM slot has been filled.

CHILI DUMP

The Holiday Parade will be happening on November 24th, and once again the Events Committee will have a stand at the Chamber Mall selling chili (\$2.00 / bowl) to warm your body and soul. We need your help to make this a success.

We figure we will need at least twelve gallons of chili - so we are asking you to make a gallon or so of chili and have it at church by Wednesday morning, November 22nd. We will then pour all of the chili together and serve it nice and warm during the parade

There is a signup sheet on the bulletin board in Parry Hall for those who wish to donate chili or you can call Nancy at 608-742-7242. Each year our chili is a big success. If you have any questions please contact Nancy Schaper.



Our annual Holiday House will be held on Saturday, December 2nd from 9:00 - 11:00 in Parry Hall.

We will be *selling our famous* **chicken noodle** and **beef barley soups** in quart jars. We also will have a variety of baked goods for purchase. We will be looking for donations of baked goods so a sign up sheet will be posted in Parry Hall or you can call *Donna Mohr or Elaine Crammond*. Our proceeds are given to our year end donations to various places in our community.

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 will be **Saturday, November 4th 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.



We are looking for **"readers"** for the "Greening of the Church" worship service on Sunday, December 3.

If you would like to participate - please contact Pastor Dave by Sun, November 12.

Thank you!



Advent Devotionals will be available beginning on November 26th. 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.



PPC "volunteers" to "stock the shelves" at the Food Pantry on the 3rd Wednesday of each month - **November 15** - usually @ 5:00 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"

Troop 7070

All new crossovers on track for Scout rank
Cabin campout @ Moon Lake
Working on "Snow Base" plans in 2024
"Rechartering"

Troop 70

Celebrated "TWO" Eagle Courts of Honor recently - Congratulations Lukas and Blake!
Plans for "Lock In" @ PPC on Oct 27-28
Working on "Snow Base" plans in 2024
"Rechartering"

Keep up the great work, Scouts!

There is about 195 billion dollars of medical debt now in the United States. That's a huge number. Beside adverse health effects like high blood pressure, stress and poor nutrition, those struggling with medical debt can face bankruptcy and homelessness. Many are less likely to seek medical care for preventative services or treatment. But...there is hope!

John Knox Presbytery is raising money to relieve medical debt. Every dollar raised will be sent to an organization called RIP Medical Debt, a leader in the purchase and forgiveness of medical debt. They are able to buy debt that has gone to a collection agency for pennies on the dollar. This method allows what we contribute to go much further toward the elimination of medical debt. *A single dollar will remove at least \$100 of medical debt for someone struggling to pay their bills.*



Our congregation, along with every other congregation in John Knox Presbytery, is invited to participate. Think about how much medical debt could be eliminated through the efforts of all 55 churches in our Presbytery! The need is great. Our congregation can make a difference and bring hope to many people.

Last year, the Presbytery sent \$14,245.25 to RIP Medical Debt where it grew to take care of \$1,925,734.76 of medical debt for 2,594 families. That's a lot of bang for the buck! Those whose debts have been significantly reduced or forgiven altogether receive a yellow envelope containing that good news. As you can imagine, those folks experience many emotions when they open the envelope and discover what has happened...relief, joy and gratitude. Here's what one person said in

a thank-you note to RIP Medical Debt: *"When I got your letter in the mail, I just cried. I am beyond touched and beyond grateful for your kindness and empathy."* Offerings may be given to the church - made out to "John Knox Presbytery" - and mark it "RIP Medical Debt". You may also donate online by going to the Presbytery's website, jknox.org. Let's help send out a lot more of those letters!

Over a hundred million Americans, one in three, struggles with the weight of medical debt.

- **You make a donation**

We use data analytics to pinpoint the debt of those most in need: households that earn less than 4x the federal poverty level (varies by state, family size) or whose debts are 5% or more of annual income.

- **RIP buys medical debt at a steep discount**

We buy debt in bundles, millions of dollars at a time at a fraction of the original cost. This means your donation relieves about 100x its value in medical debt.

- **Together we wipe out medical debt**

People across the country receive letters that their debt has been erased. They have no tax consequences or penalties to consider. Just like that, they're free of medical debt.

Important "Information and Activities" Around Portage

Red Cross "Blood Drive" @ Caledonia PC

Below you will find a "link" for an upcoming Red Cross Blood Drive being hosted by the Caledonia Presbyterian Church - on November 30, 2023 - from 12:30-5:30 p.m.

<https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/drive-results?zipSponsor=Merrimac>

If you are interested or would like to register for the Blood Drive, the information is included with the link

Or you can call 1-800-REDCROSS to make an appointment.

"Sharing Supper" Information!

On Monday, November 27 - 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.

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"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](#)

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

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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)



Just One More Thought ...

A definition of "appreciation" ... the act of recognizing someone's worth as a person or showing that you are grateful for something that person has done - an increase in the value of something:

I always find it interesting that "October" is designated as "Pastor Appreciation Month." A pastor colleague noted that "while it is nice having a month set aside for appreciation, what about that say about the other 11 months?" All joking aside, I do appreciate your "appreciation" for the work and ministry and mission which we have shared, for nearly 28 years.

I find this particular "definition of appreciation" is interesting - in that there is a component of "looking back" - of recognizing what "has been done and shared."

Yet, there is also this "component" of that which is yet to come - the "increase in the value" of that which has been shared. My "appreciation" for all of you includes both elements.

As I noted on October 15, I am deeply appreciative of the ministry which we have shared together. My family and I have been "blessed" to have been called here to Portage, to live in this community, to share in God's work and ministry with you and to have shared life and faith with you over these years. And I look forward to that which we will continue to share in the days and years ahead.

Someone noted with "sports trades" - that "it is nice when it works out well for everyone."

I trust and pray that this has been the case with our shared ministry here in Portage - that it has, and will continue to be that which "work out well" for us (and to the glory of God) in the years to come.

Thank you, PPC community, for all that you have given to me and my family. And thank you for all that you do to be messengers of God's Good News here in Portage and beyond.

With Great Appreciation - Peace, Pastor Dave