



The Portage Presbyterian Church

December, 2024

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

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

Congregational Meeting - December 8

The Session has called for a "Congregational Meeting" on Sunday, December 8 - following worship - for the purpose of receiving the report of the Nominating Committee - and to elect Ruling Elders and Deacons to serve beginning in January of 2025.

Christmas Joy Offering

We trust in the hope of the Christ Child, the perfect gift, for whom we prepare a way so he can prepare a way for us to know the fullness of God's love. Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us. Our gifts smooth the path for our current and retired church workers and their families in their time of critical need; and prepare the way for our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

"Holiday House" @ PPC - December 7



PPC's Presbyterian Women Group will be hosting a "Soup and Bake Sale" on Saturday, December 7 - from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

A choice of Soup (*Beef Barley or Chicken Noodle*) will be available in "*quart jars to go*" for only \$8.00



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

And don't forget the famous "Mission Chicken Soup Mix" which will also be available!

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!**

"Decorating" The Church For Advent

We will be "decorating the Church" for Advent - on **Saturday, November 30** - beginning @ **9:00 a.m.**

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

"Greening of the Church" Worship - Sunday, Dec 1

On **Sunday, December 1** 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."



Advent 2024 - "A Thrill of Hope, A Weary World Rejoices"

"A Thrill of Hope, A Weary World Rejoices"

During our Advent season, we will be exploring the idea of "hope" in our lives and in our world.

Through the experiences of Mary and Joseph, the Shepherds and the Angels - we will "discover hope" in the middle of our life's journey - perhaps even in places and with people we may never expect.

"Christmas Worship" in A Barn - Stay Tuned!



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 - Friday, Dec 20

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 Friday, December 20 - beginning @ 6:00 p.m.





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 **Wednesday, December 25** - beginning @ 11:00 a.m. (note - the change in time)

FREE Christmas Day Dinner Soon!

This will be the 26th year the Portage Presbyterian Church has provided a free mid-day dinner for people in our community - on Christmas Day!

We are returning to a "Dine-In" Dinner experience this year. Deliveries will be available to those who are homebound within the city of Portage. There will no "drive thru" option.



Reservations for delivery can be made by calling Tara @ 608-697-8588. **Reservations must be made NO LATER THAN December 22nd.**

Since we are moving to a "Dine-In Experience" we will need a number of volunteers to make this work. And we do need donations of cookies too. If you are available to volunteer, please call Tara.

PPC - serving the community in this season of hope!

"Readers" for Christmas Eve

We are looking for "readers" who would like to participate in any of the Advent - Christmas Eve - Christmas Day worship services.

If you would be interested - please indicate on the "sign up sheet" on the kiosk in Parry Hall - or contact Pastor Dave.

"Devotionals" for Advent

During the Advent Season, we will be offering different options for "devotionals."

We will have copies of "calendar-style" devotionals for **Elementary - Youth - Adults** available to either be picked up or mailed.

We will also have a "Daily Online" devotional as well - using a resource called "*Twas The Season of Advent.*" The "Daily Online Devotional" can be found on PPC's "Facebook Page" beginning on December 1.

"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 - **YOU** are welcome to be a part of this 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).



PPC's Sunday Worship - also on "YouTube"

Here's "another option" for "online" worship experiences!

You can go to the PPC "YouTube" Channel!

Here's the "web" information -

<https://www.youtube.com/@portagepresbyterianchurch2652>

The videos on "YouTube" are *not live streamed* - they are added to the PPC YouTube Channel during the following week.

Upcoming Worship Services

Sunday, December 1 - "Traditional" Worship Service - 10:05 a.m.

The First Sunday of Advent

"Greening of the Church" Sunday

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

Sunday, December 8 - "Traditional" Worship Service - 10:05 a.m.

The Second Sunday of Advent

"Finding Hope - Mary and Joseph"

Sunday, December 15 - "Traditional" Worship Service - 10:05 a.m.

The Third Sunday of Advent

"Finding Hope - The Shepherds"

Friday, December 20 - "Longest Night" Worship Service - 6:00 p.m..

A Worship Experience

for Those who find this time of the year to be difficult

Sunday, December 22 - "Traditional" Worship Service - 10:05 a.m.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

"Finding Hope - The Angels"

Tuesday, December 24 - "Candlelight" Christmas Eve Worship - 5:30 p.m..

Christmas Program

"Finding Hope - Right Here!"

Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Day Worship Service - 11:00 a.m..

A Service of Song and Scripture

Sunday, December 29 - "Traditional" Worship Service - 10:05 a.m.

The First Sunday of Christmas

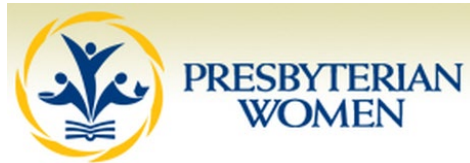
IF you would like to receive the "weekly worship materials" -
the Sunday Worship Bulletin & Children's Bulletin -
by email- please contact Pastor Dave.

Harvest Dinner -"It's A Wrap!"

Thanks to all who helped in any way with the Harvest Dinner. In the last 4 years, we served the dinner by drive thru because of Covid. Our goal was to get back to serving the dinner in the church.

So this year we decided to serve the dinner buffet style in the church dining room. We served 135 adult carry outs, 75 adults in the dining room, and 7 children.

Hopefully next year we will have more people eat in the dining room.



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!

Sunday Morning "Video" Volunteers

We are looking for a few more folks to be "trained" to help provide the "live Sunday morning videos"!!!

If you have questions about doing the video, please contact Pastor Dave or any of those who have been trained.

If you would like to be a part of this worship ministry, please contact Pastor Dave.

Sunday Morning "Screen" Volunteers

In addition to our "Livestream" Video opportunities on Sunday mornings, we are also seeking "volunteers" who may be interested in operating the "projection screens" we use on Sundays.

You will be "trained" to use the computer which enables the screens to be used.

If this is something in which you may be interested (or would like more information) - please contact Pastor Dave.

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.

"Reverse" Advent Calendar

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



In 2023 - we collected 325# of food for the Food Pantry!

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" will be available at the church by the first Sunday of Advent (December 1) and is also be included with the December newsletter.



Upcoming dates for "Stocking Shelves @ the Food Pantry" will be **Wednesday, December 18** . There will be **no stocking** on **Wednesday, December 25** .

We usually begin @ 4:00 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..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.

The Scouts have some fun and exciting things planned!

Plans are being made for "upcoming events and activities" such as

- Nuclear Science Merit Badge
 - Aviation Merit Badge
 - Highway Clean Up
 - Hikes and Outings
 - "Winter Adventures"
 - Pinewood Derby
 - "Crossover" for Webelos
- Helping with a fund raiser at the International Crane Foundation

And a "Troop Fund-Raiser" at Portage Pizza Ranch - *Monday, Dec 2 - 4:00-8:00 p.m.*

As you can see - the Cub Scouts Pack and Scout Troop are busy!

Be sure to keep the Scouts and their leaders in your prayers!

"Thank You!"

To the Church Dinner Workers and Chefs:

Another fantastic thanksgiving dinner!

It was a treat to get four dinners and offer them to people who might not get a thanksgiving meal.

Thank you for your dedication to making that possible.

Count me in for six next year!

PS - the best gravy ever!

Bob Viking



My, that was delicious. Thank you.

JoAnne DeYoung (via Facebook)



Important "Information and Activities" Around Portage



"Kwik Trip" Car Wash Cards are still available!

For \$36.00 / card, you will receive 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.



[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

YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/@portagepresbyterianchurch2652

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!*

A Blessing for Beginning Again in Advent
(Kate Bowler)

God, could this be the year when we see it?
The goodness that is coming,
like starlight from a distant time?

Could this be the Advent when we sense it?
That the springtime of the soul
will one day last forever?

Could this be the Advent when we notice
the inbreaking of your coming promises?
Promises full of blessing:
of truth so clear, so bright
that every shadowy lie must flee away.
of compassion so deep, so strong
that everyone is encircled in its embrace.
of restoration so complete, so beautiful
that there is gladness everywhere.
and of justice so satisfying and so right,
that all will be well.

-11-

May this Advent be the new beginning,

as we learn to live by the light of your coming promises.
Glimpsing the world through tears and fears,
while also seeing something sacred shining through too.
Our Truth. Our Light. Our Promise incarnate.
Amen.

PPC's Church Officers

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)
Rhys Brenner (2024)
Lee Roundy (2024)

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

Tara Bandekow (2026)
Nancy Beasley (2026)
Kathy Raimer (2026)

Deacons

Moderator of Deacons - Peggy Alf-Sechtig
Secretary - Liz Bellmore
Treasurer - Joyce Meredith

Tammy Foster (2024)
Lynne Warren (2024)

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

Glenda Day (2026)
Vickie Kastner (2026)
Joyce Oehlhof (2026)