



The Portage Presbyterian



A Newsletter for The Portage Presbyterian Family

December 2017



ADVENT

ADVENT DECORATING - DECEMBER 3

The "greening" or decorating of the church will be a little different this year.

Everyone is invited to come on *Sunday morning, December 3* (the First Sunday in Advent) for a pancake breakfast and to help decorate and prepare the sanctuary and church for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

We will start decorating @ 8:00 a.m. You may stop for breakfast at any time you like.

Then, we will stop our decorating to join together in our time of worship.

If we have decorating to finish, we will do so after the worship service.

Those of any age, skill level or decorating prowess are encouraged to come and share in this time together.

CHRISTMAS EVE "X 2"

This year is one of those unusual ones in which Christmas Eve falls on Sunday.

We will have a "morning" worship service @ 10:05 a.m.

And then we will also have our traditional "candlelight service" including the singing of Christmas hymns, the "cloth for the cradle" and lighting of our candles @ 5:30 p.m.

Come and share in these wonderful opportunities for worship and fellowship as we celebrate the birth of the Christ into our world and lives.

And be sure to invite your neighbors and friends to come and share with us too!!!

"HOLIDAY HOUSE" - DECEMBER 2

The Presbyterian Women's annual Holiday House will be held on Saturday, December 2nd from 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. A great selection of *baked goods such as holiday cookies, bar, pies and snacks* will be available for you to purchase for the holidays. *Craft items will be found as well.*

A luncheon will be provided for \$5.00 which will feature *chicken noodle soup and beef barley soup along with fresh vegetables, rolls and desserts.* Please come and enjoy the food, fun, fellowship and the sound of Christmas Carols.

If you are making some yummy baked goods you may bring them to the church on Friday, December 1 from 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Otherwise you may bring them to the church the day of the Holiday House beginning at 8:00 a.m. We would like them as early in the morning as possible.

If you have any questions or would like to help in any way, please contact Elaine Crammond, Kathy Hankins or Donna Mohr.

"NO REHEARSAL" FOR PROGRAM!

That's right! There will be "no rehearsal" for this year's Christmas program on Sunday, December 17th @ 10:05 a.m.

Because - we are doing an "*Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant.*"

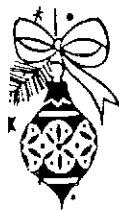
Young people "of all ages" are encouraged and invited to participate as we share the amazing story of Jesus' birth.

So, if you want to have a part in the Christmas program this year - *just show up* on Sunday, December 17 and *you can choose your part and your costume.*

See you then!

Be sure to invited family, friends and neighbors to share in this unique sharing of the Christmas story.

UPCOMING WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Sunday, December 3, 2017
The First Sunday of Advent
10:05 a.m. - Advent Worship
"Greening of the Church" Service

Wednesday, December 6
6:05 p.m. - "Wed Nite @ PPC" Worship

Sunday, December 10, 2017
The Second Sunday of Advent
10:05 a.m. - Traditional Worship Service

Wednesday, December 13
6:05 p.m. - "Wed Nite @ PPC" Worship



Sunday, December 17, 2017
The Third Sunday of Advent
10:05 a.m. - Worship
"Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant" Program

5:30 p.m. - "Christmas In A Barn" Worship
@ Heinze Farm - Hwy 127

Wednesday, December 20
6:05 p.m. - "Wed Nite @ PPC" Worship



Sunday, December 24, 2017
Christmas Eve
10:05 a.m. - Traditional Worship
5:30 p.m. - Candlelight Worship

Wednesday, December 27
NO "Wed Nite @ PPC" Activities!



Sunday, December 31, 2017
The First Sunday of Christmastide
10:05 a.m. - Traditional Worship

5:30 p.m. - "Informal" Worship
Celebration of the Lord's Supper

MEMORIAL GIFTS

(continued from column 1)

Don Olson
Jill Porzel
Nancy Schaper
Joyce Scherbert
Lynn & Nancy Van Epps
Other Family Members & Friends

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of *Jack Polnow*, from

Sherry Bornick
John & Elaine Crammond
Kathryn Curtis
Tom & Mary Heinze
Bob & Janet Hollander
Ann Lee
Edith McElroy
James & Teresa Miller
Richard & Rosemary Minnema

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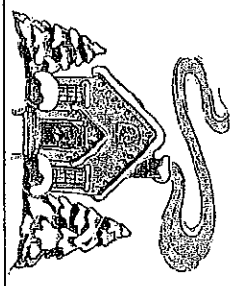
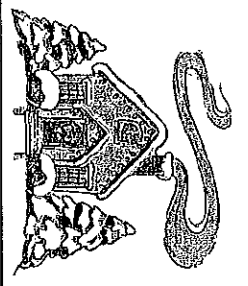
Editor - Kathryn Curtis

Pastor - The Rev. David J. Hankins

(continued in column 2)

December

2017



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>3 1st Sunday of Advent</p> <p>9:30am Sunday Class 10:05am Greening of the Church</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3:30pm ACA, WC 6:00 pm Bell Choir 7:00 pm Guitar Lessons Parry Hall</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 5:00pm Light Snack 5:30pm Lord's Lambs 6:00 pm Events, Pizza Hut 6:05pm Worship 6:30pm Chancel Choir 6:35pm Confirmation 7:30pm Worship Jam</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Church Office Hours Monday – 10:00am – 12:00pm Tuesday – Office Closed Wednesday – 8:00am – 1:00pm Thursday – Office Closed Friday – 8:00am – 1:00pm</p>	<p>1</p> <p>January Newsletter Articles Due in Office</p>	<p>2</p> <p>10:30am – 1:00pm Holiday House, Dining Room</p>
<p>10 2nd Sunday of Advent</p> <p>9:30am Sunday Class 10:05am Traditional Worship Congregational Meeting</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:00 pm Bell Choir Parry Hall 7:00 pm Guitar Lessons Parry Hall</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10:00am Region 5 Prayer Group, WC</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9:30am Art Group, WC 5:00pm Light Snack 5:30pm Lord's Lambs 6:05pm Worship 6:30pm Chancel Choir 7:30pm ACTS</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00am – 4:00pm Interim Training, Fellowship/ Dining Room 6:00pm Session Meeting, WC</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>17 3rd Sunday of Advent</p> <p>9:30am Sunday Class 10:05am Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant 5:30pm "Christmas in a Barn Service" at Heinze Farm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>10:00am Worship Service at Tivoli 5:00 – 6:30pm Sharing Supper at Bartels Middle School</p>	<p>19</p> <p>11:00am "Late For Breakfast" at Dino's</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9:30am Art Group, WC 5:00pm Light Snack 5:30pm Lord's Lambs 6:05pm Worship 6:30pm Chancel Choir</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24 10:05am Worship 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Service</p>	<p>25</p> <p>11:00am Christmas Day Worship 12:00pm-1:30pm Free Christmas Day Dinner <i>Merry Christmas</i></p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>31 10:05am Worship 5:30 pm New Year's Eve Service 6:30pm Game Night Fellowship Hall</p>			<p>CARD PARTY Mark you calendars for our first card party of 2018 that will be on Friday, January 26. 3</p>			

"READERS & MUSIC" FOR CHRISTMAS?

If you are interested in being a "reader" for Christmas Eve or in providing "special music" during the worship service on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, please check out the sign-up sheets in Parry Hall and let us know.

Questions? Talk to Pastor Dave



TERRI LYNN NUT & CANDY SALE

Our Terri Lynn Nut and Candy Sale was once again a big success. We ordered 134 bags which was one less than last year. We made a profit of \$198.87 that will go to the general operating budget of our church. Thanks to all who purchased the nut and candy and enjoy them.



"CHRISTMAS IN A BARN" - DEC 10

Some things stay the same - other things change!

So it is with our "Christmas worship in a barn" service.

Yes, we will be holding our annual "barn service" again this year on *Sunday evening, December 10 @ 5:30 p.m.* This worship time provides members, friends and folks from the community an opportunity to get beyond the "Christmas blitz" to rediscover a more simple, and yet powerful, Christmas worship experience.

And to share this in a "real barn" with farm animals!

The location of the "barn service" is the *Heinze Farm - W10079 Hwy 127.*

For those unfamiliar with Hwy 127, you go on Hwy 16 toward the Dells and turn on Hwy 127 just past the I-39 interchange, going past the Columbia Correctional/the Prison.

Come and share a real unique and inspirational Christmas experience.

And be sure to dress warm! See you there!

NEW YEAR'S EVE "MORNING" - 10:05 a.m.

On Sunday, December 31 we will be gathering for worship @ 10:05 a.m. as we reflect on endings and new beginnings.

And then we will have our traditional gathering in the evening @ 5:30 p.m. with our "informal" worship service.

New this year is a "Game Night" being organized by the Deacons after the evening service.

Come and share in these special opportunities for worship and fellowship.

And be sure to invite your friends and neighbors to come and experience the wonderful gifts of worship and fellowship here @ PPC.

Pastor's Page

Are you one of those people that can't stand hearing Christmas songs months before the holiday actually arrives? A psychologist in Great Britain says too much Christmas music is actually bad for your mental health ...

I knew it! I just knew it!!! Finally, finally "someone" agreed with me!

Hearing the same songs over and over each day make workers struggle to "tune it out" ... You're simply spending all of your energy trying not to hear what you're hearing."

There I lay in bed one morning in the middle of November, waiting for the "oldies station" (that shall remain nameless) to prod me from my sleep. But, instead of the Beatles or CCR or Buddy Holly, here, in the middle of November - BEFORE Thanksgiving - I heard "Christmas music."

Now, it is not that I am against Christmas music. I love Christmas music. In fact, it is one of my favorite times of the year with some of my favorite music. The message of what God has done in and through Jesus Christ is one that never grows old for me.

So, Pastor Dave, what's your problem? My problem is more of a concern or fear that when the "music" or the "season" comes too early or becomes too commercial, we will soon grow weary of listening. By the time Christmas arrives, we will no longer really pay attention to the wonderful message that the songs proclaim, we will find them to be just something else "to get through" and they will lose their ability to touch our lives with what is the most important message we ever need to hear - that of God's love, grace, hope, redemption and new life.

Be assured, I will not do much when it comes to this whole "commercial Christmas thing" except to rant and rave ... and to do my best to remind and challenge myself and you to remember that there is more to Christmas than presents, trees, food and music.

Christmas is about God - what God has done and what God will do. And that's a message, a hope, a promise, that not even "early Christmas music" can drown out.

"NEW YEAR'S EVE" WORSHIP - 5:30 P.M.

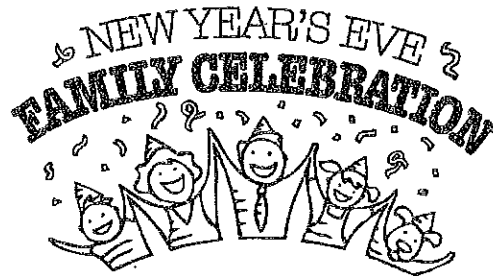
New Year's Eve is a time when we tend to reflect on what has been and to anticipate what will be.

So it will be for us here at PPC. As we gather for our annual "New Year's Eve" "informal" worship service, we will be taking time to reflect on this past year and where we have seen and have experienced God present and at work. And we will be looking ahead in great anticipation at what God will do in our lives, in our church and in our world.

Come and share a special time of worship as we sing, pray, reflect, share the Lord's Supper and rejoice.

Our New Year's Eve "informal" worship, including the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Following the evening service, a special "fellowship opportunity" is being planned by the Deacons.



NEW YEAR'S EVE "GAME NIGHT"

If you have no plans for New Year's Eve we have the answer!

Join us for a game night in the dining room following the New Year's eve service for pizza, beverage and games, games, games!

The Deacons are planning the event and hope to see you there.

All that is required is your presence with your favorite game if you wish. Card games, board games or any other group game is welcome.

New Year Service is at 5:30. And then pizza will be served after the service and then the games will begin! We hope to play for at least a couple of hours.

We will have a sign-up sheet on the kiosk in Parry Hall so you can let us know if you're coming and so we can have plenty of pizza for you!

See you there!

A.C.T.S./ HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH @ PPC

A.C.T.S. - "After Confirmation Talks (and) Service" is a group of "high school age" young people who come together for discussion, service, mission and fun!

ANY YOUNG PERSON is welcome and encouraged to participate - there is no membership fee & there is no form to sign. Just come and hang out as we explore ways in which God is at work in our lives and ways in which we can share God's good news with those around us.

In November we participated with other young people in Region 5 of John Knox Presbytery as we came together in Oxford at the First Presbyterian Church to put together "blizzard boxes" for those who receive home delivered meals in Marquette County.

We continue to explore ways in which we can help River Haven, including fund-raisers and helping to pack "homeless bags" to be distributed.

In December we are planning to "ring bells" for the Salvation Army.

We are meeting together on the *2nd and 4th Wednesdays @ 6:35 p.m.* Come and join us!!!

We would enjoy having you share the journey with us!

Be sure to check out the *ACTS@PPC* Facebook page too!!!

Questions? Contact Pastor Dave.



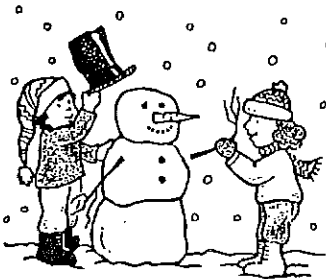
TAXI CAB "VOUCHERS"

The PPC Deacons have purchased coupons to help aid our members in coming to church. If you are unable to find a way to church, call a cab! The ride will be covered with coupons that will be kept at church. The coupons can be used for both your arrival to church and your return ride home. Please consider using them whenever transportation to church becomes an issue for you. We want to see you at church! If you have any questions please call the church office 742-6006.

8

... participated, helped

and at:



COUNTING "CAN TABS" - JANUARY, 2018

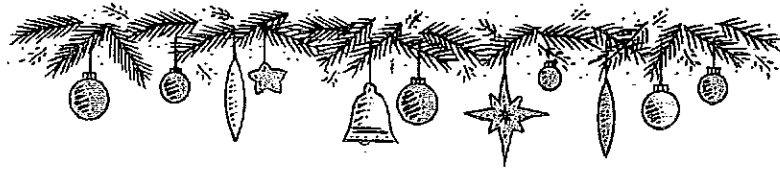
Perhaps you have read or heard about the efforts of our own Mercedes Alves who is collecting "can tabs" to be donated to the "Ronald McDonald House."

Mercedes decided that she would like to collect the "tabs" in memory of her big brother Gunner who was killed in a car accident. She also wants to donate these "tabs" to the "Ronald McDonald House" as a fund-raiser for the special ministry that they offer to families who have children in hospitals. Mercedes and her family were staying at the Madison "Ronald McDonald House" at the time of Gunner's accident.

Mercedes and her family are looking for volunteers to help "count the tabs" on Monday, January 15 in the basement of the City Hall.

If you can come and help "count the tabs" contact the Church Office and we will pass the word to Joe and Katie and Mercedes.

Come and help Mercedes as she seeks to make a difference for others.



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

This will be the nineteenth year the Portage Presbyterian Church has opened its doors on Christmas day for a free mid-day dinner for people in the community. Last year's event provided a meal for about 150 people and it is anticipated that at least that many will be served this year. The Christmas dinner was initiated to provide a gathering place and festive meal for people who would otherwise be alone or could not provide a holiday meal for their family. Generous donations from the congregation and the community have supported the event. One of the factors contributing to its success is that many individuals and families including many from outside our congregation help. The meal served is turkey and ham, mashed potatoes, vegetable, cranberry and rolls along with dessert and beverage. Meals can be delivered to shut-ins by calling the church office ahead of time. Dinner will be served from noon to 1:30 P.M. We are in need of help that day. Please contact Nancy Schaper at 742-7242 if you are willing to volunteer a few hours of your time or sign up on the sheets in Parry Hall. There is also a signup sheet for donations of Christmas cookies for our dessert.

UNDECORATING THE CHURCH

We will be un-decorating the church on Saturday, January 6th at 9:00AM. Please come and help us. The more help we have the faster we will be done.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING

Once again we answered the call to ring bells for the Salvation Army. We rang early in the season again, December 19. Thank you to Jill Porzel, Evelyn Brown, Tammy & Allison Foster, Marci, Chris, Brady & Aubrey Rietmann, Pam, Nolan and Chris Crossley, Jim Jordan, Rosemary Minnema, Laura Brenner, Liz Bellmore, The O'Connor Family and Debbie Caepner for volunteering to ring. If you were unable to ring on that day and want to donate your time, call Kathryn kettle coordinator, at 1-608-617-3237 to sign up.

WHITE GIFT OFFERING---DECEMBER 17

As a part of the worship service on December 17, you are encouraged to bring a "white gift" offering. What is a "white gift?" Here at PPC it is a non-perishable food item wrapped in white paper. If you choose, you may also offer a monetary donation. All "white gift" offerings will be donated to the local Portage Food Pantry. The food pantry is in great need of our help. The items that are most urgently needed are oatmeal, pancake mix, soups & stews, canned meats, crackers, tuna spaghetti sauce, peanut butter and canned vegetables.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

A Presbyterian tradition for almost seventy years, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to provide congregations direct ways of supporting specific causes that help those in need.

The receipts from the offering are distributed equally to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs and to Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women of the General Assembly Mission Council to support Presbyterian racial ethnic education.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be received on December 17 during worship service. If you have boxed church envelopes, there is a Christmas Joy envelope included.

"SHARING SUPPER" - DECEMBER, 2017

The "Sharing Supper" will be shared on Monday, December 18 - a week earlier!!!

Serving begins at 5:00 p.m. **at the Bartels Middle School cafeteria.**

"Sharing Supper" is a meal, sponsored by community groups and organizations. It is intended to bring people in the community together, around tables, where we get to know one another and have an opportunity to learn more about what is happening in the community around us.



THANKS!

Thank you to everyone who made our Harvest Dinner a great success. Thank you for the donations of 47 pies. Thank you to Edith McElroy for the donation of bread for the dressing, Fred & Judy Taylor for making the dressing and Link's Greenhouse for donating the squash and gourds. Thanks to Beth O'Connor who provided a Silent Auction with 8 nice baskets to bid on and generated \$450.00 towards our profit.

Thank you to all the people who helped in the dining room, kitchen, pie room, ticket sellers and takers, publicity people, turkey bakers and carvers, dishwashers and cleanup crew and those of you who came and ate the delicious meal. We served 193 meals and made up 75 carry out meals. We made a profit of over **\$2900.00** that was donated for the general operating expenses of our church. This would not have been a success without the help of everyone. We are so lucky at PPC to have so many willing people to give of their time. If you were unable to make it, you missed a wonderful meal and fellowship time. So you don't miss it next year mark your calendars for November 11, 2017.

An extra special thank you to the members of the Events Committee, (Donna, Edith, Nancy M., Kathy R., Allison, Kevin and Peggy) who put in many extra hours to make this all come together. Thanks to Nick Hankins, Edith McElroy, Debby Capener, Chris Sechtig, Liz Bellmore, Kathy Raimer, Kevin Foster Rosemary Minnema and Rhys & Laura Brenner who came and helped us cook up 108 acorn squash and to Nick, Kathy Hankins, Donna Mohr, Fred & Judy Taylor and Kevin Foster who helped all day the day of the dinner.

It was a rough day for me with my broken leg but everyone stepped up to make it a very successful one. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Nancy Schaper



You are encouraged to take time before each Communion to reflect on the meaning of the Lord's Supper for you, for PPC and for the world.

The "Directory for Worship" notes that "*in preparing to receive Christ in this Sacrament, the believer is to confess sin and brokenness, to seek reconciliation with God and neighbor, and to trust in Jesus Christ for cleansing and renewal.*"

As Presbyterians, we believe that coming to the Lord's Table is not a right, but a privilege given to those who come in faith, repentance and love - the gifts of God for the people of God.

Sunday, December 3, 2017

First Sunday in Advent

@ 10:05 a.m.

Sunday, December 31, 2017

New Year's Eve "Informal" Service

@ 5:30 p.m.

"GLUTEN-FREE" BREAD- COMMUNION

In an effort to make sure that all have access to the Lord's Table, the Board of Deacons decided that all of our communion breads served will be "gluten-free."



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - DEC 10

There will be a "special" Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 10 following our morning worship service.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive the report of the Nominating Committee and to vote for Ruling Elders and Deacons for the coming year.

Thank you to the Nominating Committee for their faith and diligence in this special work.



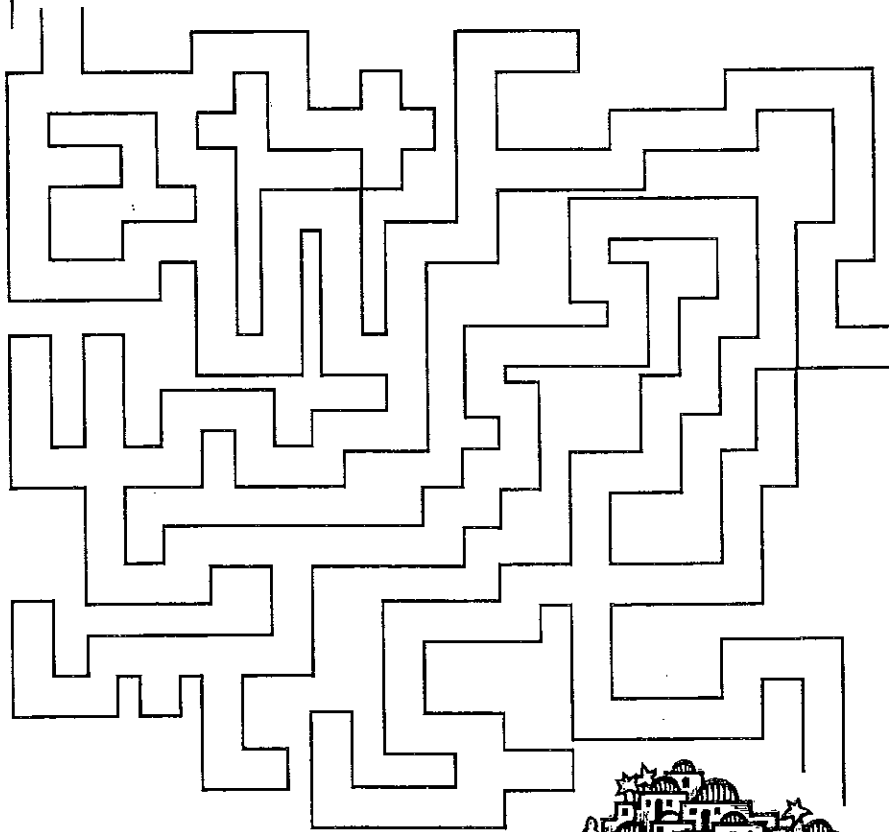
JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.



START

Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.



BETHLEHEM



[KID1217B]

17

Note: A completed maze is in a file called KID1217B_A on this month's CD and on the website, www.NewletterNewsletter.com.

THANKS!

FROM "YAKUTAT"

Kathryn and the Women's Association -

Your gifts have been fun to get as we use them for our rummage sales. But we totally understand the cost of postage.

As we are such a small group and it's hard to do rummage sales, we do appreciate the gift cards more. That way your gifts can reach out more. We occasionally like to donate supplies or snacks for the kids in school.

Thank you all so much for what you do for us here!

It is really hard not having a pastor to keep up with correspondence.

Your support, both financially and through prayers and thoughts mean so much to us.

Thank you all!!!

*Cathy Wassille
Yakutat Presbyterian Church*

A "THANK YOU"

A huge "thank-you" to all of you who prepared food items for Dad's funeral luncheon. Everything was so good!

Thank-you too, for those that waited tables and did all the things behind the scene that made it so special for our family and friends.

Sincerely, *The Polnow family*

"THANK YOU"

Thank you (Portage Presbyterian Church) for allowing the "Creative Arts Festival" to be held at the Portage Presbyterian Church.

The kids AND adults had a fabulous artistic day!

Sincerely, *Jen Martens*



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Sunday Worship Service
10:05 a.m. Traditional Worship
Third Sunday of Each Month is Informal Service
Child Care Available
Church is Handicapped Accessible
Everyone Invited!
Wednesday Worship Service
6:05 p.m. Informal, Interactive Worship



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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