



**PORTAGE
LAKE
UNITED
CHURCH**

PLUC

United Church of Christ & Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
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December 2018

What's Happening @ PLUC

Consistory Highlights

submitted by Terry Monson, Clerk

At its November meeting, the Consistory:

- Discussed the Angel Mission Director's report found elsewhere in the Church Highlights.
- Learned that:
 - At the end of October, the Church's checking account balance was \$30,012 of which Helping Hands funds were \$735 and flood relief funds were \$10,707.
 - Supply expenses are running above budget, suggesting that they should be increased in the 2019 budget.
 - Pledges are running a little behind budget but giving in other categories has made up for the shortfall. The Financial Secretary's Report confirmed that January through October pledges were 81% of budget, but unpledged, loose plate and building usage were 282%, 99%, and 117% of budget.
 - Nine food vouchers were distributed in September and October.
 - The Youth Group now has eight regular attendees
- The Pastor Search Committee has received and will be reviewing three pastor profiles sent from the UCC.
- Last winter's snowplower has retired and recommended David Mattila for snow removal. His bid is higher than last year. He will be hired unless a lower priced reliable snowplower can be found.
- Pastors Norland and Beach discussed sharing Wednesday evening services between the two churches, probably December 5 and 19 at Portage Lake and December 12 at Good Shepherd.
- Heard an update from the Finance Chair on the Church's KCF endowments and Vanguard account. The KCF endowments now total \$39,400 thanks to a significant gift (\$14,858) from the Elvis J. Scott Trust. The Church also receives a distribution from the KCF's Wagner endowment, which was valued at \$101,108 at the end of March 2018. The Church's Vanguard account had a balance of \$86,427 at the end of October. Since its inception in July 2017, the Treasurer has withdrawn \$15,750 to meet cash flow needs and the account has earned \$6,708 in distributed and undistributed interest, dividends, and capital gains.
- Approved a \$100 donation to Little Brothers and Office closures on

November 22 and 23 for Thanksgiving, December 25 for Christmas, and January 1 for New Year's.

- o Scheduled December 2 for a potluck and Greening of the Church and the next Congregation/ Corporation Meeting on February 3, 2019.

Highlights of November's Congregation/Corporation Meetings

submitted by Terry Monson, Clerk

Quorum: A quorum of twenty-one members was present.

2019 Slate of Officers: Nominations were Lydia and Will Lytle for three year terms on the Consistory and Beth Smock and Edward Lowther as Financial Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. All were unanimously approved.

Budget: The Finance Committee projected a small surplus (or a lower than budgeted deficit) for 2018 due to savings in clergy compensation, improved returns on Church assets, and higher returns on the Wagner Endowment. However, the deficit will return in 2019 as clergy compensation returns to a normal level, a full year of the Youth Ministry is funded, and some operating expenses increase. Discussion followed on the share of designated assets (restricted for specific purposes) in the Vanguard account. (Note: Since the meeting, \$980 of designated Memorial Fund money was transferred into the Superior National Bank savings account. There are now no designated assets in the Vanguard account.)

State of the Church: Moderator Sprague reported that the Youth Ministry is up and running; income is exceeding expectations; the Pastor Nominating Committee is working well; and generally the Church is healthy.

Pastor Nominating Committee Report:

Church Profiles for both the UCC and PCUSA have been submitted. The Committee expects to learn of interested candidates shortly and is aiming to complete the process by early 2019.

Building Committee Report: The Building and Maintenance Committee reported that it will revisit solutions to window leakages in spring 2019.

Corporation Meeting: Members approved the business conducted during the Congregational Meeting.

Financial Report

Information received from Financial Secretary

Received in November

Pledge	\$5084.50
Unpledged	540.00
Loose Plate	63.00

Other News

Stewardship Drive Coming to a Close

submitted by Beth Smock, Financial Secretary

The 2019 Stewardship Drive for Portage Lake United Church is coming to a close. We have received a little over half of the pledge cards that were sent out by mail this year. Thank you to those who have made their 2019 pledge. If you have not yet returned your card, please do so in the next week or two.

A final report on the Drive will be available in the Annual Report. Thanks again to our Members and Friends for participating in this year's Stewardship Drive.

Mark Your Calendar

**December Potluck
Sunday, December 2, 2018**

**Please join us for good food and fun while
we decorate the church for the season.**



Greening the Church

Portage Lake United Church members are invited and encouraged to participate in the "Greening of the Church" potluck on Sunday, December 2, 2018. We'll have a potluck meal following the Sunday morning church service; and then spend time working together to decorate the church so it looks bright and cheerful for the Christmas season. It is always a fun event, and it is amazing how quickly the church is transformed into a bright and festive place with many people working together. Invite your friends to come to the event too. The more people the merrier.

Christmas Pageant

submitted by Bobbie Dalquist

On December 23, the fourth Sunday of Advent, our youth will be a part of a short Christmas pageant presented as part of the Church service. "Let's Do Something Different This Christmas," written by Gary Evans and performed by our 1999 youth, is making its comeback this year. It will be done in place of the children's sermon. Please join us and all of our families with children for this special Sunday service.

Christmas Eve Social

submitted by Bobbie Dalquist

Punch and cookies will be served after the service on Christmas Eve. Please bring a half dozen of your Christmas cookies to share.

Christmas Poinsettias

submitted by Bobbie Dalquist

We will again decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias on Christmas Eve. Please sign up by Sunday, December 16 and indicate a special wish or dedication that will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletin. The cost is \$18. Please indicate what the check or cash (in an envelope) is for and drop it in the offering plate. Your poinsettia may be taken home after the Christmas Eve service. If you won't be here that evening, let Bobbie Dalquist know what to do with your poinsettia.

You are invited to...

Portage Lake United Church
**Christmas Eve
Service
5:00 PM**



Christmas Eve

The service will be followed by a
Christmas social

Toys for the Nursery

submitted by Bobbie Dalquist

We would like to add some new toys to the nursery and also are in need of rectangular baskets or bins for organizing the toys on the shelves. When you are doing your Christmas shopping, please consider purchasing a toy for the nursery - cars, trucks, diggers, Hot Wheel accessories, a Noah's ark set, pre-school level games, religious books for pre-school to early elementary children or storage baskets or bins. Gently used toys are also welcome. Questions? Contact Bobbie Dalquist, rbdalqui@gmail.com, 906-370-8614

Fellowship Guild NOTICE

submitted by Judy Albee

'Tis' the season' to mark your calendars! Mon., December 10th is the date set aside for us at The Bluffs' first floor private dining room. We will gather at 12:30 to assemble Christmas baskets, share holiday plans and enjoy a relaxing meal before other seasonal events require our attention. Please sign up at church or contact Judy Albee (482-2615) if you can fit this holiday event into your schedule and provide something for the 8 – 10 baskets. It is a wonderful way to support our hard working staff and seniors while enjoying each others' company in a lovely setting.

Christmas Fund/Joy Offering

In the lead up to Christmas, many of us spend time in search of the *perfect gift* — the gift that communicates to friends and family how much we know and

love them. We search our memories for indications of what gift might cause the faces of our loved ones to light up. We scour the stores and shops, hoping to come across the thing that will communicate a depth of love that our words cannot.

As important as gifts to loved ones are, we have an opportunity to give gifts that help many people we do not know through the Christmas Joy Offering. These gifts in particular draw us back to the manger and God's perfect gift to us— Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to live among us, bringing light into darkness, and reconciliation to God and to one another. A perfect gift from a gracious God.

During this Christmas and Advent Season, we celebrate leadership; past, present and future through support of the Christmas Joy Offering. We do so because church leaders greatly impact our lives of faith, walking with us down the path to be more like Jesus. We want those church leaders and their families who find themselves grappling with a critical financial need to have the resources they need which are provided through the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. We also support the offering to help our future leaders in the church and world, like those educated at our Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Supporting these students helps the whole church develop leaders who reflect the wideness of God's intended diversity.

For those supported through the Christmas Joy Offering, this help is truly a gift from above. May our gifts, and the leaders who receive them, point us always to the truth of the one whose birth we celebrate, Jesus Christ — the truly perfect gift.

from the PC(USA) BLOG

Note: This year's Christmas Joy/Fund offering will be taken on December 16th.

Angel Mission

submitted by Lois Jambekar

Angel Mission personnel thought that life at the Mission would settle down in September and October after an extremely busy summer and the Backpack Drive in August, but that was not meant to be. In September a truck load of new dresses were donated to the Mission from Community Action. In October the Mission sponsored two Coat Give Aways, one at Calumet High School on October 13 and one at PLUC on October 20. At Calumet 193 coats, 72 hats, 68 pair of boots, 43 gloves, and 20 scarves were given away. At PLUC 115 coats, 5 pair of snowpants, 97 hats, 72 pair of gloves, 66 scarves, 30 pairs of boots, and 18 miscellaneous items were given away. The students who came to our church to pick out winter items were very appreciative of the Coat Give Away. October 20 the Mission participated in the Calumet Trunk or Treat and 608 children stopped by the store for treats. In the month Angel Mission gave food out to 42 families which served 72 adults and 38 children, they helped a young family pay an electric bill so the family was able keep their service, and also helped pay bus and taxi fare for people to travel to doctor's appointments.

This month the Angel Mission is starting the Angel Tree project to help families give Christmas gifts to their children. Our church has always been generous each year in donating gifts for one or two families. The list of children we will be supporting will be at church on December 2.

“Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!”

— Dr. Seuss, [How the Grinch Stole Christmas!](#)

Helping Hands

submitted by Beth Smock, Office Manager

It has been a couple of months since I gave you an update on our Helping Hands program. During October and November we gave out 10 \$50.00 food vouchers to Jim's Foodmart. During this same time period we received Helping Hands donations totaling \$165.00.

As you can see, our current need is outpacing our current giving. During this season of love, please consider giving a little extra for those less fortunate.

Fire and Animals

submitted by Beth Smock

There will be no dog pictures in the newsletter this month. That is because I want to share something much more serious and important with you.

Nancy, Dianne and I got to know a MTU graduate student several years ago. After finishing her grad work, she and her family moved back to her home -- in Chico, CA. Nancy has received several emails from her recently. While she did lose her home, she and her family are physically okay.

I will not share her very graphic description of their flight from the fire, however she did talk about seeing animals also fleeing the fire. Here is a little of what she shared about work being done for animals.

"The suffering of the animals was and has been unimaginable. Our vet daughter is working with burned animals day and night.

We have taken on a puppy who was trapped in the burn zone without food or water for 6 days. Her burned paws will need daily bandage changes for months, and none of her pack could be saved, they were so hurt. But we have to do something for the animals, so this is our contribution, via the

Border Collie Rescue. We named her "Ember."

If I do ask for a contribution it would be to a fund helping the animals.. the North Valley Disaster Group rescued Ember and her pack, and they are also caring for injured livestock and wild animals where they can. Thank you so much. Here is an article about them with a donation link.

<https://www.nvadg.org/>

It has been a very difficult year for people all over this country. Sometimes we forget that people are not the only members of God's family affected by these disasters. Please take a moment to remember our four legged brothers and sisters.

Beth's Buzz

Where do I start? Actually, that is not hard. I start with a **HUGE** Thank You. I wish I could hug each and every one of you (I really wish I could hug anyone, but maybe soon). As you know, this has been a challenging year, with two floods in my home and my fall and shattering of my left elbow. At least I am a righty so that is good. I don't even want to start naming names of those who helped me. First, it would be a very long list and I am still typing with one hand and I am sure to leave someone off the list. You all did so much for me both financially after the floods and by covering the office and keeping things running at the church while I could not work. But most of all, I appreciate your love and prayers. While I have tried to do most of my crying

at home, I will admit this has been very difficult emotionally. Knowing your love helps keep me going.

An update. While my home is not yet completely fixed, I moved back in August. I was out for almost exactly two months which is a lot less than others. I will tell you that a couple of days before I moved back I had to go to the house to meet the guy who was turning the gas back on. While I was waiting I went upstairs and laid down on **MY** bed. Boy did that feel good.

As far as my arm goes, I still have pretty limited use of it, but started **active** PT this week. I had only been doing passive PT. Now the hard stuff starts but I am looking forward to the work that needs to be done to have two working arms. I would ask that you keep the prayers coming because this is the part that is going to hurt, but it will be a good hurt. I probably still have two or three months (or more) of work left but hope to maybe even go back to my old job at Walmart. Right now I am a Greeter which is driving me crazy. Sitting at that door is not my thing, I need to be more active.

I continue to be honored to be your church Office Manager and Financial Secretary. I started working here in December of 2006. That means I start my 13th year next week. I have worked with four different Pastor's and learned from each of them. There have been many changes and the church and it's members and friends have always been there for each other. We are truly blessed.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I have partially retired going to part time at Walmart. Maybe I will get to join you more in the coming year.

Return Service Requested

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Oh Holy Night

December 2018

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8:00-11:00 AM - Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri

Pastor Office Hours

9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon - Thursday or by appointment

