



**PORTAGE  
LAKE  
UNITED  
CHURCH**

***PLUC***

***United Church of Christ & Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)***  
**1400 E. Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931-1208**  
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September 2020

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### **Consistory Highlights**

*submitted by Beth Smock*

**Clerk's Report:** Consistory voiced their appreciation for the Clerk going to Marquette for the annual Clerk's review.

**NOTE:** There were no issues with the Church Registry but there were several omissions noted in the review of the Minutes. These included and were noted in the August minutes.

- Installation of Elders: The Minutes did not include installation of new Elders. This was done in June 2020
- Election of the Treasurer: The slate of PLUC officers, including the Treasurer was accepted at the November 2019 Congregational meeting.
- Gender Distribution: The gender distribution of the Consistory (50% female – 50% male) closely resembles the gender distribution of the Congregation (57% female – 43% male).

- Ann and Greg Campbell transferred from Gloria Dei Lutheran Church on February 16.

Pastor Peter led communion in August over Zoom so there were no Elders assisting with communion this month.

**Financial Secretary Report:** A discussion was held on how the church does it's budget, including how long it will take for the church to get to a place where budget discussions can emphasize mission more than just making sure we can pay our bills. Discussions on strategies for balancing the budget will continue as the budgeting process for 2021 begins in September.

Consistory approved the Financial Secretary's request to use \$400.00 per month for fresh produce vouchers for as long as needed (or until the money runs out).

**Office Manager Report:** We have received quite a few hand made masks. Office Manager Smock will put masks on the bench in the entryway with a sign informing people that the masks are free for the taking.

The office has changed the way we do many of our paper items such as the Annual

Report and Newsletter. Therefore, we have a lot of paper that we no longer use (8 ½ x 14 and 8 ½ x 17). Office Manager Smock will contact local schools and churches to see if anyone would like to have this paper. This will probably clear out one bookcase so it can be used for other purposes.

**Angel Mission Report:** In June workers at Angel Mission were finally able to get almost everything out of the basement. They also got some nice totes with lids which has allowed for better storage. Angel Mission helped a family with household items and money after a fire. They helped another family of a surgical patient. They received \$500.00 in donations.

In July Angel Mission stopped taking clothing donations which is allowing them to make progress in going through all of their donations. They received \$412.00 in cash and \$379.00 in check donations. Angel Mission thanks Jim Northey's students for setting up the new website. Jim's daughter has been helping to maintain the website.

The issue with the missing Presbytery check has been resolved.

**Pastor's Report:** The online ZOOM service continues to do well. A suggestion was made to put the phone call-in number on the website. A few people have been attending the in person service (less than 10) but most people are not yet ready to return to the building.

The date for the outdoor worship and "bring your own lunch" church picnic will be September 13. Pastor Peter will look for a location, possibly the Rotarian Pavilion by Chutes and Ladders. He will also look for PA equipment. The service will also be on ZOOM for those unable to attend in person. Covid rules (masks and social distancing) will be observed.

Pastor Peter will fill out the form for PLUC to participate in the MTU Virtual Afternoon on the Town.

Some concerns with privacy on the website and with the video of the ZOOM services have been received. Any pictures of people will be removed from the ZOOM service. An announcement and email will be sent out asking for someone to help with the editing of the video services. Readers, people doing the Sermon Under the Blanket, and Prayer Writers will be contacted to see if they want to be on the video or if they would prefer to opt out of those volunteer positions.

Information about Synod Grants has been received. Pastor Peter shared an idea about putting in a window between the room Treasurer Lowther uses and the sanctuary. This would allow the person helping with the video for ZOOM services to have a dedicated place to work. Pastor Peter will explore the possibility of using one of these grants to make these changes.

Pastor Peter will be taking a vacation day on August 23 as he takes his daughter back to college. He stated that he would pre-record a sermon. However, Consistory felt that he should not have to do this if he is taking vacation time. Therefore, other ways to worship were discussed. The decision was made to make a list of other churches (Presbyterian and UCC) who offer online services. This list will be shared with the PLUC congregation and people invited to visit one of those services. Our ZOOM link will be opened at 10:30 am if people want to visit prior to going to another service. Then at Noon people can return to our ZOOM link to share what they experienced at other services.

Due to the Covid -19 pandemic, Eric Byykkonen has found it very difficult to have the youth ministry. Therefore, Consistory accepted his recommendation

and effective August 1, 2020, the PLUC youth ministry has been suspended.

**Old Business:**

Houghton County already has funding to repair the trails after the Father's Day floods. Use of left over PLUC funds is tabled at this time.

Non-Recovery groups that have used the church in the past may return using the same rules as the Recovery Groups. Groups will need to have a signed copy of the Building Use Agreement on file.

A request to use the nursery area for some educational purposes has been received. Pastor Peter will speak with those requesting the use of this area to garner more information. The request will be evaluated once more information has been received.

An update to the church By-Laws has been recommended to deal with decisions made by the Consistory and during Congregational meetings that are held online. This change to the By-Laws was accepted by Consistory with the proposal being presented to the Congregation for final approval at the next in-person Congregational meeting.

**New Business:**

The tentative date for the Fall Congregational Meeting is November 1, 2020.

The Stewardship, Nominating, and Personnel Committees have been activated. Elder M. Jarvie-Eggart will serve on the Finance Committee. Elder L. Jambekar will sit on the Personnel and Nominating committees.

**Financial Report**

*Information received from Financial Secretary*

**Received In August (thru 08/23)**

Pledge	\$5333.50
Unpledged	592.00
Loose Plate	00.00

**Outdoor Worship and Church Picnic**

Please join us on September 13th for an in-person outdoor worship service with a church picnic to follow. Barring any major storms (we will meet in light rain) or changes in pandemic restrictions, we will begin gathering at 10:30 am at the Rotary Pavilion at Chutes and Ladders with the service beginning at 11:00 am. After service, we will have a "bring your own" picnic. You will need to bring chairs/blankets and your picnic items including food, drink, plates, and utensils. Masks will be required and we will be practicing social distancing.

The service will be on ZOOM as usual for those who are unable to attend in person.

We are excited about this service as it will allow us to be together for the first time in a long time giving us a chance to catch up on how people have been coping with the challenges of the last seven months. Can't wait to see you all.

**Riddle Time**

What has a head and a tail, but no body?  
(Answer on back page)

## Declutter Update

*Submitted by Liz Evensen*

The 'Declutter Team' of Bobbie, Susie and Liz have been busy since July. Bobbie and Liz initially started in the Fellowship Hall by clearing out Fellowship Guild's closet. We put Fellowship Guild's items in the closet next to its original closet. Then, asked various AA groups to use the closet we emptied for AA brochures/books that were scattered throughout the church. The large storage closet in Fellowship Hall was also rearranged but I'm afraid that closet will be a never-ending project!

The Choir Room is our current focus. Susie agreed to reorganize the sheet music and the three of us are slowly making progress. The room was first decluttered and that helped. Bobbie found a home for the old choir robes:...MTU! The upright piano in that room hasn't been used in years and it seemed like it needed a new home. Charles White assessed it and assured us the piano was in good working condition but did need tuning, Susie thought it would be a very good piano for early pianists – neither of these needs were being met. We first thought to try and sell the piano, so that people would know it had value. However, when we went to Consistory for approval of our idea, they thought we should just try to give it away. Susie advertised it on Market Place and we are hopeful the piano will soon have a new home!

Once the piano is gone, the music is in order and the closet decluttered, we will freshen the room with paint, and it will be ready for when we can all gather/meet again! We are still pondering a new name for that room....please let us know if you have a suggestion! ❖❖

Looking ahead: we hope to install a changing table in the nursery room and turn the old nursery 'cry room' into usable storage space. Anyone who is interested in

helping us on these projects, please let us know! Clearing the church during this time of minimal use seems effective as we search for new ways to meet the needs of current/new members and friends.

## Helping Hands

*submitted by Beth Smock, Helping Hands Administrator*

As noted above, Consistory has approved the continuation of the \$20.00 fresh produce voucher for Jim's Foodmart. This is a very important mission. With the office being closed, we are not giving out as many of our regular food and gas vouchers. I get called a couple of times a month and do go into the office to give out requested vouchers, but the produce vouchers are very popular.

The gifts to Helping Hands we receive each month are very much appreciated. We are also fortunate that Rick vonBatchelder, a long time friend of the church, provides funds that we are able to use to continue to fund these vouchers. (Rick also provides for the flowers we have at church during the year.) However, we are spending \$400.00 per month on the produce vouchers, plus whatever we have in other vouchers so there may come a time when funding is short.

Therefore, if you could keep this mission in your prayers, and possibly help out financially, it would go a long way for us to be able to continue helping those who are struggling with food at this time.



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Ever hear the saying "That dog is as big as a horse?"

## Copper Country Angel Mission

*Submitted by Sherry Middlemis-Brown*



A Big Thank You to Jim Northey and his daughter, Madeline Larson!

You probably recall Angel Mission's good news that a talented group of Jim's students would undertake developing a website for Angel Mission. Then, Covid struck! The students had put together the basic website, but there were many loose ends to tidy up. Jim had intended to finish off the project, but became inundated with work, including leading the technical staff for our worship services. His daughter, Madeline, stepped up to fill the need for Angel Mission. As of August 21,

- the Angel Mission website (ccangelmission.org) went live and linked on the Copper Country Angel Mission Facebook page.
- the Facebook page is linked to Angel Mission's website, so you can move between the two
- donation buttons, established through Paypal, appear on both the Facebook page (under Learn More) and on the new website.

So, we are now live on electronic media. For those of you used to finding New Beginnings Angel Mission on Facebook, please switch to Copper Country Angel Mission. Like and Follow Copper Country Angel Mission at that new Facebook page. Learn more about Angel Mission on its website, ccangelmission.org.

Our PLUC family can become our beta testers by letting us know how you like the page and website and telling us how we can improve them.

It has been a long haul to get to this point, but we could not have done it without the students, Jim, and Madeline. Thank you all for your hard work and precious time.

## What's Happening While We Are Away

*Submitted by Beth Smock*

I don't know about you, but my time at home is flying by. I used to wonder what I would do with myself. Now, I get up in the morning and before I know it, it is 6 pm. I don't think I am doing anything special, I just always seem to be busy.

What about you? Are you doing something special? If you would like to share what you have been doing this summer, let me know and I can do another version of what I did with my Covid-19 summer.

Oh, and I am running out of recipes to put on the website. If you have one you would like to share, send it to me at [office@pluc.org](mailto:office@pluc.org).

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**Pastor Office Hours:**

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

**Portage Lake United Church  
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**Return Service Requested**



Could you deliver this for me Mr. UPS Driver?

Riddle Answer: A coin