



**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 2021

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## **Consistory Highlights**

*submitted by Beth Smock*

**Finance Committee:** Finance Committee co-chair T. Monson reported the following: Finance Committee co-chair T. Monson and Treasurer E. Lowther closed the Superior National Bank savings account and moved the money to the checking account and confirmed that T. Monson is an authorized signer on the checking account. Treasurer will make sure that cash transfers from Vanguard are set up to go to our checking account. T. Monson contacted the Keweenaw Community Foundation about our 2021 distribution of funds which will be distributed as follows:

4250 - KCG Endowment Income \$4,652.52

2305 - Fellowship Guild Payable \$779.41  
( A check will be cut to pay Fellowship Guild for its portion)

Total \$5431.93

Finance Committee co-chair B .Dalquist is working with Jeff McMahan, Red Jacket Rentals, about the Angel Mission electric bill. After its September meeting, the Finance Committee will make recommendations to substitute ESG-focused

exchange traded funds for the Vanguard's Mid-Cap Value fund in the Vanguard account. Elder B. Brookhouse moved (support by Elder G. Campbell) to adopt the finalized Finance Committee policy. Approved.

**Office Manager:** Office Manager Smock continues to work from home after her knee replacement surgery. She will return to the office once she can get into the car to drive. She did request vacation time to visit her family, September 29-October 5th. This was approved. Smock presented Consistory with information about the produce vouchers we had been giving out through the Trinity Food Bank. All 220 vouchers provided to Trinity have been given out and PLUC has had two requests for produce vouchers directly. Smock requested input from Consistory on how to proceed with this ministry as funding is running low. Consistory asked Smock and Pastor Norland to present a written proposal so the decision on how to proceed with Helping Hands was tabled to the September meeting.

**Financial Secretary:** No additional information past written reports.

**Treasurer:** No additional information past written reports.

**Angel Mission:** No additional information past written report.

**Pastor:** Pastor Norland reported that communion in August was celebrated both in person and over ZOOM with Elder L. Jambekar assisting. Our recurring meetings that have been held in person at the church are starting to return. Some are meeting both in person and over ZOOM.

**Old Business:** As is done every month, Consistory reviewed office hours, in-person worship, and building use by outside groups. The office is returning to a somewhat modified schedule starting August 16th. Following CDC guidelines, all groups entering the building will be required to wear a mask beginning August 22, 2021. Pastor Norland will update the Building Use Policy to share with those groups using our facility.

Pastor Norland and Elders J. Northey and G. Campbell have been working very hard on the new A/V capabilities of the church. At this time, it entails mostly new audio equipment but the sound quality, especially over ZOOM, is much better. Elder B. Brookhouse moved (second by W. Lytle) to approve moving forward with Phase 2 of the A/V plan. Approved. Pastor Norland will provide Consistory with a written review of this plan.

**New Business:** Consistory approved the Fellowship Guild Holiday Decorations sale to be held in November.

The Parking Lot Lighting proposal was tabled until the September meeting.

Pastor Norland will investigate where and when to hold the Fall Church Picnic.

A long discussion was held regarding the future direction of the church including having a yearly theme and what committees

might be generated by the theme. Options for themes included “Coming Together” and “Nature.”

### Financial Report

*Information received from Financial Secretary*

#### Received In August

Pledge	\$3,474.98
Unpledged	690.00
Loose Plate	5.00

### September Volunteer Schedule

Date	Greet	Reader	Prayer Writer
09/05	Beth	Christina	Lois
09/12	Barb	Ann	Barb
09/19	Jon & Brian	Beth	Carl
09/26	Greg & Ann	Lois	Terry

### Helping Hands

*submitted by Beth Smock, Helping Hands Administrator*

I want to give a little update on our Helping Hands program. We are currently looking at possibly making some changes in how we distribute our funds. During the pandemic, we worked with Trinity Episcopal Church Food Pantry and provided over 200 \$20.00 produce vouchers to Jim’s Foodmart. This was a very successful program, but we have discontinued the collaboration with Trinity as it became unsustainable. However, we have still had people come into our office asking if these vouchers are available. The number of regular \$50.00 food vouchers and \$25.00 gas vouchers decreased over the last eighteen months, but we do continue to give these out.

We want to continue the Helping Hands program, but are looking for ways to meet

the needs of those we assist in a more beneficial way. I will be working with Consistory to find a way to improve our service in the future. I will keep you informed. In the meantime, thank you to all who have helped support this ministry over the years.

### Finance Committee News

**PLUC Investment Policy:** Over the past several months, the Finance Committee revised the PLUC Investment Policy. In August, the Consistory approved its proposed revisions, which:

- Eliminated the Endowment part of the Memorial and Endowment Committee since it has not met for several years,
- Made the Memorial Committee a sub-committee of the Finance Committee (as a sub-committee, it does not need to include a Consistory elder as a member),
- Gave the Finance Committee responsibility for overseeing the Church's Keweenaw Community Foundation (KCF) endowments, which, in practice, it has done for the past few years, and
- Directed the Finance Committee to consider investments in the Vanguard account that have high environmental, social, and governance (ESG) ratings, which are consistent with our church's values.

**KCF distributions:** Due to recovery in financial markets, this year's KCF endowment distributions were higher (\$4,651) than budgeted (\$3,800). The Wagner endowment distribution was \$3,895, of which 80% (\$3,116) is general fund income and 20% (\$779) is designated to the Fellowship Guild. Distributions

from the other two PLUC endowments (\$1,535) are also general fund income.

**Closure of the PLUC savings account:**

The Consistory approved closing the PLUC savings account since it was only earning 0.05% per year, which translates into \$2 per year. About 75% of the transfer went to the Memorial fund checking balance that now totals about \$4,400. The other 25% was transferred to the general fund checking account. The PLUC balance sheet now lists checking account balances in the general fund and designated funds (such as Memorial and Helping Hands) plus the Angel Mission and the Vanguard account balances.

**Vanguard Account:** In early August, the Vanguard account balance was \$114,704. The closure of the savings account required Ed Lowther, our treasurer, to arrange for Vanguard transfers to be sent to the PLUC general fund checking account. He successfully navigated this change, which required numerous phone calls to obtain the correct forms and arranged to have a notary public notarize the changes.

**Holiday Decorations Rummage Sale**  
**Saturday, November 6, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

*Submitted by Bobbie Dalquist*

We are planning a repeat of our successful Holiday Decoration Rummage Sale that we held 2 years ago. We've received donations of Christmas decorations from 6 rummage, estate and moving sales for a really good start on our inventory. If you are downsizing your Christmas, Easter, Halloween or Thanksgiving decorations, please put them aside and bring them to the church during the first week of November. We'll be asking you for help with set up, pricing and working on the day

of the event. This is a Fellowship Guild fundraiser but all help and donations are appreciated.

### **Phase “1” Completed**

*Submitted by Greg Campbell*

July saw the installation of “Phase 1” of the PA system upgrade. The COVID lockdown and the move to Zoom worship made it clear that the legacy system which served PLUC for so many years was simply not up to the demands of modern audio and video production. Pastor Peter, Jim Northey, and Greg Campbell donated many hours in planning, installation, and fine-tuning the new system, which is nearly complete. Phase 2 will include microphones for better sanctuary and congregation sound over Zoom. Total cost of the AUDIO portion of the upgrade is +/- \$4000, most of which was allocated from existing congregation funds, but the Consistory encourages members who are able to donate toward this cost so that we can improve the VIDEO aspects of online and blended worship.

### **Angel Mission**

*Submitted by Lois Jambekar*

The Copper Country Angel Mission is open for business again after being closed for two months except for their Food Bank which remained open Wednesday and Friday to give out food to people and aid given to people that had needs during that time. The Mission was forced to close down in May because of the big fire across the street. While they were closed they made the

decision to reorganize the store, clean it up, and catch up on all the donation bags that hadn’t been opened. They were hoping to open in a month, but it took two months to complete the job. Thanks to Donna, Marti, and her crew of volunteer workers the two store fronts are clean, well organized, and there is plenty of room for people to move around in the store to find items they need. A system has been set up, too, so hopefully the store is able to stay organized.

The Angel Mission is again sponsoring a Backpack Drive. For this project they need spiral notebooks, pocket folders, rulers, scissors, Classic Colors Magic Markers, Colored Pencils, School glue, calculators, scissors, gel pens, erasable pens, Pencil end erasers, pencil holders, and a few backpacks. They do not need pencils, crayons, ballpoint pens, or glue sticks. Any donations you could make to help with this project would be much appreciated. You can bring your donations to the church and leave them in the office.

September 2021

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E-mail: [office@pluc.org](mailto:office@pluc.org)

Website: [www.pluc.org](http://www.pluc.org)

Pastor: Rev. Peter Norland

Office Manager: Beth Smock

#### **General Office Hours:**

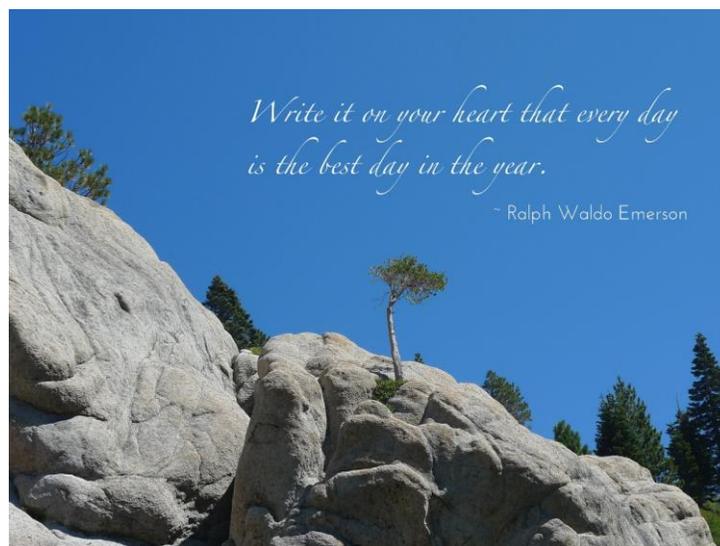
8:30 AM – 11:00 AM – Mon.-Fri

#### **Pastor Office Hours:**

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

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**Return Service Requested**



While some of us may be sad summer is almost over,

There are those who can't wait for winter.

