



**PORTAGE  
LAKE  
UNITED  
CHURCH**

***PLUC***

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

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March 2022

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### **Consistory Highlights**

*submitted by Beth Smock*

#### **Office Manager and Financial Secretary**

**Reports:** The One Great Hour of Prayer offering will be taken on March 27th.

**Finance Committee:** The Helping Hands funds are currently running very low. As of the time of the Consistory meeting, Helping Hands had received \$360.00 in donations for the year (we started the year with no funds available). Office Manager Smock had given out \$150.00 in vouchers this year. This did not include two requests where the people never came to pick up their vouchers. Office Manager Smock will be putting an article in the March newsletter to let people know we are running very low on funds. (We can transfer money from vonBatchelder funds which we have done in the past to keep the program running.)

As part of the report from the Audit Committee, Consistory needs to look at the Flood Relief funds we still have available, several thousand dollars, and decide how to proceed with this funding. At this time, we will see if there is any more need among members of the congregation for any of

these funds. Office Manager Smock will put announcements in the bulletin to see if there is need and place an article in the March newsletter. This funding will be re-visited at the March meeting to see if any requests for help have been received, how much is left, and what to do with any remaining funds.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Peter will be leading a book discussion during the five weeks of Lent. The Ash Wednesday/ Lent/Holy Week schedule was shared with Consistory. Communion Assistants: Elder B. Brookhouse will assist with Communion in March, with Elder G. Campbell assisting in April.

**Angel Mission:** The landlord has increased the rent on each side of Angel Mission by 50%. Therefore, the staff and volunteers will be moving everything into one side of the Mission by February 28th. Two new co-directors have been hired and they are working very well together. The co-directors, members of the board, and some volunteers have toured the building Angel Mission hopes to purchase and it looks very good.

**Building and Grounds:** The roof was recently shoveled at a cost of \$950.00. The

Building and Grounds Committee will explore finding a cheaper provider to shovel the roof next year.

### **Old Business:**

The Building and Grounds Committee is working on updating PLUC policies effecting the building.

Personnel Committee has updated the personnel job descriptions but still needs to discuss changes in the Building Attendant description with the Building Attendant

The Pastor Evaluation form is ready for Consistory members to complete. The results will be reviewed at the March Consistory meeting.

A somewhat detailed discussion about the PLUC Covid policy was held. Based on current trends, Consistory decided to continue with the current Covid policy. However, the hope is that positive trends will continue and that guidelines can be relaxed at the March meeting. Pastor Peter addressed the possibility of re-starting a coffee time after worship. The decision was made to begin an optional coffee time after the March 13th service. Those who feel comfortable can stay for coffee and visiting. For those who do not yet feel comfortable with a coffee hour, they may leave as soon as service is over. Office Manager Smock will attempt to find folks willing to host the coffee times.

### **New Business:**

Pastor Peter will contact Elders Will and Lydia Lytle regarding plans for the remainder of their term on Consistory.

## **Spring Congregational/Corporation Meeting Highlights**

The 2021 Annual Report was accepted.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Peter reported that he had found 2021 to be a challenging year as it was hard to communicate with each other during Covid. He stated that he had begun to plan for a future after the pandemic, and then Delta hit. Once the Delta variant began to subside, he again began to plan for a more "normal" future, and then Omicron hit. He believes in some ways as pastor he was just trying to ride out Covid, and therefore unable to shift from "just surviving" to "thriving". This has been a learning opportunity. Peter's faith has been growing as he is learning that hope is supposed to be active—not passive. So he is learning to accept the life we are given, as we are given it, and living in faith in it, rather than simply withholding and waiting for some wished-for future that may never arrive. He witnessed how God is here, active, and faithful in and through the PLUC congregation as we are today.

**Election of Elders:** The Nominating Committee's nominations of Dianne Sprague and Ann Campbell, the Consistory class of 2024, were presented. There were no other nominations from the Congregation. The Nominating Committee also presented Beth Smock as the Financial Secretary and Ed Lowther as the Treasurer for another one year term. No other nominations from the floor. As there were no floor nominations, the nominations of the Committee were accepted.

**2022 Budget:** Bobbie Dalquist, Co-Chair of the Finance Committee, discussed the 2021 Budget results and presented the 2022 Budget. The Finance Committee had projected a deficit for 2021 of around

\$6000,00, but the year actually ended with a small several hundred dollar surplus. This is mainly due to fewer expenses than anticipated. The General Fund account ended the year in the negative but the Vanguard account was very positive. The Vanguard account is part of the General Fund so it was not necessary to make any transfer of funds. Bobbie also presented the 2022 budget. One question was asked about whether the Finance Committee had taken increased utility costs into account when developing the budget. Bobbie reported that they had done this. The 2022 budget was approved.

**Pastor's Terms of Call:** Pastor Norland's Terms of Call were presented. There was no discussion and no changes. The Pastor's Terms of Call were accepted.

**By-Law Changes:** In August 2021 Consistory approved changes to the By-Laws that had been presented by the Finance Committee. These changes must also be approved by the Congregation. Changes include: 1) The Finance Committee and Building and Grounds Committee become the only standing committees. 2) The Memorial Committee is now a subcommittee of the Finance Committee. 3) The Endowment Committee has been eliminated (the tasks of this committee are done by the Finance Committee). 4) The Finance Committee is in charge of all investment accounts. The proposed changes in the church By-Laws were accepted.

After the Congregational Meeting was adjourned, the meeting of the Corporation approved the work done during the Congregational meeting.

<b>Financial Report</b>
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**Received thru February 20, 2022**

Pledge	\$15,034.00
Unpledged	1,684.84
Loose Plate	50.00

<b>March Volunteer Schedule</b>
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<u>Date</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Prayer</u>
03/06	Lois	Christina	Greg
03/13	Beth	Greg	Barb
03/20	Barb & Jon	Dianne	Lois
03/27	Ann & Greg	Beth	Jim

<b>Ash Wednesday/Lent/Holy Week</b>
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Pastor Peter will be providing an "Ashes to Go" opportunity the morning of Ash Wednesday. He will be in the church drive through from 7:30-9:00 am. He will lead an Ash Wednesday service at the church on Ash Wednesday, beginning at 6:30 PM. PLUC and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will again offer Lenten Prayer services starting March 9th at 6:30 PM at Good Shepherd and then alternating between the two locations for the remainder of Lent. PLUC will host a Maundy Thursday service and Good Shepherd will host the Good Friday service. Please check the church calendar on the webpage for further details. All services will be available via ZOOM. Lenten Prayer services at Good Shepherd will have another ZOOM address which will be made available as we get closer to the service dates.

## ***In Other News***

### **Urgent Need for Helping Hands Donations**

*Submitted by Beth Smock*

One of the many challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the increase in financial need experienced by many members of our local community. During 2020-2021 PLUC worked with Trinity Episcopal Church and their food pantry to give out over 200 \$20.00 produce food vouchers to Jim's Foodmart. Unfortunately, we had to discontinue this program as it became unsustainable. It also seriously depleted our funds for our regular food and gas vouchers. At the end of 2021, Treasurer Ed had to transfer a little over \$11.00 to have the Helping Hands account balance. Thus we began 2022 with no funds in the account.

Fortunately, this does not mean the end of the program as we are able to use vonBatchelder funds to maintain the program. However, we would like to not have to transfer any more funds than necessary.

The good news for the first couple of months of 2022, is that giving toward the Helping Hands funds has increased with a total of \$360.00 received through the first of February. The not so good news is that we have given out 3 gas vouchers and 4 food vouchers (one other person called to request assistance but never came to pick up the voucher.). All vouchers are for up \$50.00 which leaves us with a maximum of \$10.00 left in the account with one more week of February left. (This may not be an exact number as I only know how many vouchers I have given out. Folks usually do not spend \$50.00 exactly so what we have spent might be a few dollars less.)

I know this has been long but I wanted to give you a complete picture of where we are

with the Helping Hands funds. And then ask that you prayerfully consider what gifts you can provide for this fund. There is a great need out there. While I do have "regular" folks that we have helped in the past, I have been seeing more and more new people coming in for help during the pandemic.

Thank you for your help with this very important ministry.

### **Flood Relief Funds**

At their February meeting, the Consistory discussed what to do with the remaining flood relief funds from the 2018 floods. We have several thousand dollars of unused funds. Last year, Consistory offered some of these funds to be used to repair local trails, but this funding had been received from other places so was not needed.

As we consider other possible uses for these funds, we first wanted to make sure to address anyone in the congregation who still has a need. Even if your need is small, the funds are still there for you; you would not be "taking help away from someone else." If you would like to discuss the possibility of receiving any funds, please let the office, Pastor Peter, or a member of Consistory know. Consistory will be re-visiting this issue again at their March meeting.

*"Ash Wednesday, with its visible sign of dust and ashes on our foreheads, is a forcible reminder of our own frailty and mortality and sinfulness. We don't like to remember those parts of ourselves, but on this day, it is literally rubbed onto us." — Paul J. Willis*

## One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

**Note:** The following is taken from the PC(USA) One Great Hour of Sharing information pack.)

During the season of Lent, we celebrate that God connects with us through Jesus' resurrection and connects us with "those who have least" — that's how Matthew 25 puts it — and that's what One Great Hour of Sharing is all about. **Connecting.**

Our gifts provide relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed.

*This Lenten season, please give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing.*

PLUC will be taking our "official" offering on March 27<sup>th</sup>, but gifts can be made at any time. Please mark your check "One Great Hour" so that gifts are put in the correct place.

You have to believe in happiness  
Or happiness never comes...  
Oh, that's the reason a bird can sing—  
On his darkest day, he believes in spring.



Don't forget to "Spring Forward" on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

## Join us for a Book Study

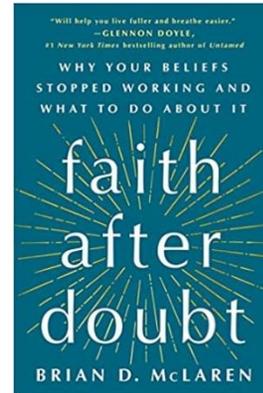
[\*Faith After Doubt\* by Brian McLaren](#)

Tuesday afternoons 5:30-6:30 p.m.

March 8 through April 5

At PLUC

From Brian McLaren comes a bold proposal: only doubt can save the world and your faith



Check our website for more details on the book.

Email [pastor@pluc.org](mailto:pastor@pluc.org) to let me know you are interested.

Help to purchase the book is available.

### Schedule

- March 8—Session 1** Preface & Introduction (6 pages)
- March 15—Session 2** Part I: Your Descent into Doubt (pgs 3-58)
- March 22—Session 3** Part 2: All In Doubt (pg 59-130)
- March 28—Session 4** Part 3: Life After (and With) Doubt (pg 131-205)
- April 5—Session 5** Afterword: (pg 206-220)

## **Think Spring! Think Rummage!**

submitted by Bobbie Dalquist

Are you thinking of spring? Then also start thinking about a church rummage sale. As you are cleaning out closets and downsizing your clutter, please hold on to things and donate them to the church rummage sale, tentatively planned for the first weekend in June. We will take furniture, but we need pictures of what you are donating at least a week before the sale so that we can advertise the items. No clothes, but we'll take most anything else in good condition: kitchen and household items, tools, camping gear, books.

## **Angel Mission**

Submitted by Sherry Middlemis-Brown

Our hearts are heavy with the loss of our long-time manager, Lynn Lanyon, after 14 years of co-managing Angel Mission. Lynn died after a short and unexpected illness. As her obituary said, "The community lost one of its earthly angels, but her mission is now continued in heaven, watching over us all."

At the end of January, our landlord increased our rent by 50% and wants a year-long lease on our storefronts. Therefore, the board of directors decided to pursue purchase of a slightly smaller building with huge possibilities located a few blocks north of downtown. We can safely purchase the building with a mortgage and not stretch our monthly expenses beyond what we would spend renting. We intend to activate a **Go-Fund-Me** campaign for interior finishing work and ADA accessibility as soon as our professional inspection is complete. We

hope that the congregation will support our efforts to acquire a home of our own by helping to spread the news about the **Go-Fund-Me** campaign on Facebook and other social media.

We have also invited two new managers to take charge of Angel Mission. Terry LaBonte and Mike Quello are both long-time volunteers. They will work as interim co-managers for the next six months with option of becoming permanent. Already, the store is taking on an organized look, as the result of their enthusiasm and hard work.

Thank you for your generous and kind support.

## **Important Information**

To access our Worship Services via ZOOM, you can go to the PLUC webpage and click on To Join Our Service or you can go to the calendar on the webpage and click on Sunday Worship and click the link.

February 2022

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

Pastor: Rev. Peter Norland

Office Manager: Beth Smock

**General Office Hours:**

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

**Pastor Office Hours:**

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