

# The Messenger

A Newsletter of Portage United Methodist Church  
MARCH 2021 Rev. Doug Clement, Pastor



For I know  
the plans I have  
for you,  
declares the LORD,  
plans for welfare  
and not for evil,  
to give you a future  
*and a hope.*  
Jeremiah 29:11



## Preparing for Easter

### Holy Week Opportunities – Mar. 29<sup>th</sup> thru Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>

#### **Palm Sunday (Mar 29)**

- Online Worship at 9:00 am
- Drive-In Service at 9:00 am (*followed by Car Parade*)
- Radio Service at 9:30 am (*AM 1350, WPDR*)

#### **Maundy Thursday (Apr 1)**

- Zoom Communion Service at 7:00 pm

#### **Good Friday (Apr 2)**

- Online Worship posted at 9:00 am
- Drive-In Service at 7:00 pm

#### **Easter Sunday (Apr 4)**

- Online Worship at 9:00 am
- Drive-In Service at 9:00 am (*with Holy Communion*)
- Radio Service at 9:30 am (*AM 1350, WPDR*)



It has been said that Devil's Lake is among the crown jewels of our state park system, and I would certainly have to agree. For as long as I can remember, my family and I have visited the park, spent time walking its trails, and simply enjoyed the beautiful scenery. Prior to COVID-19, my aunt and uncle hosted an annual gathering of friends from college and relatives from my dad's side of the family. Together, we'd spend the whole day hiking, climbing, and picnicking.

One of the highlights for me was always what my family calls "boulder-hopping". Early in the morning, we would drive out to the park and gather at the southern end of the East Bluff. That is where we would start "hopping" (or climbing) from boulder to boulder up the side. Getting all the way to the top usually took a couple of hours. Once everyone made it to the meeting point, we'd hike down the other side and share a picnic lunch by the lake.

I got to be pretty good at "boulder-hopping". So, when my scout troop decided to go actual rock climbing at Devil's Lake, I figured it couldn't have been that much different. We carried our gear up a trail on the West Bluff and got set-up at the base of a relatively short rock face. I was still feeling pretty confident as I watched the first scout clip-in and start to climb. In fact, it wasn't until I was clipped into the harness and had my hands on the rocks that, suddenly, I wasn't so sure.

Thinking back on it now, I am reminded of the disciples' experience when they saw Jesus walking across the water. Several of them had been fishermen and were quite familiar with the lake they were on. They knew how to handle a boat, even in the midst of a storm, but they had never seen anyone walking on the water before. Still, Peter mustered up his courage and asked Jesus to have him come over on the water.

At first, things seemed to be going well. Scripture tells us that "Peter got out of the boat and was walking on the water toward Jesus". (Matthew 14:29). But he had barely gone a few steps when he remembered the storm. Peter started to get scared and he began to doubt himself. And in that moment, he sank.

It's easy to be confident in ourselves when things are going well, when we have clear evidence that what we're saying and doing is working. However, we struggle both individually and as communities of faith to maintain that confidence when the storms of life are battering us or when we feel lost and alone. We have a hard time believing what God is telling us about ourselves. We don't

think we have the ability to do what God is calling us to do. And so, like Peter, we start to sink below the waves.

Part of the promise we remember during Lent is that we are not alone. God is with us. Christ is calling us to step out of the boat and to come across the water. We have a unique opportunity to practice that sort of faith this year, to put our trust in God and show how much we believe we can do (with God's help), by finding new ways to (re)connect with one another in the midst of our current situation. One doesn't have to see all the other churches who are finding ways to engage outside of in-person gatherings to know we can do it. I believe because I see the potential right here and I know that God is saying we can.

Climbing that rockface at Devil's Lake seemed impossible, but my leaders and my fellow scouts never gave up on me. They were right there, offering words of encouragement, pointing out good handholds and places to put my feet. With their help, I started to believe that I could do it. I started to climb.

So, in the words of the apostle Paul, let us "continue encouraging each other and building each other up", believing in ourselves and trusting that God is making a way.

Blessings,  
Pastor Doug

**It's Not Too Late!**  
**Lenten Study: *The Walk***  
**by Rev. Adam Hamilton**

Pastor Doug will offer a small group virtual study on Wednesdays, February 24 and March 3, 10, 17 & 24 at 6:00 pm.

Through videos, conversation, and prayer, we will learn how we can follow in the footsteps of Christ every day (even in the midst of coronavirus).

You can purchase Rev. Adam Hamilton's *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life*, online at Cokesbury, Amazon, or Abingdon Press.

Please email the church office at [office.portageumc@gmail.com](mailto:office.portageumc@gmail.com) or call (608) 742-2107 so you can be included in the zoom group.

Articles for the  
April newsletter  
are due March 14

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Follow the prompts to complete your donation.



Last month the PUMC Finance Committee proposed the creation of a "Pandemic Relief Fund". We're happy to tell you this is now fully operational!

Our church will use all donations to this fund to help local individuals and families who have been directly impacted in a negative way by the current pandemic. Please send your donations to the church and direct them to the "Pandemic Relief Fund". And thanks for your generosity! - Phil Berg, Finance Committee chairman

**Daylight Saving Time  
begins March 14th.**



**UMCOR Special Offering - March 14, 2021**

In the midst of disaster, The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is a sign of hope throughout the world. Your support allows the vital work of UMCOR to reach communities everywhere when disaster overwhelms a community's capacity to respond on its own. For 80 years, UMCOR has provided assistance where it is most needed. Every gift helps strengthen the organization for the days, weeks, months and years ahead.

Donate online at: [advance.umcor.org](http://advance.umcor.org) or send a check to your local church with 'UMCOR' in the memo line.

**Portage**  
**Pop-up**  
Drive-thru  
**Pantry**  
**Fresh Produce & Perishables**  
**2:00 - 5:00**  
**Every 4th Wednesday**  
held at  
**1804 New Pinery Rd., Portage**  
**Portage United Methodist Church**

**Our Little Free Food Pantry** is in great need of some supplies. Going fast - any personal hygiene items (like deodorant, toothbrushes and paste, and feminine products.) Travel sized items work great in the Little Pantry! Our food stores are getting low as well. Paper/cardboard packaging has worked the best throughout the winter, but we will soon be able to return to providing canned foods, or those in plastic bottles. If you want to donate, just bring your items in a plastic bag and leave at front door with a note that it's for the Little Pantry. Please don't load the items into the pantry, as it gets too crowded. We have a volunteer who checks it weekly (thank you Laura Moeller!) And thank you all for your support!

**TWO BLOOD DRIVES IN MARCH!**

**High School Sponsored Drive**  
Thursday, March 4 from 11 am - 4 pm

**Red Cross Blood Drive**  
Thursday, March 25 from 11:30am-5:30pm

Best to make an appointments by calling  
1-800-RED-CROSS



**Birthday Blessings**  
Pastor Doug

Pastor Doug is having a birthday Sunday, March 21! How about mailing a card (or dropping one off in the secure drop box) sending an email, or giving him a call to wish him a happy day!

**We're Lending a Helping Hand!**

This winter, if you find yourself unable to get to the grocery store or pharmacy and there's no one able to run that errand for you, please call us at Portage UMC. We have a team of caring people who will pick up and drop off at your house.

Just call the office at 742-2107 and let us know where to pick up your order and we'll try to get that done for you!

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**Thought for the day:**

Do for others with no desire of returned favor.  
We all should plant some trees we'll never sit under.

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**Update from the COVID-19 Strategy Team**

Dear friends,

Grace and peace to you! As we journey through this Lenten season, the members of our COVID-19 Strategy Team find themselves in a place of hope-filled anticipation. Participation in worship remains strong. Volunteers are serving people in need through our pop-up food pantry. Families are engaging through virtual Sunday school. And our case numbers appear to have gone down since the pre-holiday spike. ***These are all things worth celebrating!***

Our journey, however, is not over. As much as each and every one of us longs to be together with you, protecting our community from the coronavirus is something we cannot afford to rush. In order for the new vaccines to protect us individually, each person must receive two doses, administered a few weeks apart. In order for the vaccine to protect us collectively, the majority of our community will need to have gotten both doses and be fully immunized. We do not believe this will occur before Easter this year.

That said, ***we are seeing a potential to create opportunities for people to (re)connect with each other*** in the coming weeks and months through safe, alternative means while our team continues to work on what is needed to prepare for re-launching in-person ministries. These ideas are still taking shape and we will continue to update you on them as they develop.

In the meantime, we encourage you to keep faith, to remain strong, and to continue doing the good work and ministry you have been doing throughout this season of social distancing. Reach out to one another, call each other, write cards or send packages. Above all, pray with one another, that we might join together in sharing God's love.

Thank you for all that you are and all that you share with our faith community.

Blessings,

Pastor Doug  
and the COVID-19 Strategy Team



It has been a year since the stay at home order was put in place. When it

happened, it felt like our world shut down and everything changed overnight, not for the better. It was scary and lonely. It felt as though we had lost so much: opportunities, church, school, jobs, entertainment, and even our friends and family. I know that is how I felt and occasionally still feel, but I prayed a lot. I prayed for God to take those fears and to show me his path in all of this. I prayed for guidance and patience and he led me on a path I had not planned. I didn't know how to create videos, edit, create slides, convert youtubes, etc..but somehow God was calling me to do more for our church/community than he had called me before and when God calls it is wise to listen.

I look back almost a year now and there are still many things I lost, but I can see God's work in our church, worship, people, and community. It is easy to get fixated on the things we miss and/or lost, but then we might miss the things God wants all of us to see and do. To see so many new names (I hope someday, faces) of those who watch and follow us on Facebook and Youtube is an incredible blessing. There are people that share in worship with us who don't even live near Portage. Our drive-in service has faithful followers and volunteers who worship every Sunday even in sub zero temperatures.

Our newest worship addition is starting this week. We are going to be able to deliver DVDs of the Sunday service to area nursing care homes and/or people without technology. **We are in need of a volunteer to help with this new worship opportunity by dropping off the DVD's to the different places each week.** If you are willing to be this person, please let me know. Also, if you know of someone who would like a DVD, please let the church office or myself know as well.

I want to thank everyone who served as a liturgist, special musician, volunteer, and usher this past month. Your time and talents are *truly* appreciated.



Several people made Valentines for area nursing homes and church members. Not only did these Valentines touch those who received them, those who made them were touched by making them and being able to share them. Thank you to everyone who helped with this outreach project.



DO you have talent? Drawing, gardening, scrapbooks, baking, sewing, writing, singing, dancing, gymnastics, karate, playing an instrument, whistling, stacking cups, dog/cat tricks, even a unique way of folding folded sheets.....then we can't wait to have you share your talent at our **VIRTUAL TALENT SHOWCASE- LIVE- Friday March 12th 6:30pm.** We need people/kids to participate and to attend. Please sign up! The best two things- it is free and fun! Sign up by the link below, Facebook event, or calling the church or myself. Link to the Live Showcase will be sent out a week before and will be Facebook and Mailchimp.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F44A8AE22ABFB6-virtual>



Stay healthy and take care,  
Katie Zirbes, kzirbes3@gmail.com  
or 417-0247 (call or text)





**You will notice that a greeting card was enclosed with your newsletter this month.**

These cards were purchased by United Methodist Women. Our hope was that you would think of someone you have not seen in awhile (a church member? a shut-in? someone not doing well with this isolation?) and that you would write them a little note, "Thinking of You". One card sent out may not seem like much, but multiply that by over 200 cards and suddenly it **does** make a difference. We can share the love of God and each other by this little action. We hope you will join us!

Thank you,  
Sheril Lannoye, President, UMW

(You will also find our yearly statement of giving on page 8.)

### **If You're in the Hospital**

Being hospitalized is usually a traumatic and stressful experience. You have a church family willing to help! If you would like a visit from the pastor and/or to be placed on the prayer chain, or anything else that would ease your stay, please call the church office (742-2107). Let us know which hospital, a room number if available, and a contact's name and number. Thank you!

Note: Hospitals do not call churches or pastors anymore. You, or a family member, needs to contact us.

(During COVID-19, visits may not be allowed, but we would be happy to call.)

### **Church Drop Box**

Have you made use of the new drop box yet? It's located just to the left of the main front doors and is a secure way for folks to drop off messages, paperwork, offerings and other such items.

No need to call ahead or wait for office hours. Simply drive up, place whatever you're dropping off in the slot, close it, and then check to make sure it dropped down into the box!

Pick out a few names this month and send a birthday card! Or make some calls to wish them well! REACH OUT!



## **MARCH Birthdays**

1 Larry Krueger	14 June Fredrick	Mike Fredrick
2 Ava Copple	15 David Briggs	23 Tim Francis
Cameron Weiss	Sophia Burns	24 Carol Rosing
3 Shirley Patchin	16 Royden Atkinson	25 Joan Dykstra
Rikki Simonson	17 Trent Briggs	26 Chris Lindner
4 Ed Hallett	Berniece Fosnow	29 Connie Lindert
David Kohler	18 Sheri Chester	Ashley Olson
5 Marv Messer	19 Christian Heo	30 Hazel Shanks
6 Scott Maass	Dan Pulver	31 Ron Babler
11 Karan Barreau	Rita Smick	Mitchell Butson
13 Bob Cuff	20 Shawn Bolgrien	Jason Narel
Steve Hallett	21 Rev Doug Clement	Vicki Tessman

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN  
DISBURSEMENTS/MISSION GIVING 2020

**LOCAL CHURCH**

Office (paper, etc)	200.00	
Sunday Morning Coffee - 20%	122.31	
Sunday Morning Coffee expense	68.80	
Funerals/Receptions/Lent	21.74	
Camperships -Youth	---	
Recognition-Teachers, Sr. High, Confirmation	23.98	
Christmas Cheer/In Memory	17.00	
No Bake-Bake Sale(parsonage Remodeling	1,410.00	
Kitchen/Church(striped, waxed floors)	300.00	
		<b>\$2,163.83</b>

**UMW – LOCALLY**

Programs/Sunshine/etc.	---	
Program Resource, Library, etc.	240.00	
Special Recognitions	See Below*	
Camperships - Women	---	
Bazaar	---	
Special Mission Giving -Ilulu Orphan Program	500.00	
UMCOR Hygiene Kits	377.00	
Kinship Mentoring of Columbia County	300.00	
Karan Barreau(Prayer Shawl)	200.00	
		<b>\$1,617.00</b>

**UMW DISTRICT & CONFERENCE**

Pledge To Mission	2,500.00	
Special Mission Recognition	280.00	
Call To Prayer and Self Denial	47.00	
World Thank Offering	43.00	
School of Christian Mission	50.00	
Gift To Mission (Baby and Thank You cards)	-----	
Gift In Memory (Sympathy cards)	85.00	<b>\$3,005.00</b>

TOTAL GIVING BY UMW IN 2020 \$6,785.83

The total (\$2,163.83) was given in support of our church, our church members, and our youth, locally.

The total (\$1,617.00) was given in support of our United Methodist Women and special mission giving locally.

The total (\$3,005.00) are funds our local Unit channels through undesignated and designated giving to the District, than on to Conference, Nationally and Internationally.

Through giving, United Methodist Women provide for the MISSION OUTREACH of the organization locally and all over the world.

\*Special Mission Recognition moneys are sent to the District, however a pin and certificate is given to special people locally recognizing them for their support to the local UMW or in recognition of a member's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**As UNITED METHODIST WOMEN, we thank everyone in our church family for your continued support.**

## March Calendar of Events

Sunday Worship is available online and can be found on YouTube at Portage UMC or on our Facebook Page

### March 7, 14, 21, 28, Sundays

9:00 am: Drive-in Services (Back Parking Lot)  
9:00 am: Online Services (YouTube/Facebook)  
9:30 am: Radio Service (AM 1350, WPDR)

### March 3, 10, 17, 24, Wednesdays

6:00 pm Lenten Study online

### March 4, Thursday

11:00am-4:00pm: High School Blood Drive

### March 24, Wednesday

2-5 pm: Pop-up Pantry Drive-thru

### March 25, Thursday

11:30am-5:30pm: Red Cross Blood Drive

### March 28, Palm Sunday

Palm Waving Car Parade for shut-ins



## Children's Ministries

Welcome March! We're just three or so weeks into Lent and I hope that you've had some time to reflect on this season. The weekly Lenten bags will continue throughout the month for both adults and children. I hope that if you have been able to snag one that you are enjoying them!

Children's Sunday School lessons resumed the week of February 14th and run each week through the week of Easter. At the conclusion of Easter, the Sunday School lessons will be done, but they are all available to be viewed as many times as you like on our church YouTube page.

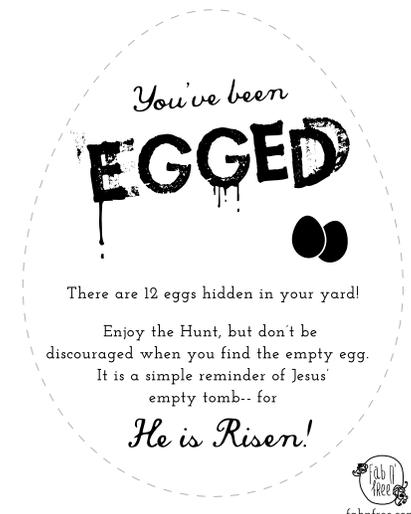
Vacation Bible School planning and decisions have been postponed for a month or so as we wait to see how the virus evolves and what the summer may hold. If you have talents in singing/music, skits/plays, set decorations, storytimes, snacks, computer/movie recordings or editing, or making and teaching crafts and you WANT to volunteer to help out. Please contact me.

Lastly, to sign up to be "egged" on April 3rd please call the church office and give Shar your name and address.

\*\*\*12 plastic eggs will be hidden in your yard for you and/or your children to find. 1 egg will be empty to remember that the tomb was empty.\*\*\*

Blessings to all!

Amanda



**FINANCIAL SUMMARY SHEET**

**January 31, 2021**

\*\*\*\*\*

**GENERAL FUND**

Income: 20,756.32

Expense: -27,080.92

**-6,324.60**

**DEDICATED FUNDS**

Income: 700.00

Expense 2879.72

\*\*\*\*\*

**FUND BALANCES**

General Fund	(21,500.84)
Dedicated Fund	61,330.00
*Checking Account Balance (total of Gen. and Ded. Fund)	39,829.16
Memorial Checking	15,114.45
Jenkins Fund	49,107.80
Anderson Fund	23,088.28
Wiedenhaupt Fund	5,932.07
Endowment Fund	18,735.72
Hamele Fund	12,039.92
<b>TOTAL</b> <b>*(checking balance not in total)</b>	<b>163,847.40</b>

Thank you,  
Rich Jacobson, Church Treasurer

***Please take just a moment to lift each church below in prayer during their week. We are all in need. Send them a simple card letting them know you are praying for their health and welfare amidst these challenging times.***

Lime Ridge & Sandusky, clergy Joice Jacob and the 58 combined members. Lime Ridge & Sandusky is located at PO Box 36, Lime Ridge, WI 53941-0036; February 28, 2021 – March 6, 2021.

Livingston, clergy TyLacey Hines and the 96 members. Livingston is located at PO Box 59, Livingston, WI 53554; March 7, 2021 – March 13, 2021.

Montfort, clergy TyLacey Hines and the 78 members. Montfort is located at Po Box 128, Montfort, WI 53569; March 7, 2021 – March 13, 2021.

Cobb, clergy TyLacey Hines and the 43 members.

Cobb is located at Po Box 128, Montfort, WI 53569; March 7, 2021 – March 13, 2021.

Lodi, clergy PyungAhn (Peace) Kim and the 251 members. Lodi is located at 130 Locust St, Lodi, WI 53555; March 14, 2021 – March 20, 2021.

Madison: Asbury, clergy Harold Zimmick and the 972 members. Madison: Asbury is located at 6101 University Ave, Madison, WI 53705; March 21, 2021 – March 27, 2021

Madison: Bashford, clergy Amanda Stein & Kory Douglass and the 206 members. Madison: Bashford is located at 329 North St, Madison WI 53704-4920; March 28, 2021 – April 3, 2021.

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VOLUME 21      ISSUE 3

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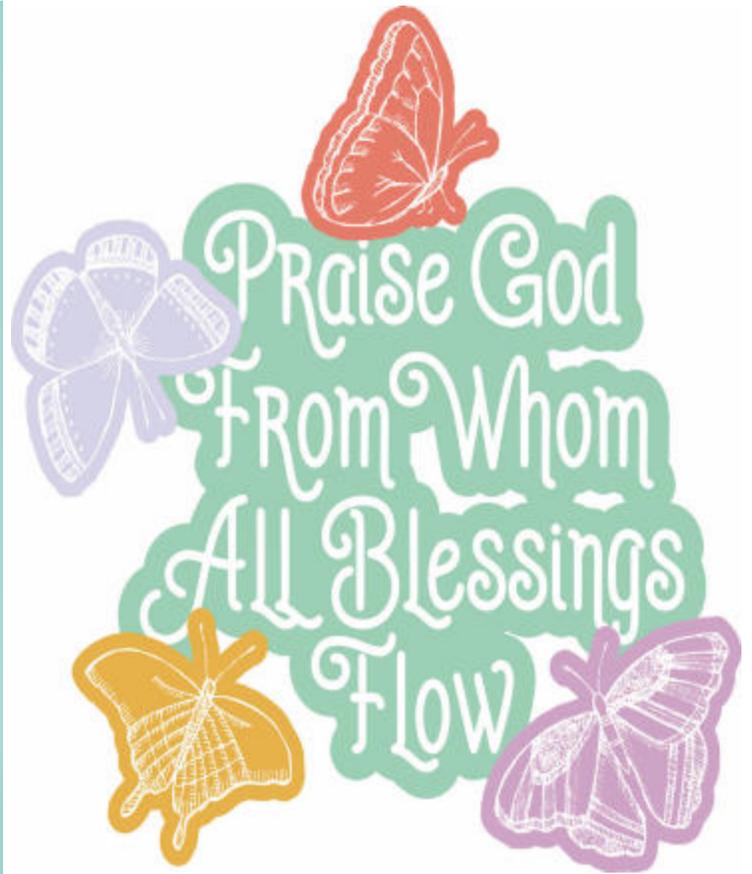
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