

The Messenger

Victory!

Death has
been swallowed
up in victory.

• • •

1 Corinthians 15:54,
NIV

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



Holy Week Opportunities – Mar. 29th thru Apr. 4th

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*)



April 4

See page 6 for details!



Spring is such an interesting time of year, one of my favorites in fact. I just love how everything seems to be in constant flux. Each day is different from the last, every

moment a bit of a surprise. You can literally watch as the world changes around us. There are signs of movement and activity, new life springing forth. And yet, the shadow of winter still looms. There is always a chance that we could see one last cold snap, one more deluge of snow before it's all over.

For many of us, this may reflect how we have been feeling about our faith lives and our journey together as a community. We have just made our way through Lent, a season of reflection and preparation in which we try to be more focused about living into who God is calling us to be. There are opportunities to study, to learn from one another, to practice new skills or disciplines that will help us grow our faith. And yet, it seems there is also a shadow of grief that haunts our steps. There is a sense of being unfulfilled.

Certainly, this was the case for the disciples. They had spent nearly three years traveling around with Jesus, witnessing the wonders and signs he performed, hearing everything that he had to say. They saw how he lifted people up and brought a new sense of life to those who'd been beaten down or pushed to the margins. And yet, the disciples were not convinced when the women arrived that Easter morning and told the others what they'd witnessed at the empty tomb. They were still haunted by angry religious leaders, menacing Roman soldiers, and the shadow of a brutal cross.

They were missing hope.

Hope is defined as "a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen". It is present in the midst of our waiting for something, our anticipating what might happen, our desire for the outcome to be favorable to us. Indeed, hope is such a vital part of our lives that we often find it difficult to move forward or to imagine any sort of future without it.

Sometimes we talk about hope very casually. We toss it around without much thought like when we go to place a take-out order from a restaurant and express our "hope" they have a certain item on the menu. Then

there are other times when our hope seems to be so much more. We hope the people of Hawaii will be able to go home and rebuild after the flooding and mudslides. We hope there will be an end to fighting and bloodshed in Myanmar resulting from the coup. We hope this pandemic will be over soon and that we will be able to see our loved ones face-to-face again.

What we celebrate on Easter Sunday is the hope of Resurrection, the promise that life will be victorious and that death will not have the final word. It obviously took time for the disciples to figure that out. They did not see what the women did at the tomb and they did not believe when the women told them, but in time, Jesus did appear among them. They were able to see the risen Christ for themselves, to touch him, and to hear his voice again. Their grief turned to joy. They believed!

The same is true for us. As we continue our journey together into this season of Easter, we can already see signs of growth and new life, opportunities for us to (re)connect, and progress toward the day when we will be able to gather together in-person again. We also know that these things will take time and that it is the hope of the Resurrection (and the presence of Christ in our midst) that will carry us through.

Blessings,
Pastor Doug

Support for the Discretionary Fund

Throughout this pandemic, we have been able to offer financial support to those in need, bridging the gap from where they are to the people and resources that can help them get on a better path. However, the needs are great and our resources are few. Consider donating to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund so that we can continue to reach out and help people in these difficult times.

**Articles for the
May newsletter
are due April 14**

**You Can Donate
Directly from Your Smartphone!**

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Just text the amount you want to donate,
including the dollar sign (ex. \$20)
to 844-556-1238 and click on the link they send you.
Follow the prompts to complete your donation.



**This fund has already helped
someone from our church!**

We are accepting donations
for this Pandemic Relief Fund.

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! - Finance Committee

**NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES
Special Offering April 14, 2021**

TOGETHER OUR REACH IS BEYOND MEASURE

This Sunday recognizes and supports the contributions of Native Americans to the church and society. Part of the funds collected allow us to collaborate with existing native ministries, create programs and support seminary scholarships for United Methodist Native Americans. Fifty percent of the offering remains in your annual conference to develop local ministries. The conference committee on Native American ministry (CONAM) administers these funds.

When you give generously on Native American Ministries Sunday, you equip seminary students who honor and celebrate Native American culture in their ministries.

Items Needed for Little Free Pantry!

It seems like every week we run short of food for the Little Free Pantry on our property. Now that the weather is better, bring on the canned and bottled goods! Also, personal hygiene products go quickly. **All food items must have intact labels and be within the sell by/use by dates.** Just leave your donations at the front doors (please label "for Free Pantry".) We'll take care of stocking it so it doesn't get overfilled. And "thank you" for your donations!

MATC Sponsored Drive

Thursday, April 22 from 9am - 2pm

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

Thank You Notes

Dear Blood Program Leaders,

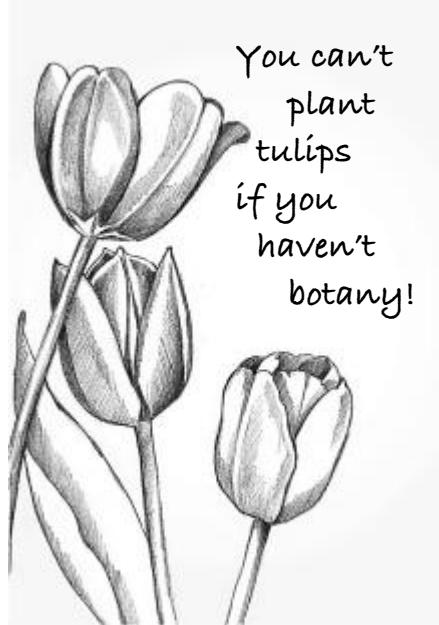
Today, March 11, marks one year since the coronavirus outbreak was officially declared as a global pandemic. I want to thank you for hosting blood drives, or for graciously allowing us to use your building. You have helped so many patients in need of lifesaving blood during a very challenging year.

Sincerely,

**Nicole Rundahl
Donor Recruitment Account Manager**

Thank you to Phil Berg (Finance Chair) and Karen Zenor (SPRC Chair) for your time and service in these positions. You are much appreciated and we wish you well as you transition into other forms of ministry.

Thought for the day:
A good example has twice the value of good advice.



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**

Update from the COVID-19 Strategy Team

Dear friends,

We are excited to share with you that our congregation is taking steps forward in the process of preparing for a safe return to in-person gatherings!

At our February council meeting, the leadership agreed to follow the guidance of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, an ecumenical organization that resources and supports churches like ours. They've given us lots of good information about what is needed and recommendations to help us work on getting ready.

They have also given us a series of benchmarks to measure our progress and let us know when it will be safe to proceed to the next level.

Our strategy team is reviewing this material and has already identified several things we can be working on to move us in the right direction. We are partnering with trustees, the staff-parish relations committee, and others to get these things rolling. We will continue to update you on our progress through the weekly ENews and Facebook postings.

You can help us out right now by doing the following:

- * get your COVID-19 vaccine (*once you're eligible*)
- * encourage your friends and loved ones to get vaccinated
- * wear your masks and practice social distancing of at least 6 feet

Thank you for all that you are and all that you do! Your support is what makes it possible for us to continue doing good work and ministry through this season.

Blessings,

Pastor Doug
and the COVID-19 Strategy Team

APRIL 2021

WORSHIP

He has risen! As we look ahead to the future, Christ brings hope and light. I know I am beginning to experience some excitement that our state is heading in a direction of people being vaccinated in record numbers and that our Covid cases have reduced significantly.

I am still patient and cautious as I am mindful that slowly “turning the dial back up” ensures that we will be able to gather with our families, friends, and loved ones sooner. That being said, we have **exciting** news to share about worship.

EXPANDED OUTSIDE OPPORTUNITY AT THE DRIVE IN SERVICE

Starting Easter Sunday, April 4th, those who attend the drive-in service may, if they wish, bring a lawn chair to sit outside their vehicles (with masks on and socially distanced at least 6 feet apart from the next person not in your household). That being said, we ask that you do not congregate any closer than 6 feet. The parking lot will be marked and you will need to keep your lawn chairs on a specific side of your vehicle to ensure we can park enough vehicles distanced apart. You can listen via your car radio with the window open or bring a battery operated radio device to listen to. More information will be shared through email and Facebook.

PERSONAL TIME IN THE SANCTUARY

Starting the week of April 5th, those who wish to spend time in the sanctuary to pray, meditate, watch the service on their phone, etc.. may do so using a sign-up system through the church office. There will typically be a morning and afternoon time slot Mondays-Thursdays except when other activities are taking place in the sanctuary (i.e. recording service elements, blood drive, etc.) The church office will have a schedule of the times that are available. We ask that you call the church office at 742-2107. At this time, only members of the same household may attend together (with masks on). We ask that you stop at the table outside the sanctuary for further guidelines on sanitizing, standard screening questions, and cleaning procedures.

We are excited at the ability to begin to “turn the dial” back up in reconnecting with each other and our community. You can continue to help by getting your Covid-19 vaccine when you become eligible, wearing your mask, and practicing social distancing. The more we work together, the more we will be able to be together.

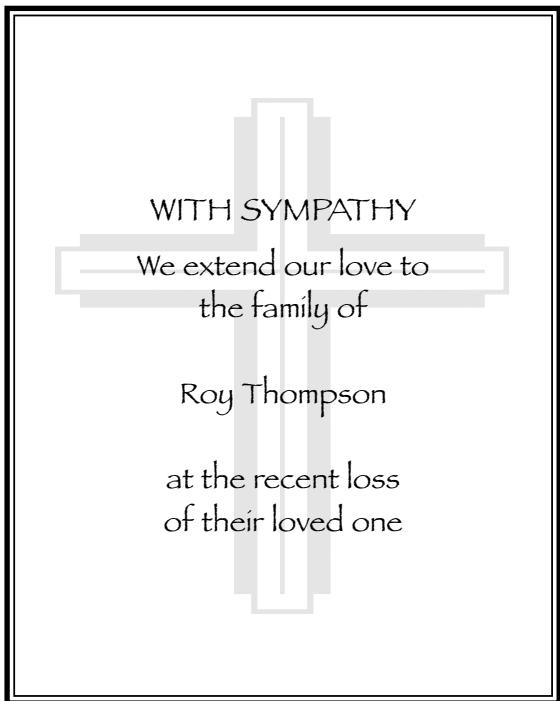


I want to thank Laura and Gary Moeller, Karen Zenor and Mark Johnson, David Briggs, Rich Jacobson, The Thiele Family, Joel Engelland, Hannah Kallungi, Chris Hurd, Paul Petersen, and anyone else who served as a liturgist, special musician, volunteer, and usher this past month. Also, many thanks to those who participated in the Talent Showcase (Sheril Lannoye, Jessica Malsack and her talented nieces, Madelyn Curtis and her amazing cat, and Karen Ratze) Your time and talents are *truly* appreciated.



Stay healthy and take care,

Katie Zirbes kzirbes3@gmail.com or 417-0247 (call or text)



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

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!



APRIL Birthdays

2	Lori Banks Jane Engelland	8	Parker Breene Isaac Brockley Cindy Phillips Russ Wyman	18	Sam Bortz Mason Simonson
3	Ryan Maier Laci Monroe Chris Shane	9	Clarice Rosing	19	Richard Mohl
4	Colleen Kaufman Jennifer Narel	10	Alexia Kutina	22	Jim Kuhl
5	Avery Bartels Corky Cullen Kyle Homan	14	Traci Bartels Bill Phillips	24	Tom Banks
		15	Sue Pulver	25	Ken McTier
		16	Kyle Lucey	26	Madison Bear Kathy Hallett
				28	Carrie Scherbert
				29	Shirley Dahnert
					Vicki Keller



THANK YOU FOR BLESSING OUR SHUT IN MEMBERS

By Niki Briggs, Youth Director

Thank you so very much to all of the youth families who participated in the Easter basket ministry for our members who are on our PUMC shut in list. Your time and talents were very much appreciated!

This has been such a difficult, lonely year for everyone, but most especially those who are unable to get out. If anyone in our congregation would like to send a "Thinking of You" card, here are the PUMC members who are currently on our shut in list. Please call or text Niki Briggs at 608-697-3993 for that person's specific address. Shar also has the list of addresses in the church office: 742-2107.

Vern Trecek	Tivoli	George Mitchell	King's VA
Pat Condo	Tivoli	Janet Nehls	Hamilton PP
Dave Schultz	Tivoli	Glenn & Betty Potterton	Hamilton PP
Howard Becraft	Our House	Delores Wade	Hamilton PP
June Cullen	Our House	Esther Osterby	Hamilton PP
Gigi Dalton	Our House	Richard Mohl	Oakridge
Kim Shaw	Home	Julie Morris	Heritage House
Dave & Jean Rodgers	Home	Shirley Rehdantz	Heritage House
Nona Merklein	Home	Gretchen Hepler	Pardeeville
Donna Hill	Home	Bob O'Halloran	Pardeeville
Carol Mateske	Home		

Opportunity for Youth to serve as Lay Members of Annual Conference

Any youth who are interested in participating in the Wisconsin Annual Conference Sessions are invited to apply to serve as a lay member. Annual Conference will be held virtually on June 18-10, 2021. The Board of Laity offers a scholarship to each accepted applicant, so your cost is only \$15. We will find ways to connect with each other before and during the Conference Sessions. You will receive more information after you apply. (see registration/eligibility)

Youth Member REGISTRATION / ELIGIBILITY

Youth (ages 12 - 17) in each district are invited to attend Annual Conference. This experience will give insight into the United Methodist Church and how to communicate effectively as a member of Annual Conference. Youth must complete and submit an application no later than April 30, 2021. Youth who are accepted will then have to register online and submit a \$15.00 registration fee. The \$60.00 difference will be covered by the Conference Board of Laity. All youth will be voting members of the Annual Conference. You will be an active participant in all plenary sessions, discussing and voting on all matters.

For more information, please contact Sue D'Alessio at sdalessio@wisconsinumc.org

April Calendar of Events

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

April 4, 11, 18, 25, 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)

April 22, Thursday

9:00am-2:00pm: MATC Blood Drive

April 28, Wednesday

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

A Message from the Staff Parish Relations Committee

Much has been written and experienced about the inconvenience and life disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It has challenged us in ways we could not have predicted and has asked us to adapt in ways we had not considered. The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) has observed the performance of staff during these difficult times. The challenges brought about by Covid-19 make it obvious that the Portage United Methodist Church is blessed to employ committed staff willing to adapt to new and challenging circumstances. We've witnessed every employee make a newfound commitment to the church's service and discover new skills.

SPRC is taking this opportunity to praise each staff member for rewriting their job description, by learning new technologies and being innovative. It takes many hours to produce and learn unfamiliar technologies to produce a church service. It takes commitment and knowledge of the strengths of our congregation to recruit volunteers as liturgists, singers, musicians, parking lot attendants... It takes willingness to learn new technology and familiarity with Social Media to record and broadcast our messages. It takes creativity to engage with children virtually so that they can learn that Jesus loves them. Staff have sacrificed time with their families to deliver our message via e-mail, Facebook and our Website to every member of our community. Let's not forget that several of our staff have full-time jobs as well as the part time work they do for us.

During these unprecedented times, the building has been kept a safe place to work while accommodations have been made for outdoor services. All these new or improved ways to communicate have been done while maintaining the routine business of the church like answering phones, doing correspondence, counseling, comforting and sharing God's word. From the safety of our homes or cabins we've had an opportunity to enjoy beautiful music, witness religious education to youth and young adults, learn from sermons and continue to engage in the work of our church. Yes, extraordinary times require extraordinary effort!

We are blessed to have staff willing to go the extra mile in service to you and me. Our staff includes Pastor Doug Clement, Chris Hurd (Church Musician), Scott Mass (Custodian and Maintenance), Shar Kuhl (Office Administrator), Amanda Thiele (Children's Ministry Coordinator), Niki Briggs (Youth Ministry Coordinator), Katie Zirbes (Worship Ministry Coordinator) and Rich Jacobson (Treasurer). If you have an opportunity to send a message, please send it to the church via e-mail:

pastor.portageumc@gmail.com

or send a note to the church mailing address:
1804 New Pinery Road, Portage WI 53901.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY SHEET

February 28, 2021

GENERAL FUND

Income: 16,648.17
 Expense: -15,839.98
808.19

DEDICATED FUNDS

Income: 3370.05
 Expense 1207.13

FUND BALANCES

General Fund	(21,196.47)
Dedicated Fund	63,492.92
*Checking Account Balance (total of Gen. and Ded. Fund)	42,296.45
Memorial Checking	10,845.68
Jenkins Fund	49,996.83
Anderson Fund	23,596.26
Wiedenhaupt Fund	6,039.46
Endowment Fund	19,074.90
Hamele Fund	12,232.29
TOTAL *(checking balance not in total)	164,081.87

Thank you,
 Rich Jacobson, Church Treasurer

SOME EASTER HUMOR.... SORT OF!

A man was blissfully driving along the highway, when he saw the Easter Bunny hopping across the middle of the road. He swerved to avoid hitting the Bunny, but unfortunately the rabbit jumped in front of his car and was hit. The basket of eggs went flying all over the place. Candy, too.

The driver, being a sensitive man as well as an animal lover, pulled over to the side of the road, and got out to see what had become of the Bunny carrying the basket. Much to his dismay, the colorful Bunny was dead.

The driver felt guilty and began to cry.



A woman driving down the same highway saw the man crying on the side of the road and pulled over. She stepped out of her car and asked the man what was wrong.

"I feel terrible," he explained, "I accidentally hit the Easter Bunny and killed it. What should I do?"

The woman told the man not to worry. She knew exactly what to do. She went to her car trunk, and pulled out a spray can. She walked over to the limp, dead Bunny, and sprayed the entire contents of the can onto the little furry animal.

Miraculously the Easter Bunny came to back life, jumped up, picked up the spilled eggs and candy, waved its paw at the two humans and hopped on down the road. 50 yards away the Easter Bunny stopped, turned around, waved and hopped on down the road another 50 yards, turned, waved, hopped another 50 yards and waved again!!!!

The man was astonished. He said to the woman, "What in heaven's name is in your spray can?" The woman turned the can around so that the man could read the label. It said "Hair spray. Restores life to dead hair. Adds permanent wave."



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VOLUME 21 ISSUE 4

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Amanda Thiele, Children's Coordinator
Niki Briggs, Youth Coordinator
Katie Zirbes, Worship Coordinator
Chris Hurd, Church Musician
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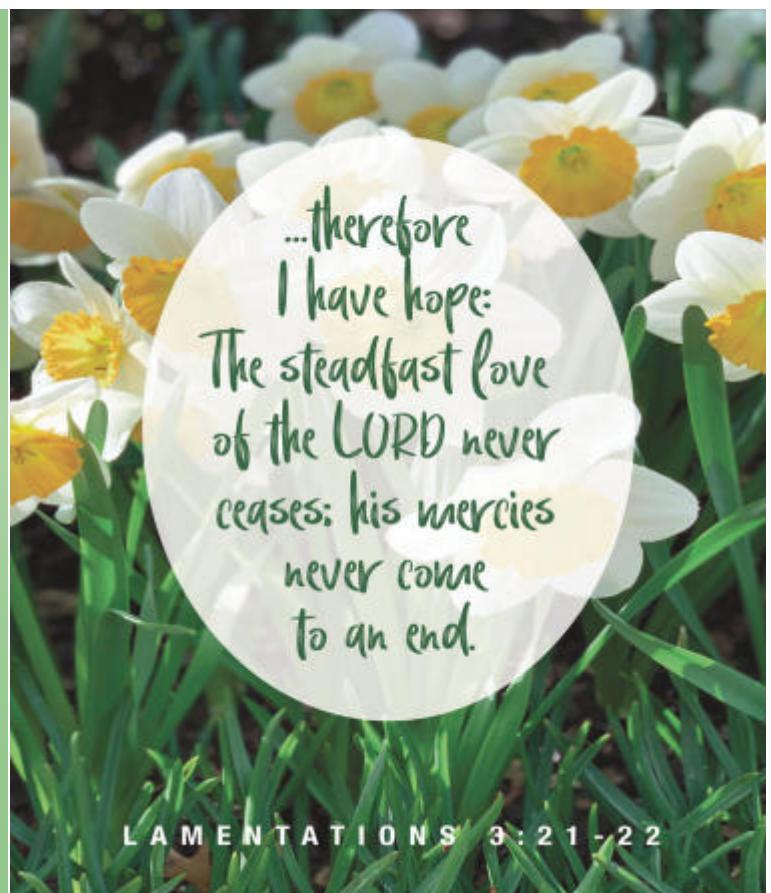
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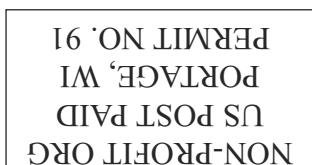
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