

THE PORTLIGHT

A newsletter for members and friends of Portland Avenue United Methodist Church



Come along this month on a virtual road trip as we explore some of America's National Parks during worship. Tune in Sundays at 10:00 am, or watch any you've missed on either YouTube or Facebook.
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/PortlandAvenueUnitedMethodistChurch>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PortlandAvenueUMC/>

July 26 - "Beginnings" (Acadia National Park, Maine)

August 2 - "Darkness" (Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky)

August 9 - "Change" (Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska)

August 16 - "Preservation" (Everglades National Park, Florida)

August 23 - "Adaptation" (Joshua Tree National Park, California)

August 30 - "Restoration" (Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio)

September 6 - "Sabbath" (Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas)

August 2020

Our Mission

"To grow followers of Jesus who change the world."

Our Vision

"To be a safe harbor along life's journey."

The **P**ORT
A safe harbor along life's journey.

Pastor's Message Rev. Carol Zaagsma

In the June Portlight, I extended an open invitation to participate in a small group study created by the United Methodist General Commission on Race & Religion entitled "Vital Conversations on Racism."

I figured it would be a significant ask to spend one hour each Wednesday evening for eight weeks in the summer, but in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd while he was in police custody, I knew that I needed to do *something* to try to learn more about racism; and I suspected I might not be the only one. Come to find out, twenty-three of us felt the same way and signed up for our virtual small group to study the topic of racism together.

Our final class was July 29, and at the conclusion of our class session, I asked each participant to share what's next for them as an individual, or what they might want to see next from our congregation.

It was really inspiring to hear the next steps participants were committed to taking. Many are intent on being more aware and open to what will happen. Some are determined to raise children who will be better participants in a more just world. Some intend to foster relationships with neighbors, or stretch to learn another language, or read books to discuss with a conversation partner, or just be more bold in talking about it. These are steps we can each take in life that really make a difference in how we live and the kind of person we become.

I know that I got pretty excited a few weeks ago when Cokesbury publishing company promoted free shipping on a number of books about racism. Here are a few I ordered and will read as some of my next steps:

- *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo
- *Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America* by Jennifer Harvey
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation* by Latasha Morrison

I'm actually a fairly slow reader, so you can imagine that I've got my work cut out for me! Even so, I'll happily work with any of you willing to co-host a discussion group with me. You can pick the book, invite others, and we'll set up a time for the discussion with others who have also read the selected book.

Another neat suggestion that emerged from members of our small group was the idea to create a scholarship for a black high school senior who is pursuing a degree in education. This will help children who are black see role models in school who look more like them. Some individuals have already established a scholarship in their name through the Education Foundation of Bloomington (more information at www.efbmn.org), while the Mission Outreach Team here at The PORT is considering how we might take a collection to support a scholarship on behalf of the whole congregation. More details will come on this.

As I glanced through the table of contents of Latasha Morrison's book *Be the Bridge*, I noticed that the suggestion for "how we begin" is to have "a posture of humility." A posture of humility calls those of us in the dominant culture to talk less and listen more while "opening our hearts to the voices of our non-White brothers and sisters." Starting with a posture of humility enables us to "study the hard truths of history without trying to explain them away."

"If we come together in the posture of humility," Morrison writes, "we can start to bridge the racial divide. A bridge that lifts up marginalized voices. A bridge of voices that is about equity of marginalized voices, not equality."

I certainly don't have all the answers, but I do know there is much to learn. And I've come to understand that the best way to begin to learn is simply to begin. And so I begin. I hope you will begin in a way that is most compelling to you. After all, as Morrison writes, "God is inviting all of us to be active participants in racial reconciliation, to show the world that racial unity is possible through Christ." I believe this, and I hope you do, too. If so, let's get started.

On the journey with you,

Pastor Carol



Sunday School News

The 2020-21 Sunday School Teachers are working on a Sunday School plan as we start the new program year, so please watch here for news in the September Portlight.

Youth Group News

We have an opportunity to consider what will be meaningful to our youth in fostering friendships and growing in their faith over the coming program year. Watch email for an invitation to a virtual planning meeting with youth, parents and Pastor Carol early in September so that we can gather ideas and discern this together.

Congregational News Related to COVID-19

Phased Re-opening Plan Adopted by Church Council

Planning continues for a time in the future when we will be able to safely worship in person again. While we had been hoping to return to in-person worship soon after Labor Day, it looks more and more like this date is unlikely.

“When” to return is a delicate decision weighing the prevalence of the virus in our community in relation to the demographics of our congregation. As has been suggested before, perhaps the more pressing question is “how” will we do it, because we can begin preparing for that now. To be sure, there are many, many pieces to this question of “how” that must be tended to.

At its meeting on July 23, 2020, the PAUMC Church Council adopted a plan that provides framework from which we will work toward resuming in-person ministries. This is very much a working document that will be adjusted as we learn more about the virus and assess what is appropriate for our congregation. The plan in its current form is included as an insert in this edition of the Portlight.

You will note there are four phases to the plan:

- Phase zero was that initial timeframe which included the stay-at-home order where the office was closed for a time.
- We are currently in Phase One, which we consider the “Do No Harm” phase (related to John Wesley’s three simple rules to do no harm, to do good, and to stay in love with God). During Phase One, we are concentrating on virtual ministries as a way to do what we can to slow the spread of COVID-19.

- Phase Two primarily adds live streaming of worship (with a few worship leaders present) and funerals to what we are doing now, as well as the possibility of small committees meeting in person if they choose.
- Phase three will be down the road when we have more specifics on the “how” it is we can collectively return to in-person ministries... “how” will we clean the facility before and after our use (and “who” will do that?)...how will we change worship to be safer (how will we avoid the riskier things like handing bulletins to people, or passing offering plates, or singing, or children’s moments)? A sub-committee of Linda Schesso, Kathy Swenson, and Barb Andrus was formed to work on a more detailed opening plan.

We learn more all the time about this virus and how it relates to larger gatherings. Please pray for your leaders and for one another as we navigate the days ahead.

Face Masks Required at The PORT

The Church Council understands that Governor Walz’s Executive Order 20-81 applies to all organizations and individuals using the PAUMC facilities.

This order, effective July 24 at 11:59 pm, states that “Minnesotans must wear a face covering in indoor businesses and indoor public settings, as described in this order and the related industry guidance, available at the Stay Safe Minnesota website (<https://staysafe.mn.gov>), as well as any other guidance referenced in this order.”

Until further notice, please wear a face mask for the duration of your visit in the PAUMC building, and make every effort to maintain 6’ of space between you and others. Thank you for your cooperation and efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Mission Outreach

Cornerstone Meal

The Mission Outreach Team will be donating 25 boxed meals to Cornerstone on Tuesday August 18. Due to Covid-19 we are not allowed to go into Cornerstone to serve a meal. They are accepting delivered boxed meals.

We are expecting to have delivered 25 boxed meals. We will be ordering from Jimmy John's and they will deliver the meals to Cornerstone.

If you would like to help with the cost of these meals, the cost is \$14/meal. This covers cost, delivery and tip. You can send a check to church and write in the memo line: Cornerstone; or give online at paumc.org/giving (choose "Special UMC Mission Offering." Thanks for supporting this Outreach project.

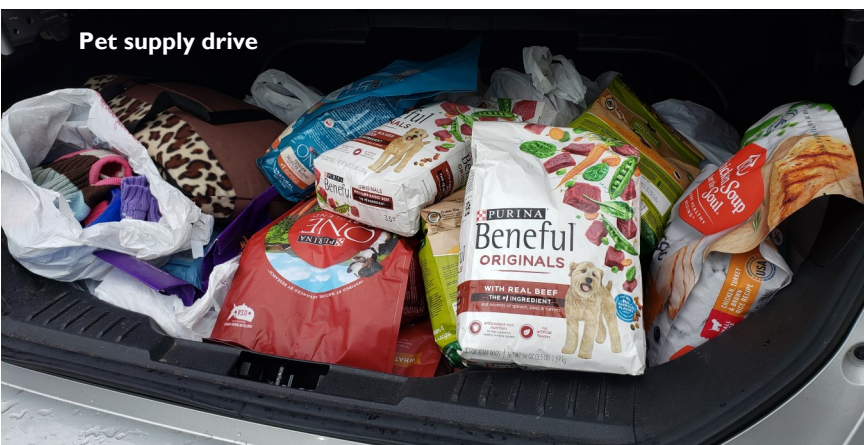
~Linda Schesso

Then on July 28, we hosted a food & school supply drive. Donations were dropped off at the PAUMC parking lot. The food was then delivered to Park Avenue UMC for a food distribution event serving residents along the Lake Street corridor; while the school supplies were delivered to VEAP for distribution to Bloomington students.



Donation Drive Updates

This summer, the Mission Outreach Team has coordinated donation drives for three separate distribution events. The first was a pet supply drive June 20. We collected donations at The PORT and then took them to Lake Harriet UMC for sorting and distribution at an event at the Division of Indian Affairs for residents along the Lake Street corridor.



We celebrate YOU during AUGUST

If you have a birthday during the month of August but your name isn't on our list, PLEASE LET US KNOW, so we can update our records for next year.



01 - Darlene Solheim	13 - Becky Rice	25 - Joe Matton
02 - Isabelle Swenson	14 - Ethan Runck	- Luke Rice
06 - Barb Deese	- Helen Witt	- Terry Wells
08 - Jean Moore	16 - Joell Anderson	26 - Lynn Livingston
- Jason Thompson	18 - Scott Rice	27 - Blessing Wilson
09 - Carol Emdy	- Chrissy Wells	30 - Jim Anderson
10 - John Perry	22 - Paul Richardson	- Annie Comee
11 - Floyd Ekstrom		- Marcie Huser
		- Carol Zaagsma

Address Updates

Amelia Liu
2551 38th Ave NE #02-310
Saint Anthony, MN 55421

Merlin & Linda Gilbertson
11041 Gulf Reflections Dr. #406
Fort Myers, FL 33908
(Merlin & Linda are spending the rest of the summer at a temporary address in Minnesota, so are using their Florida address for all mailings now and through the winter)

Caregivers Support Group

While rewarding, caregiving can also require a lot of energy and a new set of skills you are unaccustomed to using. The Caregivers Support Group was established to support one another and share resources.

This group is open to everyone who is currently a caregiver or anticipates being in that role soon. It's an open group, so you may attend as your schedule allows. And it's a perfect opportunity to invite a neighbor or coworker who might benefit from a supportive small group as well.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 13, from 6:30-8:00 via Zoom videoconference. Here are the log-in details to join the call:

- To access the call via a web browser, click on this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83813056852?pwd=Z0lPcEhZNktBQmhUR0U0bWdnMlJEdz09>
- To access the call via Zoom app on tablet, smartphone or pc: enter the Meeting ID: 838 1305 6852; and Password: 175871.
- To call in via telephone without video access (rates may apply): Dial 1(312) 626-6799 and follow the prompts. Meeting ID is 838 1305 6852 and Password is 175871.

Caregiving is hard work. Take a little time to renew with others in similar situations. Contact Linda Schesso with questions.



Virtual Coffee Fellowship

The Congregational Care Team and Pastor Carol will host a Virtual Coffee Fellowship via Zoom on Sunday, August 23, 2020, from 10:30-11:15 am. Participate as a way to connect with your church friends!

There are several different ways you can participate:

- To access the call via a web browser, click on this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87278726473?pwd=VFJ4UmhocTdKbnY1N1VpbkR0dnQyQT09>
- To access the call via Zoom app on tablet, smartphone or pc: enter the Meeting ID: 872 7872 6473; and Password: 616761.
- To call in via telephone without video access (rates may apply): Dial 1(312) 626-6799 and follow the prompts. Meeting ID is 872 7872 6473; and Password: 616761.



\$20K Grant to Provide Community Aid in Wake of George Floyd's Death

The United Methodist Church's General Board of Global Ministries has given a \$20,000 grant to the Minnesota Conference that will be used to provide counseling, housing assistance, and food to Twin Cities residents heavily impacted by the uprising following George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police.

The grant is specifically to be used for trauma-informed healthcare, rental and housing assistance, and food and hygiene items. Funds will be used alongside money collected as part of Bishop Bruce R. Ough's "[Just Love](#)" special appeal.

"It is our responsibility as persons of faith, and particularly as followers of Jesus in the Methodist tradition, to address the pervasive pandemic of racism," Ough said when announcing the special appeal last month.

Rev. Kevin Schill, who is retired, is leading a "Rapid Response Team" that was formed in the days after Floyd's death as churches and individuals sought ways to assist in rebuilding the community. In recent weeks, he has spent significant time connecting congregations wanting to help with immediate needs they can address—like providing food to Minneapolis food shelves. (A [closed Facebook group](#) specifically for Minnesota United Methodists has become the go-to place for sharing needs and opportunities; note that you'll need to provide your church name and pastor's name to join.)

Just this morning, Schill visited a newer homeless encampment after a local woman saw The United Methodist Church's anti-racism billboards and asked the conference to help. Schill came away with a list of items urgently needed—everything from trash bags and garbage cans to clothing, blankets, and insect repellent—and he's working to connect churches wanting to help with the opportunity to provide these items.

Meanwhile, Schill and other Twin Cities leaders are also in the process of convening a team that will develop a longer-term approach to assessing needs and distributing conference funds to help address them. The team will include leaders of churches on the frontlines

providing assistance as well as leaders of color directly impacted by systemic racism and the recent uprising.



Photo by Chad Davis

Schill points out that grocery store closures in the days after Floyd's death exacerbated economic challenges many were already experiencing amid the COVID-19 pandemic and have left a significant number of families in a precarious financial situation and without access to essential items. Schill fears a "tsunami of housing instability" when a governor's order halting evictions expires in the coming weeks or months.

What remains to be determined is the best role for the church in addressing these problems on an ongoing basis—and that's something the team being formed will need to explore. For example, Schill said it's unclear at this point whether conference funds would be used to provide direct support to people needing assistance with rent or to partner with other organizations that are actively addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in other ways.

Schill's hope is that the team being formed will not only be a bridge to help the church meet vital community needs but also that it can identify and facilitate some of the deep and systemic changes the church needs to make in order to truly be anti-racist.

"How do we show up as church to speak to issues of housing instability? How do we show up as the church to speak to issues of racism and violence against people of color?" said Schill. "It gets at the very heart of our call to be the church in our neighborhoods and to be responsive to those whose voices have been at the margins for far too long. As the church, how do we listen to those voices and walk alongside them as the body of Christ? It's a very hopeful opportunity for us to grow, to listen, and to be the body."

Christa Meland is director of communications for the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>TUNE IN FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP ONLINE @ 10:00 AM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.youtube.com/c/PortlandAvenueUnitedMethodistChurch • https://www.facebook.com/PortlandAvenueUMC/ 						
2 10:00am Online Worship/ Communion	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 10:00am Online Worship	10	11 PRIMARY ELECTION	12	13	14	15 Newsletter Deadline
16 10:00am Online Worship 11:00am Congregational Care Videoconference	17	18	19	20 6:30pm Caregivers Support Group Videoconference	21	22
23 10:00am Online Worship 10:30am Virtual Coffee Fellowship	24	25 5:00pm Cornerstone Shelter Meal (Delivery)	26	27	28	29
30 10:00am Online Worship	31					

Portland Avenue United Methodist Church
8000 Portland Ave S, Bloomington, MN 55420



GIVE+
Electronic Giving Options



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE EXPEDITE

Join us for online worship on Sundays at 10:00 am
~~Sunday School (9:00 am) and Coffee Fellowship (9:30 am)~~ suspended until further notice

Staff

Rev. Carol Zaagsma (Pastor) carol.zaagsma@paumc.org (cell phone for emergencies 651-329-7878)

Kathryn Quam (Administrative Assistant) paumc@paumc.org

Open Position (Youth Director)

Peggy Larson (Music Director) peggylarson@comcast.net

Dale Miller (Accompanist) miller.daler@gmail.com

Judy Richardson-Mahre (SonRise Singers Director) jembrm@charter.net

Mary Nelson (Handbells Director) nelsonc2m@aol.com

Paul Herrmann (Custodian) 612-916-3376

Church Office E-mail: PAUMC@paumc.org PAUMC Website: www.paumc.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PortlandAvenueUMC/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/PortlandAvenueUnitedMethodistChurch>

PORTLAND AVENUE UMC's RETURN TO IN-PERSON MINISTRIES OVERVIEW (as of July 23, 2020)						
	WORSHIP	SPIRITUAL GROWTH	CONGREGATIONAL CARE	MISSION OUTREACH	MEETINGS	OFFICE
PHASE ZERO "At Home" Mar 13-Apr 25	In-person worship suspended <i>(written materials only at sanctuary; music recorded in sanctuary; video recorded at home; pre-recorded video uploaded to YouTube & Facebook for 10:00 am release).</i>	In-person education suspended Sunday School (<i>print materials mailed to children</i>) Youth (<i>videoconference</i>) Confirmation (<i>videoconference</i>)	In-person events suspended Pastoral Care (<i>via telephone</i>) Address directory (<i>mailed to every household</i>) Facebook connections (<i>Touch Base Tuesday & Say Hi Friday</i>) Funerals (<i>Graveside or limited to 10 inside with masks & physical distancing; no hymn singing; no meal</i>)	In-person events suspended Holy Week challenge for VEAP Operation Sunshine (signs on Portland Ave)	In-person meetings suspended <i>(some canceled; others held via video conference).</i>	Open Mar 15-28 Closed during stay-at-home order March 29-April 25. (<i>Mail picked up at post office.</i>)
PHASE ONE "Do No Harm" Apr 26-present (anticipate Labor Day)	In-person worship suspended <i>(written materials to 28 people; music recorded in sanctuary with distancing; video recorded at home; pre-recorded video uploaded to YouTube & Facebook for 10:00 am release).</i>	In-person education suspended Sunday School (<i>print materials mailed to children</i>) Youth (<i>videoconference</i>) Confirmation (<i>videoconference</i>) 8-week Vital Conversations on Racism small group (<i>videoconference</i>)	In-person events suspended Pastoral Care (<i>via telephone or in-person by appointment with masks & distancing</i>) Facebook connections (<i>Touch Base Tuesday & Say Hi Friday</i>) Initiating PORT Pals (<i>pairs assigned to call each other</i>) Funerals (<i>Graveside or limited to 10 inside with masks & social distancing; no hymn singing; no meal</i>)	In-person events suspended Pet supply drive for Lake Street Food drive for Park Ave UMC distribution event School Supply drive for VEAP Cornerstone catered dinner boxes	In-person meetings suspended <i>(held via video conference).</i>	Open for telephone inquiries only April 26-May 30. (<i>Baby gates prevent people from entering offices; cleaning protocol initiated at beginning and end of each shift.</i>) Phone appointments encouraged May 31-present; drop-ins are accepted.
PHASE TWO "Do Good"	In-person worship suspended <i>(written materials to 28 people; explore live stream capabilities to occur at 10:00 am with worship team present in sanctuary with distancing & masks when not singing or speaking).</i>	In-person suspended Sunday School (<i>explore videoconference</i>) Youth (<i>videoconference</i>) Confirmation (<i>classes completed in June 2020</i>) Small Groups (<i>videoconference</i>)	In-person events suspended Pastoral Care (<i>by appt. with masks & distancing</i>) Facebook connections (<i>Touch Base Tuesday & Say Hi Friday</i>) PORT Pals (<i>two people assigned to call each other</i>) Funerals (<i>Graveside or limited to #TBD inside with masks & social distancing; no hymn singing; explore live stream; no meal</i>)	In-person events suspended Opportunities TBD	Video-conference meetings remain the norm. Small committees may meet in-person in large room with masks and distancing.	Office hours maintained <i>(baby gates in place for distancing, and masks on in all common areas; cleaning protocol at beginning and end of each shift).</i> Phone appointments encouraged; drop-ins are accepted.

	WORSHIP	EDUCATION	CONGREGATIONAL CARE	MISSION OUT-REACH	MEETINGS	OFFICE
<p>PHASE THREE</p> <p>“Love God, Love Neighbor”</p> <p><i>The question is not so much when, but how to resume safely.</i></p>	<p>In-person worship resumes with masks & distancing (<i>written materials offered upon request; live stream continues</i>).</p> <p>Initial prohibitions or safety precautions expected for choir; hymn singing; unison speaking; greeters; ushers; welcome; offertory; fellowship; number attending; and cleaning of sanctuary, restrooms & common areas upon arrival and departure.</p>	<p>In-person education resumes with masks & distancing</p> <p>Sunday School (<i>currently exploring options for one-room Sunday School during worship</i>)</p> <p>Youth (<i>currently exploring options with youth & parents</i>)</p> <p>Worship to receive Confirmations into membership (<i>arranged with families as in-person worship resumes</i>)</p> <p>Small Groups (<i>resume as scheduled in fall & spring</i>)</p> <p>Initial prohibitions or safety precautions expected regarding masks, distancing, and serving snacks.</p>	<p>In-person events resume</p> <p>Pastoral Care (<i>by appt. with masks & distancing</i>)</p> <p>Facebook connections (<i>as applicable to ministries</i>)</p> <p>PORT Pals (<i>two people assigned to call each other</i>)</p> <p>Funerals (<i>Graveside or limited to #TBD inside with masks & social distancing; hymn singing once deemed acceptable; meals once deemed acceptable; live stream if family requests</i>)</p> <p>Initial prohibitions or safety precautions expected for social events such as BINGO, game night, etc. (<i>masks, distancing, number attending, length of event</i>).</p>	<p>In-person events resume</p> <p>FMSC, Simpson & Cornerstone events scheduled as organizations allow</p>	<p>Committees may meet with masks and distancing; with some prohibitions possible due to number of attendees.</p> <p>Video-conferencing remains available.</p>	<p>Office hours maintained</p> <p><i>(baby gates in place for distancing, and masks on in all common areas; cleaning protocol at beginning and end of each shift).</i></p> <p>Phone appointments encouraged; drop-ins are accepted.</p>

Assumptions:

- All guidelines comply with MN Department of Health & CDC guidelines, as well as the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- Transitions from one phase to the other (or back again) are guided by the Governor, Bishop, Pastor and PAUMC Church Council, being mindful of the safety and comfort level of participants, as well as what is gained or lost in the transition.
- Each ministry area is responsible for creating and executing detailed written processes that comply with MN Department of Health & CDC guidelines, as well as the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, in consultation with Pastor, prior to promoting an event.
- Excellent on-line ministries are necessary going forward, in addition to in-person ministries.
- Building partners are responsible for their own phased plans and protocols based on MN Department of Health & CDC guidelines, as well as the Governor’s orders.

Note: Sub-committee was established at the July 23, 2020, church council meeting to consider detailed steps necessary for our congregation to progress to Phase 3 / return to in-person ministries. Members include Linda Schesso, Kathy Swenson and Barb Andrus with consultation with Pastor Carol.