

THE PORTLIGHT

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



2020 Breakthrough Prayer

Bishop Bruce R. Ough

O God, our God, you have reconciled the world through your Son, and you have filled me with your Holy Spirit so that I might be equipped and empowered to bear witness to your love and light.

As Jesus identified his vocation to heal a broken world, so also may I identify and embrace my vocation: "To preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

I lift into your loving presence, gracious God, those known and those unknown to me who live on the margins and in the shadows of society—the poor, the orphan, the immigrant, the widow, the beaten-down, the addict, the forgotten and lonely.

Give me, O Giver of Life and Hope, a heart that longs not for wealth or fame, but only for You and your upside-down kingdom. Grant me strength and courage to bring those who alienate into right relationship with those who are alienated so that all may know your reconciling love. Guide my every action to be in accord with your continuous and costly commitment to justice, peace, and health in the world you love so much.

By the in-breaking and in-dwelling power of your Holy Spirit, I go forth today and every day to Be the Light and Live Hope!

In the precious name of Jesus, Amen.

October 2020

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

The **PORT**
A safe harbor along life's journey.

Every year we pastors have a performance check-in with our district superintendent. It's a time when we talk about the goals we had with our congregations and how we've been progressing on them. It's probably no surprise that this year's conversation focused quite a bit on the pandemic.

I'm quite sure I don't need to tell you about any of the many challenges the pandemic has brought. But what was interesting was my district superintendent talking in terms of a marathon versus a sprint.

So I've been thinking about that since our meeting. You see, both sprinters and marathon runners are athletes, but they prepare their bodies and configure their strategies very differently based on the type of race they are going to run.

Sprinters practice again and again and again how quickly they can react to the starting gun. The difference between first and second place in a sprint is often a fraction of a second, so stride length, arm movements and body posture are key areas of focus in training for a race. Sprinters race short distances, and while capable of running long distances, doing so doesn't really help their training since speed is more important than endurance in a sprint.

Marathon runners focus their training on endurance... measuring the amount of time their muscles can perform based on your production of lactic acid. They also have to conserve energy so they have it for the end of the race. Because of this, their training focuses a lot on these two factors, and not so much on bursts of speed.

It's not much of a stretch to see how living with this pandemic is going to be more like a marathon than a sprint. And while I'm neither a sprinter or a marathon runner, I do know that planning for the long haul requires patience and persistence...patience enough to handle the length of time this is going to take, and persistence enough to stick to the plan long enough for it to work.

Harvey Deutschendorf wrote an article for Fast Company magazine a few years back in which he identified seven habits of highly persistent people. Several of the habits relate to vision and drive or desire, all of which serve as a means of motivation. While the article didn't go in this direction, this first group of habits is what, to me, relates to our faith. God is a source of our vision, and the closer our relationship with God, the more in-tune we are with God's vision for the world, and the more motivated we will be to work for what matters.

Some of the other habits deal more with our confidence and discipline, which both serve to help us stay on course. And a third category of habits relate to support, in particular having role models that act as guides and mentors. The last category of habits is perhaps my favorite, as it relates to our commitment to learning and our ability to adjust and adapt. I think this last category is instrumental in maintaining perspective and in preventing fracture when under stress. Perhaps these habits, along with our faith, hold the key to navigating through the marathon ahead.

We read the following in Hebrews 12:1-2: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

I suspect most of our congregation does not identify as either a sprinter or a marathon runner. And yet we find ourselves in a pandemic that requires many marathon-running skills. May we lean on one another, while growing in our faith, on the way to the finish line together, no matter how far down the road that may be.

In the race with you,

Pastor Carol



Pastor Carol Out of the Office

Please note that I have scheduled time away from October 10-25. For pastoral care emergencies, please contact our PAUMC Council Chair, Kathy Swenson, at (612) 209-4559 as your first call for help. I have arranged for worship with several colleagues that I'm very excited for you to hear from. Seriously, you won't want to miss on-line worship in the coming weeks! I'll look forward to being back again on Monday, Oct. 26.

Sunday School News

We have ordered fall curriculum for Sunday School and look forward to trying our new plan of having Sunday School during worship once it's safe to return in-person ministries. Our teachers are missing Sunday School with you, but it will be fun to be back together when we can.

Youth Group News

We have a new schedule for MS/HS youth this program year! Once it is safe to return to in-person ministries, we plan to have Sunday School on the first and third Sundays of the month, starting at 10:00 am; so it will run concurrent with worship. Youth group will continue to meet on the second and fourth Sunday evenings from 6:00-8:00 pm. Stay tuned!

Conference-wide News Related to COVID-19 *by Bishop Bruce R. Ough*

Friends in Christ,

As you know, this has been an intense season for our churches. But you have risen to the occasion by pivoting to move your ministry online. You have responded to the call for racial justice and played a key role in rebuilding our communities following the killing of George Floyd. You have been diligent in developing practices to keep your congregation safe amid COVID-19 by caring for one another and gathering in creative ways. I am so thankful for your perseverance and innovation in the face of these unrelenting challenges.

As we turn the page to fall, a time when we're used to kicking off a new year of programming and children's ministries, we find ourselves still in "[Stay Safe MN](#)" mode and needing to continue to significantly limit our in-person gatherings. Everything is different, and it looks like this will be our new normal for the foreseeable future. As we head into this new season, I want to offer some reminders and encouragement:

1) Pandemic fatigue is real, but we cannot relax in our efforts to keep people safe. With cold weather approaching, it will be tempting to think we can be the exception—that we can gather like we used to and no one will get sick. Unfortunately, there are tragic stories of church-related coronavirus outbreaks from all over the country. Gathering indoors in groups is still a high-risk activity. It is critical that you, as leaders, have developed your [COVID-19 preparedness plan](#) in accordance with our [phased re-gathering plan](#) and that you hold to it for the sake of the most vulnerable in your midst. We are called to make our love for one another incarnational. We do this by protecting each other and our neighbors. If you and your church leadership team or council has made a thoughtful and prayerful decision to resume in-person worship, your preparedness plan needs to include:

- a. requirement for masks to be worn by all persons
- b. people staying at least six feet apart
- c. strict adherence to the [state-mandated capacity limits](#) (we strongly recommend staying well below them)
- d. no congregational singing
- e. cleaning and sanitizing public spaces between each group gathering

2) Christmas is coming. As painful as this is to think about, it is unlikely that we will be able to have a large number of people together, shoulder to shoulder, on Christmas Eve holding candles and singing "Silent Night." Take a moment to lament this loss. And then, remembering Mary and Joseph who left what was comfortable to go on a journey to Bethlehem, start planning for how you can help bring Christmas to your community in fresh and new ways. Things won't look and feel like they used to, but that was the case at Jesus' birth too—he was God's in-breaking in startling new ways. We have an important opportunity to try something completely different that reaches people in our mission fields in new ways.

3) Continue to be kind and generous to yourselves and one another. This is a hard time for all of us. Give yourself grace. We are all doing the best we can, and we are all making decisions based on our particular context. Be wise about how you steward your time, resources, and energy. Ask the tough questions that lead to clarity about where to invest and where to let go so that you stay true to your mission while continuing to adapt and refine your methods for growing in love of God and neighbor, reaching new people, and healing a broken world in this unique season of ministry.

I pray for you and our world daily. May we be people who offer light and hope to a weary world!



Mission Outreach

Help Fund a Newly Created Scholarship

Years of inequitable treatment of black people have led to major life issues for the black community. The legacy of that treatment is poverty, limited housing, limited job opportunities, reduced educational opportunities and unfair treatment by police.

These issues are real in today's society. And they are widespread. The problems are particularly strong in the Twin Cities. It will take a very long time to make the systemic changes necessary to bring a level of equity to the black community.

To begin to make those changes will take a massive investment. But we as concerned citizens have limited resources to affect the systems that need to be changed.

There is one small action we can take that has the potential to make a difference. A problem we hear about is that black students are hampered in their learning by not having black teachers as models for learning.

We can contribute to a fund that provides scholarships to black students who want to become teachers.

Portland Avenue UMC will provide the funding for the scholarships (as much as we collectively contribute) while the scholarships themselves will be administered by the Education Foundation of Bloomington, as they have the administrative process already in place for distributing scholarships.

Please join me in contributing to this worthy resource that has the promise to make a real difference for the black community now and for generations to come.

Donations to the fund may be mailed to the church office, made payable to PAUMC with "Bloomington Scholarships" in the memo line; or otherwise given securely online at paumc.org/giving (select the fund listed as "Bloomington Scholarship").

~Russ Cox & the Mission Outreach Team

"Parade of Donations" Recap

Thank you to everyone who participated in the VEAP food drive drop-off on September 30 in honor of Linda Schesso's retirement. We had a wonderful turnout with a fairly steady stream of cars coming from 6:00-7:30 pm to wish Linda well while dropping off donations for the local food shelf.

Not surprisingly, Linda said that one of her favorite things about her career has been the kids, especially "seeing their a-ha moments when the lightbulb goes off and they really get something...and, of course, the families." After 34 years of caring for children, she has cared for many sets of siblings over the years.

Linda remarked that the turnout for this mission outreach event was "just fantastic. It shows we really are a congregation that cares."

Fantastic, indeed! In addition to the monetary donations collected (totaling \$2,630 with contributions still arriving), we loaded two vehicles with food. One of those vehicles had 520 pounds of donations (two full pallets with sides plus one shopping cart). Needless to say, VEAP was overjoyed. While these donations were being dropped off, car after car was pulling up to get food.

Thank you to the Mission Outreach Team for coordinating this project, for your participation, and for Linda Schesso, whose heart is so big for our neighbors in need that she wanted to celebrate her retirement by doing something kind and meaningful for others.



We celebrate YOU during OCTOBER

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

01 - Beth Cameron	11 - Jeff Avery	19 - Jake Rasmussen
03 - Lynn Furda	- Ginny Karki	20 - Joanne Sanftner
04 - Daniel Dray	16 - Emilia Runck	24 - Jerry Solheim
07 - Tim Hagerty	- Steve Soucy	- Gloria Wilson-Bahun
	17 - Janea Medzagoh	26 - Marlus Jackson
	18 - Fran Carpenter	



Address Updates

Joan Whitehead
1568 Quarry Rd. #103
Eagan, MN 55121



Virtual Coffee Fellowship Sunday, October 25, 2020 10:30-11:15 am

Join your friends from church on this virtual call to see how everyone's doing! We use the Zoom platform, so if you're new to Zoom, you can watch a tutorial here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>

To join the Zoom Meeting via web browser:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84845572316?pwd=d0M0SHNWc1NRNnBmeW9DYjIkc21BZz09>

To join via the Zoom App:
Meeting ID: 848 4557 2316 Passcode: 986300

To join via telephone (rates may apply):
(312) 626-6799
Meeting ID: 848 4557 2316 Passcode: 986300

Caregivers Support Group

If you are at a point where you are offering extended care for a loved one, whether that be a spouse, child or parent, then the Caregivers Support Group is for you!

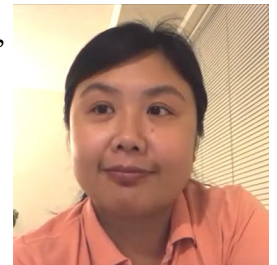
We are just beginning to read a new book, *Self Compassion* by Kristin Neff, PhD, so now is a perfect time to check out the group. We plan to discuss Part 1 of the book at our next meeting, Thursday, November 19, from 6:30-8:00 pm.

We generally begin meetings with a check-in from each

person to support one another in our challenges, and then we'll spend some time discussing what we read from the book. All are welcome, so please contact Linda Schesso at schesso77@yahoo.com for more information or to be included in the meeting notice.

Welcome to our Newest Member

Gang Liu (Amelia) became a member of The PORT on Sunday, September 27. She moved earlier this year from Los Angeles, California, where she attended Whittier First United Methodist Church.



Amelia values a congregation that likes to do something to make a difference. She experienced this at the church in Whittier, CA, in the ways they donated warm clothes to a nearby homeless shelter and fulfilled wish list items from neighbors in need at Christmas. She also appreciated worship, where she felt the Spirit's presence and enjoyed inspiring messages from the Bible and a beautiful choir with a lot of musical instruments.

Amelia notes that Portland Avenue United Methodist Church is a lot like the church she enjoyed there, and she is pleased to have found us. She's looking forward to many opportunities to make a difference now in Minnesota with The PORT.

Amelia works as an accountant; and when not at work or church, she really enjoys hiking and all the beauty of creation, and recently put together a model ship in a bottle as a project for stress relief. Welcome to Amelia!

2020 Annual Holiday Bazaar "COVID-Style"

It's Happening: The PORT's 2020 Annual Holiday Bazaar "COVID-Style!" Here are the dates:

Friday, November 13
9:00 am - 6:00 pm
&
Saturday, November 14
9:00 am - 3:00 pm

We are working hard to get the details finalized but as we told you last month, we are planning a pared-down event in order to provide the safest conditions for our guests and our volunteers. With that, we will also need to monitor the number of people shopping at any given time, and are fine-tuning those details.

We will not be offering a bake sale this year, nor will we be selling food from our kitchen, the Bazaar Bistro. Instead we are planning to sell a few commercially-made food items including the fruitcake and some other treats. We had hoped to offer Freddy's lefse again, but sadly we learned the Freddy's Company has closed down for the rest of the year so we were not able to place an order.

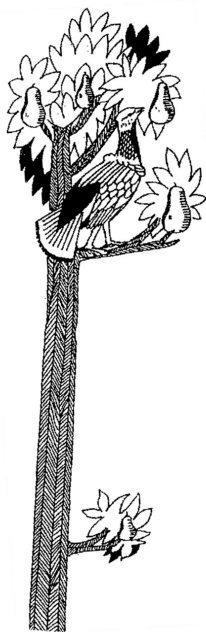
The handmade ornaments and crafts that we are known for will be available, as well as a Silent Auction.

Silent Auction Details:

As in years past, we are looking for themed gift baskets and donated goods from local businesses for the silent auction. If you or your family have donated a gift basket before, please consider doing one again.

We will not be distributing the actual baskets in an effort to minimize contact points. Instead, we ask that you come by the church with your Silent Auction donations for **Curbside Drop-off on Sunday, October 11 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.** A volunteer will take your donations and a small team will get the baskets made up.

Don't want to shop? Great! We will take cash donations or gift cards as well, using both to make up additional baskets. **We won't be able to accept Silent Auction goods after Oct. 11th.** We hope you understand that we need the time to get things prepared in a new way for this year.



Handmade Craft Items:

Are you wanting to donate your handmade items for the sale? Terrific! If you haven't already been working on some projects to donate, please do get started now!

We are asking for all completed handmade craft donations to be delivered via **Curbside drop-off on Sunday, November 1 from 4:00 -6:00 p.m.** Again, that deadline is firm. In the past, we have accepted completed projects right up to the last minute but we can't do that this year.

If you would like to help with wood-cutting, light sewing (blanket stitching, etc.), or painting wood parts please contact any of the folks below and we will get you a project. We have several things on the back burner waiting for just the right person to help.

If you are interested in finding a craft project that you can make at home with your own donated materials and time, please let us know and we will be happy to share some ideas with you!

Volunteering:

Of course, we will need some volunteers to work at the Bazaar too! We will send out an email in the next couple of weeks so be thinking about whether you are willing to work and what you would be comfortable doing. We absolutely understand if you aren't comfortable being present at the event, but if you are, we would love to have you.

Come be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime event! And until then, please add this event to your prayers. This year more than ever we all need something positive to bring our community together. Please pray for the safety of our workers and our guests.

The 2020 Holiday Bazaar Sub-Committee:

Lynn Livingston (952) 797-2645
Lori Livingston (612) 240-2640
Kathy Swenson (612) 209-4559
Barb Andrus (612) 619-5785
Judy Richardson-Mahre (612) 202-6457



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <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/ </div>		1	2	3
4 10:00am Online Worship/ Communion	5	6 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp	7	8	9	10
11 10:00am Online Worship	12	13 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp	14	15 Newsletter Deadline	16	17
18 10:00am Online Worship	19	20 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp	21	22	23	24
25 10:00am Online Worship 10:30am Virtual Coffee Fellowship	26	27 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp	28	29 7:00pm Church Council Videoconference	30	31 HALLOWEEN

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>