

# THE PORTLIGHT

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



June 2026

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## ***Ah, Summertime...***

***The busy weeks slow down, the days get longer, school is out, and the outdoors is calling. Whether you're camping, traveling, swimming, gardening, or relaxing by the fire, remember to spend time with God.***

### ***Special Sundays in June @ The PORT:***

**Please join us on 6/7 at 10:00am for Graduate Recognition and Reception of New Members. A cake reception will follow during coffee time.**

**Join us on 6/21 at 10:00am as we celebrate Father's Day with "Donuts for Dudes".**

***We hope you will safely enjoy the slower pace of summer, and we look forward to seeing you soon at the PORT.***



## **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.

# Pastor's Message

Hello Portland Avenue UMC,

It is hard to believe that we are already entering June, and we have officially reached the end of my first year of ministry here at The Port. It was a great year, and I really appreciated the opportunity to start figuring out the rhythms of the church, and I am looking forward to what year two will bring.

We do have a big day planned on June 7. This was not part of plan at the beginning of the year, but we are going to turn June 7 into a "Day of Celebration" at The Port. We are going to honor our graduates, we are going to welcome new members into the church, and we are going to do our celebration of Memorial funds (which we usually do Memorial Day weekend). June 7 will also be the kickoff to our new sermon series.

Since Easter, we have been looking at the actions of the early church in the Book of Acts and considering what we can learn from them and how they might apply to the church today. We looked at the very first Christian sermon in the Bible by Peter, the priorities of the early church – teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. We looked at the story of Stephen, the first martyr, the story of Paul engaging with people in Athens, and then we concluded with Pentecost Sunday. After a look at the Trinity on Trinity Sunday (May 31), we are now ready to move forward with a new sermon focus.

Throughout the year I generally like to follow the Lectionary, but I will often take a brief break during the summer to explore unique topics that don't generally come up during the year, often involving specific people or events in the Bible. However, this year will be different for two reasons. First, as you may know, I am going to be gone for the month of July. I will be spending four weeks in England. In the beginning of that time I will be participating in a "Wesley Pilgrimage" which is offered to Methodists throughout the world. I am especially looking forward to this trip, as I like history, I like England, and I will greatly appreciate the opportunity to dig deeper and learn more about John Wesley and the history of the Methodist

Church. I will write more about this pilgrimage in the July Portlight. Following the Pilgrimage, my family will meet me in England and we will have a vacation. I will return in August raring to go!

In addition to that interruption, I also found that I really liked what the Lectionary lined up for the rest of the summer and into the fall. So I am going to do a sermon series, but it will be a little different than I have done in the past, and it will be continuous from June 7 all the way until the end of October. And the series will be an extended look at Genesis and Exodus. Over five months (four months of sermons) we are going to follow the story of the origins of the Jewish people, of the people of Israel. We will start with promises that God makes to Abraham of a Promised Land, and we will conclude with the death of Moses right as the people are about to enter that promised land for the first time.

Throughout this time, we will cover many of the familiar stories you may remember from the Old Testament, but we will tell them in the unified story of God's promise, God's faithfulness, and God's deliverance. Everything that God provided to the people of Israel, he provides to us even to this day.

Here is a what we will cover:

God Promises the Land; God Promises Descendants; God provides for Ishmael and Hagar; Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac; Jacob wrestles an Angel; Joseph sold by his brothers; Jacob and his sons enter Egypt; The birth of Moses; The burning bush; The ten plagues and the Passover; The parting of the Red Sea; Manna in the desert; Water from the rock; The Ten Commandments; The Golden Calf; and the Death of Moses.

These are just the highlights of the journey from Abraham to the Promised Land, but it is an incredible story of the work of God and our heritage of faith. I hope you will join us starting in June.

Blessings to you all and I'll see you on Sunday,

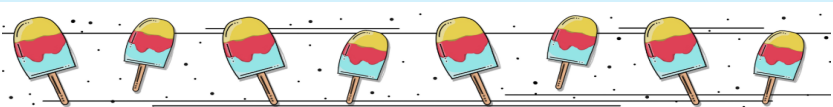
Pastor Steve





# Spiritual Growth

## June Schedule for Sunday Volunteers

	June 7	June 14	June 21	June 28
<b>Welcomers</b>	Merlin & Linda Gilbertson	Heather Anderson Bill Baker	Heather Anderson Mike Moreland	Steve & Kathy Soucy
<b>Ushers</b>	Scott Swenson Don Anderson Laurette Lawson	Bruce Benson Wayne Andersen Sharon Beckler	Bruce Benson Jocelyne Medzagoh Pam Rose	Bruce Benson Trent Olson Pam Rose
<b>Reader</b>	Carl Stockert	Neil Anderson	Trent Olson	Melinda Matton
<b>Sound</b>	Eric R-M	Tim Madsen	Intern Paddy	Eric R-M
<b>Media</b>	Nancy Hagerty	Tim Madsen	Barb Andrus	Nancy Hagerty
<b>Livestream</b>	Tim Hagerty	Scott Swenson	Clint Andrus	Tim Hagerty
<b>Closer</b>	Wayne Andersen	Wayne Andersen	Wayne Andersen	Don Anderson
<b>Counters</b>	Merlin Gilbertson Wayne Andersen	Merlin Gilbertson Wayne Andersen	Trent Olson Pam Rose	Merlin Gilbertson Pam Rose
<b>Communion Stewards</b>	Daniel & Tracy Baker			

## Congregational Care

### Birthday Blessings, June Friends!

02 - Blaine Daniels	09 - Josh Rice
03 - Dianne Madsen	16 - Blake Mahre
03 - Julie Rasmussen	18 - Bryan Darnell
06 - Clint Andrus	19 - Harvey Erstad
07 - Paul Swenson	21 - Alina Schroeder
08 - Peggy Erstad	24 - Ann Benson
08 - Guy Moore	29 - Heather Anderson



The other kids always hated it when little Moses came to the pool.

## Communications at The Port

In the middle of May, we sent out a brief survey regarding The Portlight and communications at The Port. The reason it was sent now, as had been previously mentioned by Lori, is that we are going to be forced to make some changes to the Portlight due to the expiration of software. We will need to make some changes by October. Instead of merely finding a new software option and continuing as-is, we decided this would be a good opportunity to take stock of the congregation and make sure that our current communications are meeting everyone's needs.

The early returns of the survey indicate there is a desire for more communication options, namely a weekly email and a text message option for specific news and reminders. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be working to incorporate both of those options and have them available for members and friends of The Port.

These options – weekly email and text messages – are, of course, not new or radical communications options, but they are still the ones that will allow us to reach the most people in the easiest manner with the most up-to-date information. Regarding the Portlight, we are still thinking of ways to incorporate longer articles and announcements on a regular basis. We hope to release the new communications options by mid-August. Pastor Steve

## Reflection & Vision from our Intern Paddy:

I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve as a Media and Technology Intern at Portland Avenue United Methodist Church. Throughout this internship, I learned a great deal about technology, communication, teamwork, and how ministry can positively impact the community. This experience allowed me to grow both professionally and personally while working alongside a supportive and mission-driven church team.

One of the most meaningful parts of this experience has been helping prepare for future outreach and community engagement efforts. Looking ahead, I am excited about continuing outreach work during the summer through P.O.R.T. Outreach, which will begin in June. We are currently creating a variety of outreach programs and social events that will provide

opportunities for people in the community to connect, build relationships, and participate in meaningful activities throughout the summer.

P.O.R.T. Outreach will focus on creating organized social events with a strong framework that encourages involvement, support, and community growth. As these events begin to gain traction, we also hope to increase donations and raise support for our monthly causes, helping us make an even greater impact in the community.

I truly appreciate the opportunity Portland Avenue United Methodist Church has given me. I have learned so much through this experience, and I look forward to continuing to serve, contribute, and help expand the church's outreach efforts in the future.

Paddy



## Outreach at The Port

I'm following up on the article above by our wonderful intern Paddy. He will be winding down his official internship at The Port at the end of May. He has had a great impact on the church, and a great impact on me personally.

Among the work he has done is a full review of our technology and communications, which is helping to shape the ways we are moving forward with communications changes this summer (see article top of this page), he has served on our Sunday tech teams, he has created additional social media accounts, and we have started a new podcast as well. All of this work has been a great benefit to the church so far this year.

The other work that Paddy has done, more on his own than in direct service to the church, is develop relationships in his communities and considered ways to reach out to young adults in way to bring together people in events and fellowship. He has started a group called "Port Connections" which is designed for 20-30 year olds to gather once or twice a month outside of church through events like movies, dances, meals, etc.

These gatherings will not be explicitly church related, but The Port will sponsor these gatherings. I want all of you to consider supporting these efforts, either through donations, through helping with food set up (when appropriate), and most importantly, by sharing the information about the group with any young adults in your life who might be interested. Stay tuned over the first couple of weeks in June for more details to come.

Pastor Steve

## The Story Behind the Last Supper Sculptures

*For over 30 years, a wooden Last Supper sculpture has been hanging on the wall in the south narthex, just outside our Sanctuary. Did you know it was designed and handmade by our former pastor, Rev. Clifford Wittstruck, who served our church from 1974 to 1980? Clifford made hundreds of these sculptures in a wide variety of sizes. They were commissioned by many churches across various denominations, and they were purchased by individuals to display in their homes.*

*Last June a call came into the church office from a man who inherited one of these sculptures after his mother passed away. He offered to return it to us so that we could find another use for it. His timing was perfect, as we gifted it to Pastor Reiser last June to thank him for serving as our interim pastor. When the piece was delivered to the office, there was a plaque accompanying it that told the meaning behind its design. I thought it would be of interest to share its meaning with our congregation. The plaque read:*

### The Last Supper

This portrayal of the Last Supper uses a cross to represent each person. The large cross at the center symbolizes the person of Jesus Christ, while the small crosses represent the twelve disciples. Please notice that the fourth cross from the left is upside down. It represents Peter, who felt unworthy to die upright like his Master, and chose instead to die head down. The cross just to the right of the large cross represents John, "the beloved disciple." The cross to the far right, at the end of the table with the money bag, represents Judas who betrayed his Master for thirty pieces of silver.

The disciples from left to right are: Andrew, Philip and Bartholomew; then Peter, Matthew and James the Younger; John, James the Elder, Thaddeus, and Simeon; Thomas and then Judas.

The crosses and table are oak, and were cut from the disassembled altar rail which was used in the Fellowship Hall of the Portland Avenue United Methodist Church, Bloomington, Minnesota, prior to the building of the new worship area. The chalice and bread were cut from walnut, and the money bag from cedar.


No attempt was made to make the small crosses perfect or free from flaws. This was to suggest that God can use imperfect individuals for a great work; in fact, that is all God has with which to work.

Designed and made by  
Clifford M. Wittstruck, Minister  
Portland Avenue United Methodist Church





**TUNE IN FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP ONLINE @ 10:00 AM:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/PortlandAvenueUnitedMethodistChurch>

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:30pm Church Council (zoom)	2 6:30pm Bazaar Wrkshp	3 12pm Noon Prayers	4	5	6
7 <b>Graduate/New Members Sunday</b> 10:00am Worship / Communion 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	8 6:30pm Worship Team (zoom)	9 6:30pm Bazaar Wrkshp	10 12pm Noon Prayers	11	12	13
14 10:00am Worship 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	15 <i>MN UMC Annual Conf.</i> 6/15 - 6/18	16 <i>MN UMC Annual Conf.</i> 6/15 - 6/18	17 <i>MN UMC Annual Conf.</i> 6/15 - 6/18	18 <i>MN UMC Annual Conf.</i> 6/15 - 6/18	19 <b>July Newsletter Deadline</b>	20
21 <b>Father's Day</b> 10:00am Worship 11:00am Coffee Fellowship "Donuts for Dudes" 	22	23 6:30pm Bazaar Wrkshp	24 12pm Noon Prayers	25	26	27
29 10:00am Worship 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	29	30 6:30pm Bazaar Wrkshp				

**Could you serve on Sunday mornings? Please ask any volunteer or contact the church office.**

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 in-person and livestreaming worship on Sundays at 10:00am.  
Sunday School classes for children and youth are on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

**Staff**

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