

# THE PORTLIGHT

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



December 2025

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## Advent Begins...

Nov. 30 - 1st Sunday of Advent:  
"Hope" - Isaiah 2:1-5

Dec. 7 - 2nd Sunday of Advent:  
"Peace" - Isaiah 11:1-10

Dec. 14 - 3rd Sunday of Advent:  
"Joy" - Isaiah 35:1-10

Dec. 21 - 4th Sunday of Advent:  
"Love" - Isaiah 7:10-16

Sunday morning worship services are at  
10:00am, followed by Coffee Fellowship.  
Come as you are. All are welcome here!



## Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Dec. 24 at 10:00pm: "The Birth" - Luke 2:1-14

A family-friendly service with candlelight worship and plenty  
of Christmas music. All are welcome.

## 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 to December. We had so much going on with the push to prepare for the Bazaar while simultaneously working on the Pew Upgrade Project, that we looked up and it is now Advent. Though I will say that I did appreciate the chance we had to take a breath with our Day of Thanksgiving. I am so thankful for Barb Andrus and Janene Haugen sharing testimonies of the way that God has worked in their lives and the way that the church can come together to support those who are going through so much. Their stories really show the church at its best, and really, truly what a special place The Port is to so many. It is my honor to be your pastor.

During the service we also had the chance to share some of the highlights of things that have happened this year, as well as plans for 2026. We have talked a lot about the Bazaar and about the Pew Project, but I also want to highlight a few other things. We have restarted our SupPORT Dinners on the third Wednesday each month. These have been great, and I am thankful for all who help prepare and serve the food. We have had over 20 people each meal, and it is a great time of fellowship and food. We will have another meal on December 17, and we will keep it going in the new year. I encourage all of you to consider attending these meals if you are able. It is a great chance to come together as a church outside of Sunday morning.

Our Day of Thanksgiving was also our Pledge Sunday. Many people were able to submit their pledges for 2026. For those of you who weren't there, feel free to mail your pledge or drop it off at the church or in the offering on an upcoming Sunday. Pledges are important to allow good and responsible budgeting for the year ahead. I am happy to say that through 11 months of 2025, we are in OK financial shape. We came into the year with a significant deficit budget and we have been able to close much of that gap thanks to the generosity of so many of you. In December we will have our annual March to the Manger special offering on the last Sunday of Advent, December 21. You should receive a letter about this in the beginning of December. I encourage you to consider a donation to help us finish the year strong, fully close the budget deficit, and set us on a good path for 2026.

Another feature of the Day of Thanksgiving was to decorate the sanctuary and hallway as we prepare for Advent and Christmas. I will say personally that Advent is my favorite time of the church calendar. I love

this season of anticipation and preparation as we lead to the celebration of the birth of Jesus, the coming of light into the world. I really appreciate the way that the Lectionary handles this season and the readings each week. This year, we will follow the usual Hope – Peace – Joy – Love Sundays, and we will focus on readings from Isaiah. If you are looking for a deeper dive into Advent, I encourage you to join us on Monday evenings from 7-8:30 as we participate in the Bishop's study, based upon the book, "A Child is Born".

Of course, the church doesn't stop with Christmas. Our Mission Outreach for December is serving at Feed My Starving Children on Saturday, December 27. Then, as we enter 2026, we will, as mentioned, continue with our SupPORT Dinners on the third Wednesday each month. And I am planning on starting a Bible Study on Tuesday evenings at 7pm. Our first gathering will be Tuesday, January 13 in the Wesley Room. I hope you will consider joining.

Finally, I want to mention the next project we are looking at here at The Port. We should complete the Pew Project the first week of December. We will take a little bit of a breather, and then I would like to focus on storage and some of the underutilized rooms in the Education Wing. My plan is that we, along with our partner churches, will take some real time to take an inventory of those rooms and decide what we need to keep that will help us to move forward as a church. We are very blessed to have partner churches and to have many of our rooms used, but we also need to think about what type of church we want to become. We want to be good stewards of the physical building and to maximize its use in ministry and in support of the church. A good, thorough, cleaning and organization will help us to prepare for what is to come.

There is a lot happening at The Port. We are entering this most blessed time of Advent and Christmas, and we have much to look forward to in 2026.

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



Pastor Steve





## **Bishop's Advent Study: A Child is Born, Starts December 1, 7-8:30pm**

Join us on Mondays during Advent from 7-8:30 for the Bishop's 2025 Advent Study on the book "A Child is Born". We will meet in the Wesley Room on December 1, 8, 15 and 22. The class will start with a teaching from the Bishop via Zoom, and then we will have a time of discussion.

This study will dive into the narratives of Isaac, Ishmael, Moses and Samuel to reveal how they foreshadow the Christmas story. We will have copies of the book available at the first meeting.

## **March to the Manger 2025**

The church will be sending letters in early December regarding our annual March to the Manger special offering that will take place on the last Sunday of Advent, December 21, during our regular worship time. This special offering encourages us to give beyond our regular offerings to help support the ministry and the mission of THE PORT. We have had a very solid year of giving, and this additional offering will allow us to finish strong and fully fund our budget for the year.

If you would like to contribute but are unable to attend worship that Sunday, you can mail or drop off your special gift to the office, or bring it with you to Christmas Eve worship.

## **Pew Restoration Project Update**

We are getting very close to finishing the Pew Restoration Project that was started at the end of October, with an anticipated end date of December 5. I am very thankful for all who have contributed their time to help with the work of dismantling and reassembling the pews each week. It has been hard work, but hopefully a labor of love for all who helped out. I encourage you to check out the pictures of the updated pews, but even better, come visit the church and see them for yourself!

As part of the funding for the project, we used \$15,000 from our undesignated Memorial Funds. Our Council Chair, Kathy Swenson, did a great job of reaching out to the families to let them know that their memorial funds that were used for this purpose. Here is a list of the memorials that were used: Ken Anderson (2010); Rev. Charles Nelson (2010); Marian Olson (2012); Robert Baker (2013); Betty Cornforth (2015); Mary Jane Anderson (2015); Nancy Slagg (2016); Thomas Emdy (2017); Jody Thames (2017); Larry Seldon (2017); Ted Murphy (2018); Roger Mahre (2018); Joell Anderson (2022); and Paul Richardson (2024).



## Mission Outreach

### Our Mission Outreach Event for December

Please join us for our annual food packing event at Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). Your hands are so essential in the fight against world hunger – you make it possible for us to keep sending nutritious meals to starving kids worldwide.

**WHEN:** Saturday, December 27th

**TIME:** 9:30-11:15 AM

**WHERE:** Eagan Packing Center - 990 Lone Oak Road, Suite 136,  
Eagan, MN 55121

**REGISTER ONLINE:** Using the Join Code V1EPMG, please register at:  
<http://www.fmsc.org/join-group?joincode=V1EPMG>

A sign-up sheet is at the Welcome Desk. Don't wait, we only have 22 spots reserved.



## Holiday Bazaar Recap and Thank You's

It's hard to believe our 51st Holiday Bazaar is over! We're happy to share that with our sales we exceeded our goal of \$10,000 that was promised to round-out the pew refinishing project. The road construction didn't scare folks away as much as we had anticipated, and the beautiful weather was a bonus! As early as the next morning, plans and revisions were being discussed for next year's Bazaar, which will be held on November 13 and 14, in case you would like to get it on your calendar!

Everyone involved in the Bazaar genuinely loves this ministry. It is our one big chance to share our congregation with our community, and we don't take that lightly. Much thought goes into the items created in our workshop sessions, as we collaborate to make old ideas new again. We also meet to review the menu in the Bistro to be sure we are serving great food, and to decide if it's time to make any changes. Nancy Hagerty tracks every item served so that we can look back to see what was in demand and what didn't sell as well, as that helps us decide when it may be time for an update. Such was the case this year when we decided to add the Wild Rice Soup to the menu, and it proved to be very popular. Bottom line, we seek the help of all of our PORT members, and we were excited that some people helped out this year for the very first time!

What really made this year's event special was seeing it through the eyes of Pastor Steve. His excitement and anticipation experiencing the Bazaar for the first time made us all work a little harder. He checked in on us during our workshop sessions, and offered help and support throughout the fall, which is some-

thing we hadn't experienced in quite some time. To hear his gratitude for all of the work that everybody was doing was a boost for all of us. During the two days of the Bazaar, Pastor Steve was actively present and meeting and talking with our guests and our members. Thank you Pastor Steve!

There are so many people to thank, and I hope I don't forget anyone. The workshop team began meeting weekly in March and took only a few weeks off. Thank you to Kathy Soucy, Melinda Matton, Tracy and Dorothy Baker, Nancy Hagerty, and Linda Knopp. We had a lot of fun, and these ladies worked hard getting the Fellowship Hall ready on Wednesday and Thursday. Thank you also to Kathy Swenson and Judy Rudie for helping with our displays. We also thank the folks who helped us with hauling tables and display pieces and who covered the tables and decorated our room. And for the crew who came back at the end to help us get the room ready for Sunday services again.

Thank you to Sue Wells who took over running the bake sale with the help of LaVonne Robinson. This is a huge job and you ladies were there some long hours.

Thank you to our tireless Bistro crew who did such a fabulous job of cooking and serving all of that food! Nancy Hagerty, Kathy & Scott Swenson, Barb & Clint Andrus, Blaine Daniels, along with the servers and cleanup help. You all did an outstanding job!

Editor's Note: Thank you to Lynn Livingston for her tireless coordination and leadership of the Holiday Bazaar! It's a year-round part of her life, constantly looking for ideas and thinking about what we could do differently. Lynn, you are very appreciated!

# Thank You; Christmas Puzzle

We want to extend a huge thank you to Melinda Matton, our Master Gardener, for sharing the last of her garden's flowers for the season with us! Melinda won many ribbons at the State Fair and other flower shows this season. She is so talented! Then she took the time to make nearly 20 bouquets that graced our altar and were able to be taken home by our members. They were so beautiful! Thank you for sharing with us Melinda!



## Christmas Word Find

G C P M E H E F F N Y Y A S E  
 V F I O G K N O C Y R R I L B  
 Z H S J Z X U H E G A B Z N B  
 H A T I D U R X S Z M E I P E  
 R P L R S I L E N T N I G H T  
 R K O Q S N E M E S I W A J H  
 Y L X T Y Z S W C Z S P E P L  
 M I M F H F N P N S J V E K E  
 J A B T T B A R I O R S X Z H  
 S A I Y L Y T E K V O F L W E  
 H A Y E Y T I G N J I O E E M  
 F A M K R H V N A E V U G P E  
 M A A N W A I A R S A S N O E  
 C I H O T C T M F U S O A H F  
 D J E D K Q Y S V S W T E K Q

JESUS  
 MARY  
 JOSEPH  
 WISEMEN  
 MANGER  
 NATIVITY  
 BETHLEHEM  
 CAMEL  
 DONKEY  
 STAR

HAY  
 ANGEL  
 FAITH  
 HOPE  
 FRANKINCENSE  
 MYRRH  
 SILENTNIGHT  
 LORD  
 SAVIOR  
 CHRISTMAS



# Spiritual Growth

## December Schedule for Sunday Volunteers

	Dec. 7	Dec. 14	Dec. 21	Dec. 28
<b>Welcomers</b>	Heather Anderson Bill Baker	Heather Anderson Mike Moreland	Heather Anderson Mary Nelson	Tim & Nancy Hagerty
<b>Ushers</b>	Scott Swenson Melinda Matton Kathy Soucy	Wayne Andersen Sharon Beckler Don Anderson	Bruce Benson Pam Rose Mike Moreland	Bruce Benson Wayne Anderson Sharon Beckler
<b>Reader</b>	Trent Olson	Kathy Soucy	Melinda Matton	John Hepola
<b>Sound</b>	Eric Richardson- Mahre	Tim Madsen	Eric Richardson-Mahre	Eric R-M
<b>Media</b>	Barb Andrus	Tim Madsen	Nancy Hagerty	Barb Andrus
<b>Livestream</b>	Clint Andrus	Scott Swenson	Trent Olson	Clint Andrus
<b>Closer</b>	Steve Knopp	Harvey Erstad	Scott Swenson	Don Anderson
<b>Counters</b>	Pam Rose Trent Olson	Pam Rose Trent Olson	Pam Rose Steve Soucy	Pam Rose Steve Soucy
<b>Communion Stewards</b>	Daniel & Tracy Baker			

### Christmas Eve Volunteers Dec. 24, 10:00pm

**Welcomers:** Steve & Kathy Soucy  
**Ushers:** Scott Swenson, Kathy Soucy,  
**Reader:** Neil Anderson  
**Sound:** Tim Madsen  
**Media:** Nancy Hagerty (No Livestr)  
**Closer:** Steve Knopp  
**Counters:** Pam Rose

## Congregational Care

### Happy Birthday, December Friends!

**02** - Steve Knopp      **18** - Karen Groth  
**04** - Frederick Wilson-Bahun  
**12** - Leo Castro      **24** - Mary Murphy  
**15** - Daisy Castro      **24** - Lori Moreland

If you have a birthday during the month of December, but your name isn't on our list, please call or email the office so we can update our records for next year.



**TUNE IN FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP ONLINE @ 10:00 AM:**

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



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Nov. 30</b>  <b>1st Sunday of Advent: Hope</b>                      10:00 am Worship                      11:00 am Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p><b>1</b>                      6:00pm Church Council                      (Wesley Rm. &amp; Zoom)                      7-8:30pm Advent Bible Study</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b>                      12:00pm Noon Prayers with                      Pastor Steve (Wesley Room)</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>7</b>  <b>2nd Sunday of Advent: Peace</b>                      10:00 am Worship / Communion                      11:00 am Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p><b>8</b>                      7-8:30pm Advent Bible Study</p>	<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>10</b>                      12:00pm Noon Prayers with                      Pastor Steve (Wesley Room)                      6:30pm Sunrise Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>
<p><b>14</b>  <b>3rd Sunday of Advent: Joy</b>                      10:00 am Worship/Sunday School                      11:00 am Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p><b>15</b>  <b>January Newsletter                      Deadline</b>                      7-8:30pm Advent Bible Study</p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b>                      12:00pm Noon Prayers with                      Pastor Steve (Wesley Room)                      5:30pm SupPORT Monthly                      Community Dinner</p>	<p><b>18</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>
<p><b>21</b>  <b>4th Sunday of Advent: Love</b>                      10:00 am Worship                      11:00 am Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p><b>22</b>                      7-8:30pm Advent Bible Study</p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b>                      10:00pm Christmas Eve                      Candlelight Service</p>	<p><b>25</b>                      Merry Christmas</p>	<p><b>26</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>
<p><b>28</b>  <b>First Sunday After Christmas</b>                      10:00 am Worship                      11:00 am Coffee Fellowship</p>	<p><b>29</b>                      7-8:30pm Advent Bible Study</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>31</b></p>			

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.

**Staff**

Rev. Steve Nuessle (Pastor) [PastorSteve@paumc.org](mailto:PastorSteve@paumc.org). Office: 952-888-6070; Cell: 952-210-0409  
Lori Livingston (Administrative Assistant) [paumc@paumc.org](mailto:paumc@paumc.org) Office: 952-888-6070  
Judy Richardson-Mahre (Sonrise Director) [jembrm@charter.net](mailto:jembrm@charter.net)  
Greg Jurek (Custodian)

Church Office E-mail: [PAUMC@paumc.org](mailto:PAUMC@paumc.org) PAUMC Website: [www.paumc.org](http://www.paumc.org)

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

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