

THE PORTLIGHT

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



January 2026

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Happy New Year...

Let us pray for direction as



we plan for the year ahead.

2026

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 now 2026! This represents the halfway point of my first year here at The Port, as well as the conclusion of my first Advent and Christmas. I am so thankful for all that these six months have represented for me and my family, and I am so thankful for all of the support of the people of The Port. It has been great to walk alongside you all so far for even this brief time. I really enjoy watching people share their gifts, share their hearts, and share their hunger for their faith. I look forward to building on all of that for 2026. I believe that God has many great things planned for The Port this year.

I have very enjoyed stepping into some of the traditions here at The Port. November 2025 was my first time at the Holiday Bazaar and it was everything that I imagined it would be. It was such a blessing to see so many people do so much work for the months leading up to the event, and then to see even more people step up to help and serve in the weeks and days leading up to the days. And all of this despite the construction that limited our access. It was a wonderful event, a true blessing to so many in the church and in the community.

We had a wonderful season of worship and music during Advent. It started with a great day of decorations on the service of Thanksgiving (including wonderful testimonies), great singing from Sonrise, great music from the band, and great piano contributions from Krista and Marianne. Janene Haugen and the others did a wonderful job coordinating two different programs and the kids stepped up and did great as well. So wonderful to see.

Another highlight for me was the completion of the Pew Project. That ended up being a little more labor intensive than I anticipated in dismantling and putting back together the pews, and I was so thankful for the many people who contributed their time and their talents to the project. I am especially thankful for Don Anderson, who was the only person to be there every day of the project, but also great work from Scott Swenson, Tim Madsen, Daniel Drey and many others who helped. I am thankful to Potter's Church of their generous contribution, as well as some help from their congregants. And I am thankful for the Bazaar Committee for their willingness to contribute, as well as the Memorial Fund. We also had wonderful partners who did great work with the cushions and the staining of the pews. The hard work and the expense were worth it, as the sanctuary is much improved.

We also had the completion of the sign to replace the previously damaged sign in front of the south entrance on the parking lot side. Thank you to Harvey Erstad and Scott Rice for their work in getting that completed. In

addition, the Trustees did their usual great work in the keeping the building going despite some problems that arose later in the year. In 2026, we are planning a project to clean up and reorganize the storage at the church, as well as doing a review of security system and some potential opportunities for upgrades that will improve security and make it easier for our ministry and building partners to access and use the building.

But more than anything, I am excited to see where God is leading this church in 2026. I have sensed that there is more of a hunger and an openness to do the work of the Lord and to discern what it is that God is calling The Port to specifically. We have had several conversations, and those will continue, but I have great confidence the Lord will direct us down the correct path and open the correct doors (or close the ones that we are not to follow).

There are two main ways that we can help the process of discernment – prayer and scripture. I want to challenge the congregation to do two things this year. First, I would like us to commit to more prayer. I do not have a specific goal here, I will leave this to your discernment, but I have two personal prayer goals/opportunities. I will pray each morning for 15 minutes. I will set a timer and be faithful. In addition, I will maintain the Wednesday prayer time, each Wednesday at noon. I would encourage those who are able to join me. My second challenge is to have people in the congregation read (or listen to) the entire Bible in 2026. There are several reading plans and podcasts that will help facilitate that process. If you are consistent, it is about 15 minutes a day to get through the Bible. If you need ideas or suggestions, please let me know, but that is my challenge – 15 minutes of prayer and 15 minutes of scripture each day in 2026.

I am excited for the new/continuing opportunities as well. We will continue with our SupPORT Community dinners each third Wednesday at 5:30. I encourage all to attend those – for great food and great fellowship. We are starting a Tuesday night Bible Study in January. And we are bringing back our Game Night the last Saturday in January. I anticipate more opportunities for fellowship, for fun, but also in service.

There is so much more I could say about what is coming in 2026, I do hope you are as excited as I am for what is to come.

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

Pastor Steve



January Schedule for Sunday Volunteers

	Jan. 4	Jan. 11	Jan. 18	Jan. 25
Welcomers	Harvey & Peggy Erstad	Steve & Linda Knopp	Heather Anderson Mike Moreland	Daniel & Tracy Baker
Ushers	Bruce Benson Melinda Matton Kathy Soucy	Wayne Andersen Sharon Beckler Laurette Lawson	Trent Olson Don Anderson Jocelyn Medzagoh	Scott Swenson Pam Rose Kathy Soucy
Reader	Katelyn Hagerty	Frederick Wilson- Bahun	Pam Rose	Neil Anderson
Sound	Eric Richardson- Mahre	Tim Madsen	Eric Richardson-Mahre	Eric Richardson-Mahre
Media	Nancy Hagerty	Tim Madsen	Barb Andrus	Tim Madsen
Livestream	Tim Hagerty	Scott Swenson	Clint Andrus	Trent Olson
Closer	Clint Andrus	Wayne Andersen	Harvey Erstad	Don Anderson
Counters	Pam Rose Mike Moreland	Pam Rose Mike Moreland	Pam Rose Steve Soucy	Trent Olson Steve Soucy
Communion Stewards	Daniel & Tracy Baker			

Congregational Care

Address Change:

Marilyn Anderson has a new apartment #216. Please make this correction in your Membership Directory.

In Sympathy:

Longtime member Annie Comee passed away on 12/10/25. A memorial service was held on 12/19 at The Rivers Senior Living in Burnsville, where she had resided for many years.

Longtime member Joy Plourde passed away on 12/14/25. There is no memorial service planned at this time. The family asked us to remember Joy's many years of service to the church. She was a Sunday School Teacher for many years, and she also worked part-time in the church office.

Please keep these families in your prayers.



Congregational Care

Birthday Blessings to our January Friends!

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 01 - Kumba Sheriff | 10 - Jael Medzagoh | 22 - Daniel Matton |
| 02 - Don Anderson | 12 - Chaz Brobst | 26 - Gregory Christensen |
| 02 - Kathy Soucy | 12 - Inge Lystad | 27 - Daniel Wilson |
| 04 - Pastor Steve | 14 - Nancy Stinson | 28 - Traci Darnell |
| 05 - Emery Mahre | 15 - Merlin Gilbertson | |
| 06 - Marilyn Anderson | | |
| 08 - Megan Mahre | | |

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



If you have a birthday during this month but your name isn't on our list, please let us know, so we can update our records for next year.

Mission Outreach

January's Mission Outreach Campaign

This month we are collecting new or gently used winter gear (snowpants, boots & gloves) for the students of Valley View Elementary School, serving children in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Donations may be placed in the shopping cart in the narthex or dropped off in the church office.

If you prefer to give financially, please make checks payable to PAUMC and note "Valley View School" in the memo line.

Thank you, as always, for your generous giving and faithful support.

—Nancy Hagerty and Pam Rose,
Mission Outreach Co-Chairs

Help us
WARM UP
Valley View Elementary by donating
gently used or new winter clothing.

SPECIAL SUNDAY

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"
— REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

Celebrate Love in Action on Human Relations Day

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed of a world filled with love, justice, and unity. On Human Relations Day, we can bring that dream to life by supporting ministries that strengthen neighborhoods and transform lives.

Join us on **January 18th** where together, we can fund programs like faith-based volunteer initiatives, youth organizing, and community development.



Meet our new Media & Technology Intern



My name is Paddy, and I am currently pursuing a graduate degree in Computer Information Systems. My academic studies focus on how technology, information systems, and digital tools can be used to support organizations, strengthen communication, and improve the way people connect and share information. I have a strong interest in using technology thoughtfully and strategically to serve both organizational needs and broader communities.

I am honored to serve as Portland Avenue United Methodist Church's Media and Technology Intern. In this role, I am gaining hands-on experience by applying my academic background in a real-world ministry setting. My responsibilities include working with media and audiovisual systems, providing technology support, assisting with digital communications, and helping ensure that technology is used effectively to support worship, outreach, and daily church operations.

This internship provides a valuable opportunity for me to bridge classroom learning with practical experience. I am learning how technology can enhance ministry, increase accessibility, and foster stronger engagement within the church and the wider community. I am also developing professional skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and adaptability while working alongside staff and volunteers.

Through this experience, I hope to continue strengthening my technical skills, deepen my understanding of how technology can serve ministry and community needs, and grow both personally and professionally. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn, serve, and contribute at Portland Avenue United Methodist Church, and I look forward to being part of the church's ongoing mission and work.

"Please greet Paddy and give him a warm welcome to The PORT!"

New Bible Study Starting Tuesday, January 13

I am excited to announce that we will be starting a new Bible Study at the Port on Tuesday, January 13. We plan to meet every week at 7pm in the Wesley Room. All are invited to attend. We will determine the style of the study during our first meeting. We will consider three options:

- A deeper dive into Sunday's sermon and the text.
- A look at the other Lectionary readings of the week.
- A study of a book of the Bible unrelated to the Lectionary readings.

I am excited for this new Bible Study. Several people at The Port have approached me and desired a deeper look at scripture and I can sense a hunger for scripture from the congregation as we continue to discern the next steps of the ministry of The Port. From a personal perspective, I enjoy small groups and discussions as a way to consider scripture more deeply, as well as a way to consider how scripture applies to our lives today and how it can help us to discern the next steps in our faith.

I look forward to seeing you all on Tuesdays! ~ Pastor Steve

Christmas at The PORT / Family Game Night

Thank you to all who ordered a poinsettia plant(s) for the Christmas altar this year. And thank you to Melinda Matton for coordinating. The altar was very pretty and greatly added to the beauty of the season.



On Sunday, 12/14, our PORT kids did a great job singing some Christmas songs and sharing the good news of Jesus' birth with us.

Thank you kids!



Pictured are:

Left: Aylin, Shiloh

Back Right: Richard, Theo, Eric

Front Right: Ari, Winston, Daniel



Join us at The PORT for Family

G₂ A₁ M₃ E₁ N₁ I₁ G₂ H₄ T₁

Saturday, January 31st, 4:00–7:00pm

Bring a friend, your favorite game, snacks to share, and your own beverage. Let's shake off the winter blahs and have some fun!

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

JANUARY

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 10:00 am Worship / Communion 11:00 am Coffee Fellowship	5	6  EPIPHANY	7 12:00 pm Prayers with Pastor Steve	8 12:00 pm Prayers with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Sunrise Rehearsal	9	10 Church Council Planning Retreat (WR) 9:00am - 1:30pm
11 10:00 am Worship / Sunday School 11:00 am Coffee Fellowship	12	13 6:00 pm Trustees Mtg. 7:00 pm Bible Study	14 12:00 pm Prayers with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Sunrise Rehearsal	15 February Newsletter Deadline	16	17
18 Human Relations Day 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Coffee Fellowship	19  MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. Day	20 7:00 pm Bible Study	21 12:00 pm Prayers with Pastor Steve Support Monthly Dinner - 5:30pm - 7pm	22	23	24
25 10:00 am Worship / Sunday School 11:00 am Coffee Fellowship	26 6:30 pm Worship Mtg. (WR)	27 7:00 pm Bible Study	28 12:00 pm Prayers with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Sunrise Rehearsal	29	30	31 PORT Family Game Night, 4-7 pm 

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 Kindergarten through 8th grade are on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

Staff

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