

THE PORTLIGHT

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



February 2026

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Valentine's Day Is for Christian Love

Valentine's Day is for honoring love;
To show those we love we care.
Red hearts with tender sentiments
We send, our love to share.

So on Valentine's Day we're reminded
Of our very first Christian goal:
To love the Lord with all our heart
And all our mind and soul.

To love our neighbor as ourselves
We are also told to do,
So let's live our love by the Bible;
It's God's word, flawless and true.

If we give this Christian Valentine first,
We'll never run out of love,
For infinite love will come to us
From God in heaven above.

By Joanna Fuchs

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,

Well, it has certainly been a month here in Minnesota. I am sure that after the events of the last 5 years, from the terrible, destructive riots of 2020 to the terrible tragedies of last summer and fall, that we would be able to have a little bit of a respite. But that is not our fate, and our state is now once again the center of international news.

As we all know, the immediate cause of the situation is political. It is due to a change in tactics around immigration enforcement as conducted by the Federal Government. Like many political issues, this has become divisive and is creating separation among people, in families, among friends, even in the church.

As Christians, it is natural for us to think about what our response should be, to look to the Bible for answers. Unfortunately, this is one of those issues where there is not clear guidance on how to proceed from a policy position. There is no "Biblical" immigration policy. The Bible does not tell us answers to questions such as how many immigrants are the correct amount to let into a country each year, which immigrants we should prioritize to let into the country, what is the correct response to those who are currently in the country, regardless of what path they chose to get here.

The answers to these questions are not easy, they involve the balancing of many factors, and Christians of good conscience and authentic faith can come to different conclusions. As your pastor, I have shared a little bit more on this issue than I typically have done for political issues. Partially this is because these events are hitting so close to us, and partially because the specific issues that have arisen are issues that are of foremost concern for me personally.

I do not expect people to have the same political beliefs that I do, and I realize that people in this congregation have a mix of political views. I find that to be a beautiful thing. In divided times, I still believe that the church should be a place that is open and inviting to all people, no matter what their political beliefs are. It does not mean that we will all agree, but it does mean that we should be accepting of those that come to different conclusions than we come to ourselves.

I firmly believe that the church has a role to play in helping to bridge some of the gaps and division within our country and our community. If the church cannot be a place for people with differences to come together, what hope is there for any other aspects of society? While there are certainly people who are passionate about politics and their positions, I sense that many people are growing increasingly weary and are looking for a new way. That way is faith in Jesus Christ.

I personally have strong beliefs about immigration and about the role of government in society, but this does not mean that my views are "correct" or that they are the views that should be shared by all Christians. I am not an activist, I am a pastor. I try very hard not to be partisan. I will confess that I have probably not handled this perfectly. When I have made statements, I am certain that my personal beliefs have influenced what I have said from the pulpit.

I want you to know that that is not my intention. I realize that as pastor I have a unique position and a unique authority. But that position and authority are not automatic, it must be gained through trust and honesty. Please know that I am doing the best that I can, and that I will not always get it right. However, also know that I really, truly try to seek out the wisdom of the Lord in all things that I do and in all words that I share.

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Some things that I will always advocate for is the dignity of all people regardless of immigration status, advocacy for the vulnerable and the marginalized, the importance of meeting physical needs (such as food and shelter) to the best of our ability, and the supremacy of Jesus Christ over any government or specific political position. As a church, I am trying to focus on these principles. I am especially thankful that people have rallied to support food needs for many people in our partner congregations. We are currently helping 9 different families to make sure that they have food and basic necessities. The needs may change in the future.

The other power that we have as a church is the power of prayer. We should be praying constantly. We should be praying for each other, for our church, for our community, for this metro area, for the state, for the country and for the world. We desire peace, we desire a path forward in some sort of unity. We should be praying for our

leaders that they turn down the temperature and find a way to come to an agreement that will lead to the flourishing of all people in this community.

We don't have all the solutions, we don't have all the answers, but we do have Jesus in our lives. Let us be bold in the ways that we allow him to work in us, and to share with others.

Lent is fast approaching. I have included some words about Ash Wednesday (see page 5) and about some other opportunities to consider during that time. I hope you will consider them, and consider other ways to plug into the church.

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



Pastor Steve



Mission Outreach

The Port's February Mission Outreach campaign is to provide help to the members of our partner churches who share our building. The Brazilian Church of Hope and Iglesia Bethel churches have members who cannot leave their homes right now. Here are four ways to help:

1. Monetary Donations will help to buy food and supplies for these church members as well as restock our pantry for when individuals stop at the church looking for help. If you would like to contribute with cash, please use an envelope and write "Food Help" on it, or with check, write "Food Help" in the memo field. These monetary donations can be dropped in the offering boxes or mailed to the church.
2. Pick up and deliver food and supply donations. The days and times will vary each week, but generally will occur on Fridays and Saturdays.
3. Provide monitoring assistance while they livestream their worship services at the church. If you'd like to know more about this contact Pastor Steve.
4. Bring in paper grocery bags that will be used for the food donations.



Lastly, if you know of an individual in need of this care, please contact Pastor Steve.

Thank you, as always, for your generous support of our monthly Mission Outreach campaigns.

~ Nancy Hagerty and Pam Rose, Mission Outreach Co-chairs

Spiritual Growth

February Schedule for Sunday Volunteers

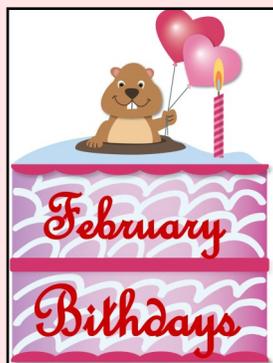
	Feb. 1	Feb. 8	Feb. 15	Feb. 22
Welcomers	Heather Anderson Bill Baker	John Hepola & Kathy Bell	Heather Anderson Mike Moreland	Steve & Linda Knopp
Ushers	Wayne Andersen Don Anderson Melinda Matton	Bruce Benson Kathy Soucy Scott Swenson	Bruce Benson Melinda Matton Jocelyn Medzagoh	Bruce Benson Trent Olson Mike Moreland
Reader	Scott Rice	Kathy Bell	Kathy Soucy	Katelyn Hagerty
Sound	Tim Madsen	Tim Madsen	Eric R-M	Tim Madsen
Media	Nancy Hagerty	Tim Madsen	Tim Madsen	Nancy Hagerty
Livestream	Tim Hagerty	Intern Paddy	Scott Swenson	Tim Hagerty
Closer	Don Anderson	Clint Andrus	Scott Swenson	Steve Knopp
Counters	Trent Olson Wayne Andersen	Pam Rose Wayne Andersen	Trent Olson Mike Moreland	Pam Rose Mike Moreland
Communion Stewards	Daniel & Tracy Baker			

Congregational Care

Birthday Blessings, February Friends!

05 - Trenton Olson
18 - Rod Anderson
18 - Henry Fischer
21 - Lexi Wells

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



Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your kind and generous gifts of appreciation that were recently given to us. It's a great pleasure being a part of this congregation and serving together. We are very grateful for your kindness!

Blessings to you all,

Pastor Steve, Krista, Marianne,
Greg, and Lori



Thinking about Summer Camp?

A variety of camps for youth through adults are available this summer and fall. Brochures are available on the Welcome Desk or you can check them out online at the links below.

(Psst...Grandparents, you can even join your grandkids at a couple of camps!)

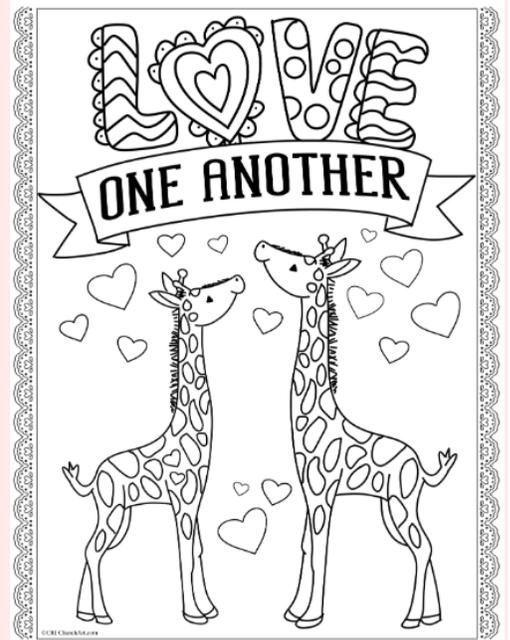


Contact us

camps@campminnesota.org | 855-622-1973
For contact info for each camp, visit
www.campminnesota.org/contactus



Happy Valentine's Day!



Spiritual Growth

Ash Wednesday, February 18

This year, Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, falls on February 18th. This is also the third Wednesday of the month, so we will be combining our usual SupPORT Community Dinner with Ash Wednesday worship.

The plan for the evening is to meet at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall for a light soup supper. When that is completed at 6:30, we will stay in the Fellowship Hall for worship. Our time of worship will include scripture, prayer, some music, a brief reflection on Ash Wednesday, and we will conclude with the traditional disposition of ashes. Worship should last 30-40 minutes.

Ash Wednesday is among the most solemn days on the church calendar, as we start the season of Lent with a time of prayer and repentance. An important part of Lent is to consider a fast. A fast is either giving something up (like a certain food) or adding something to your life (like 15 minutes of daily prayer).

I am planning on a fast this year and I encourage

you to do the same. It can be a time to focus and center us on the Lord during the Lenten season as we work towards the celebration of Easter. Any fast you should do should be realistic, but also something that you will notice, and when you feel the absence, you can remember the Lord and why you are doing the fast.

Let us refocus ourselves this Lenten season and ask for the Lord's guidance in our lives, in the life of this church, and in our community and the wider world.

Here is the sermon plan through Palm Sunday. I will have more information for Holy Week in the March Portlight.

February 22: "The Temptation" Matthew 4:1-11
March 1: "The Mission" John 3:1-17
March 8: "The Women at the Well" John 4:5-42
March 15: "The Man Born Blind" John 9:1-41
March 22: "The raising of Lazarus" John 11:1-45
March 29: "The Entrance (Palm Sunday)"
Matthew 21:1-11

~Pastor Steve

Feed My Starving Children Recap

Thank you to the 24 participants that came to FMSC on 12/27. We had 21 people packing food with 3 people labeling. We had a great time and many told us that this was their favorite Outreach project.

In total, during our session there were 106 volunteers that bagged 25,704 meals into 119 boxes that will feed 70 children for a year! Our group boxed approximately 5,318 meals which will feed 14.6 kids for a year!

Meals you helped pack went to

- Honduras through Cross Catholic Outreach
- Haiti through Food for the Poor
- Burkina Faso through Convoy of Hope





FEBRUARY

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00am Worship / Communion 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	2  6:30pm Church Council (zoom)	3 7:00pm Bible Study	4 12pm Noon Prayers	5	6 National Wear Red Day for Heart Health	7
8 10:00am Worship/Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	9	10 7:00pm Bible Study	11 12pm Noon Prayers	12 March Newsletter Deadline	13	14 
15 10:00am Worship 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	16 	17 7:00pm Bible Study	18 Ash Wednesday 12pm Noon Prayers 5:30pm SupPORT Monthly Dinner 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Service in FH	19	20	21
22 10:00am Worship/Sunday School 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	23 6:30pm Worship Meeting (Wesley Room)	24 7:00pm Bible Study	25 12pm Noon Prayers	26	27	28



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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