

THE PORTLIGHT

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



September 2026

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Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

Hello Friends!



September 13 at 10:00am

It's been a great summer but now it's time to get into the routines of fall. Come back to church to reconnect with friends, reignite your faith, and explore what God has in store for us!

Wear your PORT t-shirts or something colorful. We'll have some special surprises, and we're planning to take a group photo. Hope to see you there!

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

Pastor's Message

Hello Portland Avenue UMC,
Happy Fall everyone! As we turn the page to September, it is common to think that the summer has gone by so fast. In some senses that is true, but as I reflect on my summer, I am pretty pleased with how it unfolded. There are certainly things that I wasn't able to do – including spending as much time on and near lakes as I would have wanted, but overall, it was a great summer.

My kids were able to participate in several meaningful camps, we had some great times at the pool and visiting family. I got to explore some of the parks around my house with our dog, Sadie. My kids got to spend a lot of time playing soccer, their favorite activity. And of course, as I have mentioned before, I was able to spend much of July in England, first as part of the Wesley Pilgrimage and then on a family vacation.

So yes, summer was full and there was much that we did, and things that we missed, but it was a great summer. I am sorry that it is ending, but I am looking forward to having my kids get back into school, and I am looking forward to re-starting the rhythms that come with the fall.

In no place is this more meaningful than getting back into the rhythms of the church. Summer is a slow time at The Port (and many other churches), as many of the people of this church spread all over the state, the country, and the world. There are vacations, visiting family, spending time camping and at cabins and generally outdoors. We have true Minnesotans here.

But it is my hope as summer winds down and we turn to September that we start turning our focus back on the church. I am thankful for all who faithfully serve throughout the summer, and I am especially thankful for those who stepped up when I was gone in July. I want to let you all know that we have great things planned this fall.

First, we are continuing our look at some of the foundational books of the Old Testament. In late August we finished our look at Genesis and started our look at Exodus. We will continue our look at Exodus through the end of October, with some new ideas for November that will lead us to our traditional Advent and Christmas worship.

We are resuming our SupPORT dinners, which meet at 5:30pm the third Wednesday each month. In addition to great food and fellowship, we are also going to include other

activities those nights. In September, at our first SupPORT dinner, I will be sharing about my Wesley Pilgrimage experience, and the main takeaways I had from that time. If you are interested in John and Charles Wesley and the origins of Methodism, and what they mean for us today, I hope you are able to join us that evening. It will be dinner at 5:30, with the teaching starting at 6:30.

We are also going to resume our prayer time and our Bible study. We are still working on the days/times of those two weekly gatherings. We are also planning on Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 24, we're planning for a combined service project with the other UMC churches in the area, likely in October, and we are planning some other ways to bring fun and joy to the church, including during Sunday morning worship. Stay tuned for details.

And of course we are continuing our work and preparation for the annual Holiday Bazaar, taking place this year on November 13 and 14. We will have the usual Bazaar Workshop on Tuesdays at 6:30, and the usual ways to help and serve as we get closer to the dates. (For more information, see the article on page 5.)

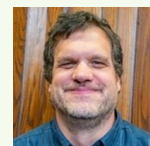
To get this all "officially" started, we will have our usual kick-off on the first Sunday after Labor Day. This year that is September 13. However, we are going to think about it a little bit differently this year. Traditionally, we have had a "Rally Sunday" on that day where we introduced our music and our kids' events. This year, we are going to have a "Back to Church" Sunday.

This is not a significant change from Rally Sunday, but more of a marker that we have had a great summer, we have enjoyed our summer, but it is Fall, and a great opportunity to get back in the habit of being in church, being in fellowship, and exploring the ways that God is working in our lives.

I really want to invite those of you who have been feeling the itch to get back into church, get back into Christian community, that this is the time to do it! This is the time to get back into the habit, and get back into fellowship. We will be taking a church/congregational picture that morning, and we have many other great things planned as well.

I hope to see you all there!

Blessings to you all,
Pastor Steve



September Schedule for Sunday Volunteers

	Sept. 6	Sept. 13	Sept. 20	Sept. 27
Welcomers	Heather Anderson Lynn Livingston	Steve & Kathy Soucy	Heather Anderson Mary Nelson	Heather Anderson, Mike Moreland
Ushers	Wayne Andersen Sharon Beckler	Trent Olson Melinda Matton Kathy Soucy	Bruce Benson Laurette Lawson Mike Moreland	Bruce Benson Jocelyne Medzagoh Kathy Soucy
Reader	Neil Anderson	Pam Rose	John Hepola	Melinda Matton
Sound	Tim Madsen	Eric R-M	Eric R-M	Tim Madsen
Media	Tim Madsen	Barb Andrus	Nancy Hagerty	Tim Madsen
Livestream	Trent Olson	Clint Andrus	Tim Hagerty	Tim Hagerty
Closer	Wayne Andersen	Don Anderson	Steve Knopp	Harvey Erstad
Counters	Trent Olson Wayne Andersen	Merlin Gilbertson Pam Rose	Merlin Gilbertson Pam Rose	Pam Rose Steve Soucy
Communion Stewards	Mike Moreland Kathy Soucy Lynn Livingston			



Birthday Blessings to our September Friends!

08 - Joaquina Lawson 25 - Clara Haugen
 13 - Steven Fisher 27 - Jerry Janes
 18 - Oliver Darnell 28 - Barb Andrus

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



Mission Outreach

September's Mission Outreach focus is continuing to gather school supplies for Valley View Elementary. The details and shopping list are in August's Portlight, with extra shopping lists available on the Welcome Desk. You may also receive an emailed copy of the shopping list by calling the church office. **Thank you for your continued generosity!**



July's Mission Outreach Update: Birthday Cake Bags Overflowing with Generosity

Our July Mission project invited the congregation to assemble Birthday Cake Bags for VEAP — simple kits that help families celebrate a child's birthday with joy, dignity, and a homemade cake. And The Port, you didn't just meet the call. You overflowed it!

We collected 30 fully completed Birthday Cake Bags, each thoughtfully packed with a cake mix, frosting, a disposable pan, plates and napkins, and even a small birthday gift tucked inside.

On top of that, you donated 14 extra cake mixes, 6 frostings, 6 baking pans and 50 of our designer bags, all of which weighed a grand 140 pounds! This ensures VEAP can continue assembling additional kits long after July.

This outpouring of generosity means dozens of families will be able to celebrate a birthday with all the fixings — a moment of joy made possible by your kindness.

Your compassion continues to make a real difference in our community. Thank you for giving so abundantly and helping make birthdays brighter for our neighbors.

~Mission Outreach Coordinators – Pam Rose and Nancy Hagerty



Holiday Bazaar News

Our annual Holiday Bazaar has been held on the second weekend in November for over 50 years. It has quite a reputation, and if you have been to any such sales, it remains unique in that everything for sale is made by our own congregation! We don't rent out space for other merchandise or services. The reason for that is so we can use the proceeds for things needed by our church. Over the years, the Bazaar has funded our commercial kitchen, bought the grand piano, organ and carpet in the sanctuary, built out and furnished the Wesley Room, and so much more. The Bazaar leaders are more committed than ever to have a great sale this year because our building and property needs some help. **We are asking for you to give prayerful thought about how you could contribute to this important event.**

- Would you like to do something creative with a small group? Our Tuesday evening workshops are just the thing! We meet from 6:30-8:15 to talk, laugh and work on projects. It's fun, and we can work with all skill levels. Come when you can.
- Could you purchase items to build gift baskets? We usually have about 30 themed baskets for our Silent Auction. Men, women and children can all benefit from these gifts.
- Do you know someone who would donate a service or give a gift certificate for one? Or do you have something special you could offer?
- Do you bake or make yummy snacks? Our bake sale is a big draw so we always need delicious contributions there! Snack mixes or candies are a hit too.
- Would you give a few hours the weekend of Nov. 13th and 14th to work at the Bazaar? We need popcorn makers, security and carryout help, cashiers, kitchen workers for our outstanding Bistro, and people to man the tables of merchandise. Would you lend a hand?

Our founder John Wesley asked us to do all we can in service to God and the church. This is one great way to honor that. We hope you will join us this year!!

If you have any questions, please contact Lynn or Lori Livingston or Kathy Soucy.



Wesleyan Small Groups

Over the past couple of months, I have spoken about the Wesleyan Pilgrimage that I took in July. I wrote both in anticipation of the trip, as well as a reflection on the pilgrimage after I returned. As I have stated many times, it was a very meaningful and impactful trip for me and has really gotten me thinking about John Wesley and the roots of the Methodist Church. (As a reminder, if you attend our first SupPORT Dinner on Wednesday, September 16, I will be sharing more about the Pilgrimage following the dinner.)

As I reflect on the Pilgrimage, there is one thing that I keep coming back to more than anything else, the idea of Wesleyan Small Groups. Small Groups are a big part of many churches today, across denominations. It is one of the best tools there is for meaningful fellowship among believers, deepening discipleship, and improving connections within a church body. Many of the most successful and growing congregations utilize small groups in some manner throughout the year.

These groups can have many names and functions. They can be "Discipleship Groups" or "Prayer Groups" or "Small Groups" or "Accountability Groups" or "Life Groups" or "Community Groups" or any number of names. Perhaps you have come across one of these names. These groups can have different focuses, they can be organized different ways, and they can have different goals, but they all flow from the original Wesleyan small groups. I have been a part of churches previously that had robust small group ministries, and they were very effective at teaching scripture and prayer, and holding people accountable in their faith, but more than anything they were effective at building community and strengthening the congregation.

I would like you, people of The Port, to consider what it might look like to have Wesleyan Small Groups here. I do not want to consider these groups because they will help us grow, but because they are good. They are good for the church, but more than anything, they are good for you. When Wesley first conceived of these groups, it was in the context of a church (and denomination) that was kind of stagnant and uncertain of what it wanted to do. It had been struggling with reaching people outside of those who were already committed.

When I think of The Port, and in many ways the larger church around the world, I think there is some malaise. There is uncertainty of what is coming next, and there is an overreliance on remembering what came before and thinking of what can be done to return to that "Golden Age." I think this is the wrong way to think about church and the work of God.

The purpose of the Wesleyan small group is to look forward, but revitalizing our faith, and by extension revitalizing our church and our community. The goal of these groups is to form our spirit and our Christian practices, while at the same time caring for each other and being accountable for our faith. This is a process that leads to growth, to energy, to revival, and to doing the work of the Lord. Each group session allows a check-in, how things are going with your soul. It allows for Christian practices of prayer and scripture reading. And it should inspire Christian acts of charity and mercy. When you are more attuned to God through scripture and prayer, and you are more attuned to the struggles and pain of each other, that is when God is ready to move.

There are layers to Wesleyan Groups, from large gatherings of worship (which we currently do on Sunday mornings), to meetings of 10-12 people to check-in, care for one another, and practice good Christian habits, all the way to small bands that really encourage confession and accountability among those that you really trust.

My hope is to start Wesleyan Small Groups in January. I would like to have groups of 10-12 in number that are separated by gender. I believe participation in these groups will be very helpful and energizing for the church, if they are done correctly, providing a chance to deepen our faith and our connection with each other.

I ask that you prayerfully consider a Wesleyan Small Group in January, and I will be sharing more details in the months ahead.

Blessings,
Pastor Steve



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

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



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 10:00am Worship, Communion 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	7 	8 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshop	9	10	11	12
13 <i>Back to Church Sunday</i> 10:00am Worship 11:00am Coffee Fellowship	14 <i>October Newsletter Deadline</i>	15 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshop	16 5:30pm SupPORT Dinner followed by Pastor Steve's highlights from his Wesley Pilgrimage in Great Britain	17	18	19
20 10:00 am Worship 11:00 am Coffee Fellowship	21	22 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshop	23	24	25	26
27 10:00am Worship 11:00 am Coffee Fellowship	28	29 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshop	30	Coming in October - Trunk or Treat will be held on Saturday, 10/24, 3pm to 5pm, in The PORT parking lot. Start planning how you want to decorate your vehicle and what treats you want to hand out! More details coming soon. 		

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.

Staff

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

Church Office E-mail: PAUMC@paumc.org PAUMC Website: www.paumc.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PortlandAvenueUMC/>
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