

THE PORTLIGHT

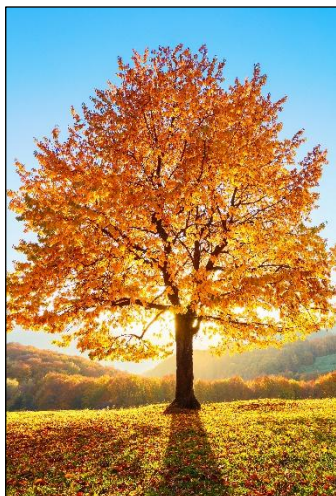
A newsletter for members and friends of Portland Avenue United Methodist Church



October 2026

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Our Mission

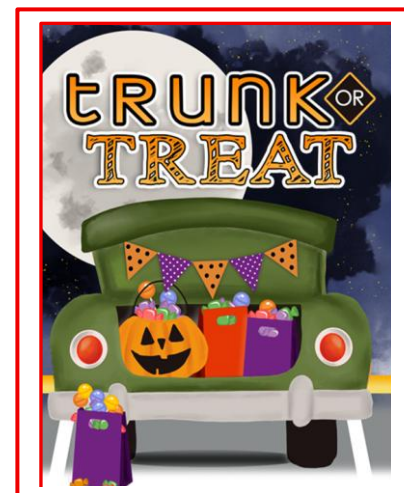
*"To grow followers of
Jesus who change the
world."*

Our Vision

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

JOIN US for Our 4th Annual "Trunk or Treat" at The PORT Saturday, October 24th 3:00pm – 5:00pm

(We'll move indoors if the weather is poor.)



DETAILS:

- Enjoy Trick or Treating in a safe family environment
- Bonfire with S'mores and Hot Dogs
- Popcorn Bar
- Everyone is invited! Bring your friends and neighbors!

EXTRA!

EXTRA!

EXTRA!

-It's time for all hands on deck at The PORT!

-Our 52nd Annual Holiday Bazaar & Attic Treasures is just
one month away!

-There is much to be done and we need everybody's help!

-Please see page 6 for details.

ThePORT
A safe harbor along life's journey.

Pastor's Message

Hello Portland Avenue UMC,

Happy October to you! In September we had our first SupPORT dinner. It was great food and great fellowship. After the dinner, I shared about my Wesleyan Pilgrimage. I have mentioned it before, but I keep thinking about and processing the trip. It was great to learn about our heritage and the Wesleys.

I had never thought that much about Charles Wesley. I am (definitely) not a natural musician and I never appreciated the richness of the hymns he wrote. But their power is undeniable, and the sheer volume of lyrics written by Charles is incredible. Charles is the most prolific poet in the history of the English language – no one has written as many songs or poems. It is an amazing legacy, and on a personal level, Charles wrote my favorite Christmas song (Hark, the Herald Angels Sing) and Easter song (Christ the Lord is Risen Today).

But Charles aside, I can't get John Wesley out of my mind. (I suppose there are worse people to spend a disproportionate amount of time thinking about.) The more I learn about Charles and his theology and his work, the more impressed I become. He is one of those people in history who came at the right time, with the right ideas/theology and the right energy and work ethic to see it through. John never planned on starting a new denomination, he wanted to reform a church, the Church of England, that was struggling and had become stagnant. It had become too focused on the work inside the church building, with not enough concern about what was happening outside the doors. It became a place for the comfortable and the elite, not the everyday person. And they had lost their fire, and desperately needed a new life. This situation very much mirrors the concerns of the church today, and I think his solutions apply as much today as they did at his time.

John believed in the importance of Acts of Piety – the worship of God, both personally and communally. We are to be focused on our worship, both in church during the service, but also on our own and in small groups. We are to pray, read scripture, take communion, fast, have meals together, and sing songs. These acts will bring us closer to God. But Acts of Piety are not enough, it must lead to Acts of Mercy. We are to care for the poor, the naked, the sick, those who are hurting and mourning, the stranger, those who are on the margins of society. Wesley also believed that spiritual renewal would lead to societal renewal, something that we could use today. In his time, John focused on three main issues – visiting and caring for prisoners, caring for the poor, and working to abolish slavery. That is quite the legacy.

Wesley believed that faith and worship was not enough, that true faith and true worship demanded that you go out and care for and love the people that Jesus cared for and loved. Acts of Piety lead to Acts of Mercy. My desire for this church is that we remember this lesson, that we re-focus ourselves on Acts of Piety, and that through that we will necessarily move towards Acts of Mercy.

The first step is to re-commit to the local church, to The Port. I would love to see you on Sundays at worship, to recapture the fire of the Holy Spirit. I especially want to highlight November 8, which will be a Wesley-focused Sunday featuring one of his sermons. I am also hopeful to start small groups in January based upon the model given us by Wesley. I will have much more to share about that in the weeks and months ahead. For now, I hope to see you on Sundays.

Blessings to you all,
Pastor Steve



Mission Outreach News

October Mission Outreach – Supporting Future Black Educators

This month, in memory of **Russ and Carol Cox**, our Mission Outreach offering will support the **Education Foundation of Bloomington**, providing scholarships for Black students pursuing careers in teaching. Your gift will help create more role models in classrooms, open doors for future generations, and promote lasting equity in education.

Please write **“Scholarship”** in the memo of your check to contribute. Together, we can honor Russ and Carol’s legacy and invest in a brighter future.

Pam Rose and Nancy Hagerty, Mission Outreach Co-chairs

Valley View School Drive Update!

Thanks to the incredible kindness of our recent school supply drive for Valley View Elementary was a heartwarming success! Every donation—big or small—will help equip students with the tools they need to learn, create, and thrive this school year. Here’s what we were able to collect together:

5	3-Ring Binders	12	Highlighters
12	Backpacks	10	Notebooks
4	Clorox Wipes	7	Paper Towel Rolls
6	Crayola Colored Pencil packs	2	Pencil Boxes
10	Crayola Crayons 24-pack	3	Pencil packs
5	Crayola Thick Markers	24	Pink Erasers
4	Crayola Thin Markers	2	Playdough containers
1	Ear Buds	2	Scissors
12	Expo Dry Markers	2	Tissue boxes
16	Folders	4	Toilet Paper Rolls
18	Glue Sticks	4	Water Bottles
3	Headphones	3	Zip Locks boxes

These supplies will go directly into the hands of students who need them most, ensuring they can start the school year prepared! Your generosity doesn’t just fill backpacks—it fills hearts and fuels dreams.

A Heartfelt Thank You from Your Mission Outreach Leaders - Pam Rose and Nancy Hagerty



October Schedule for Sunday Volunteers

	Oct. 4	Oct. 11	Oct. 18	Oct. 25	
Welcomers	Melinda Matton Kathy Soucy	Heather Anderson Mary Nelson	Merlin & Linda Gilbertson	Steve & Kathy Soucy	
Ushers	Bruce Benson Susan Armstrong Scott Swenson	Bruce Benson Sharon Beckler Scott Swenson	Bruce Benson Don Anderson Kathy Soucy	Wayne Andersen Sharon Beckler Laurette Lawson	
Reader	The Youth	Kathy Bell	Neil Anderson	Susan Armstrong	
Sound	Tim Madsen	Eric Richardson- Mahre	Tim Madsen	Eric Richardson- Mahre	
Media	Barb Andrus	Nancy Hagerty	Tim Madsen	Nancy Hagerty	
Livestream	Clint Andrus	Tim Hagerty	Scott Swenson	Tim Hagerty	
Closer	Scott Swenson	Steve Knopp	Scott Swenson	Harvey Erstad	
Counters	Merlin Gilbertson Steve Soucy	Merlin Gilbertson Wayne Andersen	Trent Olson Wayne Andersen	Pam Rose Trent Olson	
Communion	Mike Moreland Lynn Livingston Kathy Soucy				



Birthday Blessings to our October Friends!

01 – Beth Cameron
 04 – Daniel Dray
 05 – Greg Jurek
 07 – Tim Hagerty
 16 – Steve Soucy

17 – Janea Medzagoh
 18 – Fran Carpenter
 19 – Jake Rasmussen
 24 – Gloria Wilson-Bahun
 26 – Marlus Jackson

If you have a birthday this month but your name is not on our list, please notify the church office so we can update our records for next year.

Holiday Bazaar News

Our 52nd annual Holiday Bazaar & Attic Treasures is just over one month away. **We'll be open on Friday, November 13th, 9am –6pm, and Saturday, November 14th, 9am –3pm.** This is our church's largest community event and fundraiser of the year. This year, more than ever before, we will need everybody's help! Please check the information below and pick out a couple of ways you can contribute with your time and your talents in the final weeks before we open our doors.

Make Goods to Donate to the Sale:

- Attend our Tuesday evening workshops to help us make goods. No skills required; it's easy and we will happily teach you. Or you can make and donate items such as:
- New, handmade Christmas ornaments or decorations
- Needlework items like blankets, dishcloths and towels, mittens, gloves, scarves, etc.
- Gift items like pottery, jewelry, candles, paintings, etc.
- Wood-working items like decorations, bird houses or feeders, stools, toys, etc.

All donations need to be received at the church by Sunday, November 4th.

Please include a note with your name and phone number, a count of what you're donating, material costs, and a suggested retail price.

Please plan now to work at the sale:

- We will need many volunteers to staff the sale.
It's very easy and FUN! It's a great way to get to know each other better, and to meet our neighbors.
- We create a schedule for both days.
- No money handling required. We have a central cashier that handles the payments.
- We try to schedule in 3 or 4 hour increments.
Consider working each day.
- Scheduled areas include the sales tables, kitchen, baggers at cashier, popcorn popper, floaters, etc.

Bake Sale Goods needed for Friday and especially for Saturday:

- Find your favorite recipes for cookies, bars, pastries, sweet breads, pies, cakes, fudge, snack mixes, soup mixes, or canned goods like jams, pickles, salsa, etc.
- We will have trays at the Welcome Desk for you to take home to package your goodies.
- Our team will price everything for consistency.
- Donations can be brought in starting Wednesday, Nov. 11.

Advertising and Praying:

- We will soon have flyers ready to be posted at coffee shops, libraries, your breakroom at work, or mailed out to your friends.
- Watch for email ads or Facebook posts and please share them with your contacts.
- Please pray for us! Pray for the health and stamina of our workers; and for the people who come to our Bazaar that they will be uplifted and touched.

Donate a themed Gift Basket (or let somebody else shop for you with a financial contribution):

- Examples of themes are **Movie Night** with some DVD's, microwave popcorn, boxed candies or **Coffee Lover** with some mugs, coffees, flavored syrups, biscotti, etc.
- Drop off in the Bazaar Room with an inventory of your items and the total cost. Include your contact info.
- All items must be NEW, and no perishables please.
- The Gift Baskets will be sold in our Silent Auction. They are a huge draw every year and we receive compliments on how people love the convenience for gift giving!

Any questions please contact Lynn or Lori Livingston or Kathy Soucy. Thank you in advance for your help and support! Working together we are sure to have another successful year!

“Seven Ways People of Faith Can Deal with Stress” by Laura Buchanan

We say that we trust God, but do we really? In a world full of hardship and conflict, it is easy to fall into the habits of overthinking, worrying, and stressing about our present and our future. Each time we feel anxieties rise, we can take steps to ground ourselves and remember that God is with us, takes care of us, and can relieve us of our stress.

“There’s nothing in life worth stressing over. I virtually live stress free now. I want others to experience the same thing,” says Thomas Mayberry, author, speaker, and United Methodist layperson. After decades of wrestling with stress, anxiety, and depression, he committed to spiritual disciplines to find relief. He offers these suggestions:

1. **Find the source of your worry.** Take time to reflect deeply and figure out where exactly your stress is coming from. Work? Family tension? Finances? The news? “There are so many things that are filtering into us that stack on top of each other. The only way you’re going to fix a problem is if you understand that you have a problem and then figure out where it’s coming from,” Mayberry points out. “Then you can shift. Lean into your faith and build a stronger relationship with God, who’s on your side all the time.”
2. **Tap into gratitude.** “Sometimes we focus so much on our stress that we don’t recognize all the good things that are in our lives. We have tunnel vision. Change that to a focus of joy and gratitude. It might be little things, like a beautiful sunset, and we can say, ‘God, thank you for that,’” Mayberry shares.
3. **Focus on others.** “As you change your focus, you also start to focus on others instead of yourself,” offers Mayberry. “That might be in the form of serving others, where you are concentrating on somebody else’s wellbeing more than your own. The more you take that focus off of yourself, you’re not thinking about your stress anymore, you have something different on your mind.”
4. **Hold onto promises in Scripture.** When you are feeling stressed, it can help to recite comforting words from Scripture. Find a Bible verse that relates to your situation and have a conversation with God about it. Ask what God is trying to tell you. Then listen. Mayberry mentions Proverbs 3:5-6, which says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” “That stretch in the middle, ‘lean not on your own understanding,’ is crucial because we get this vision of, ‘This is the only thing that’s possible,’ but what God can do is unlimited,” Mayberry observes. “We need to trust him and realize that [our circumstances] might just be stepping stones towards where God wants us to be.”
5. **Let go and allow God to lead.** Our human dreams are small and shortsighted compared to what God envisions for us. This is something Mayberry has experienced firsthand. After years of chasing corporate success, Mayberry was tired. He placed his career in God’s hands and dug into the work he had in front of him. Soon after, he was offered a promotion, which led to four others. He continues to proceed with integrity and prayer, living his faith at work.
6. **Chat with God.** Prayer doesn’t have to be formal or held to a specific time or place. Try having an ongoing dialogue with God. Mayberry shares, “I have as much conversation with God throughout the day as I can. I constantly try to be aware of his presence, talk to him, and say, ‘Thanks for that’ or ‘I need help on this’ or ‘Give me the right words.’”
7. **Move your body.** Physical movement helps our bodies regulate stress, distracts our minds, and promotes sleep. Try chair yoga, walking in your neighborhood, or a nature hike. Mayberry is a long-distance runner, something he began in his 50s. Although he had never run more than a mile, he decided to train for a half-marathon and use the time to talk with God. The practice proved so healing that he continued and has now completed 25 half-marathons and five marathons.

Keep experimenting. We all need to manage stress, but the ways we do so are widely varied. Mayberry encourages, “Nothing will be a cookie cutter answer. Some people write in a journal, some people do a morning prayer time or read a daily devotional. Find something that works for you.”

Laura Buchanan works for UMC.org at United Methodist Communications.



October 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 10am Worship 11am Coffee Fellowship <i>World Communion Sunday</i>	5 6:30pm Church Council (Zoom)	6 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp.	7 12pm Prayers with Pastor Steve	8	9	10
11 10am Worship 11am Coffee Fellowship	12	13 6:00pm Trustees Mtg. (Wesley Room) 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp.	14 12pm Prayers with Pastor Steve	15	16	17
18 10am Worship 11am Coffee Fellowship	19	20 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp.	21 12pm Prayers with Pastor Steve 5:30pm SupPORT Monthly Dinner – Tater Tot Hotdish	22	23	24 3pm – 5pm Trunk or Treat in the PORT's parking lot.
25 10am Worship 11am Coffee Fellowship	26 11:00am Guy Moore Memorial Service	27 6:30pm Bazaar Wkshp.	28 12pm Prayers with Pastor Steve	29	30	31 Happy Halloween 

Coming in November:

Sunday, Nov. 8 – A special Wesleyan-style worship service

Friday, Nov. 13 and Saturday, Nov. 14 – 52nd Annual Holiday Bazaar & Attic Treasures

Sunday, Nov. 22 – Hanging of the Greens (decorate the church for Christmas) followed by a Potluck lunch