



**PORTAGE
LAKE
UNITED
CHURCH**

PLUC

United Church of Christ & Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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April 2023

Consistory Highlights

Discussion of Reports: Consistory briefly discussed the various reports. It was noted that Helping Hands continues to help our community. Concerns were expressed for our Office Manager, who has been suffering with severe pain and corrective procedures. It was also noted that the building committee has a variety of tasks on its radar and is looking forward to both working weather and finding funding for various projects.

Discussion about the Pastor's report touched upon our ecumenical cooperation with Good Shepherd and Holy Trinity Lutheran Churches in Lent, and our upcoming Holy Week Worship services. Pastor Norland reported that the congregation will welcome Al and Mary Eckhart into Membership on Sunday, March 19.

Pastor Norland also reported on a conversation with many local pastors in the wake of the announcement of Finlandia's closing. The economic, social and demographic challenges leading to the closing of the university also affect our local congregations as well. The pastors floated

an idea to gather local congregations (ecumenical, but mostly ELCA) together to address these realities. First foremost we would pray together. But we would also address two things: 1) share our current congregational demographic & finance trends; and 2) ideate: regarding ministry and mission light of the trends, including how might we work together in faith (as individuals, as congregation members, as community members, as a Conference). A proposed date for such a meeting is the last week of May. The Consistory thought attending such an event would be useful for our congregation.

Old Business: Elder M. Jarvie-Eggart volunteered to serve as our Presbytery Commissioner, and the Consistory approved this commission via unanimous consent with gratitude. A congregational representative to the UCC is still needed to attend an upcoming meeting in Merrill, WI on April 22, 9 am - 1 p.m.

Consistory approved the adoption of the proposed online meeting policy. The policy clarifies the consistory practice, allowing for synchronistic online and hybrid meetings of the consistory and requires that

the regular, in-person, meeting practices and policies are followed when meeting online.

Elders B. Brookhouse and G. Campbell continue to work on the “Employee Leave” policy, with no actions required at this time. Absent a policy, Consistory asked Elder Brookhouse to meet with Office Manager Smock in order to express care, concern for her health and discuss whether she is able to manage her Office Manager duties. Options for consideration might include: a leave of absence, continuing various office manager functions remotely, restructuring office hours, and/or finding additional help (volunteer or employee) to handle (parts of) the office manager duties.

Consistory discussed various ways to conduct a Pastor Evaluation. Elder G. Campbell suggested a collaborative approach that establishes measurable goals for future evaluations. Pastor Norland expressed concern that evaluation not simply report various opinions on his performance but that it might be used strategically to guide his personal and professional development, as it helps to clarify congregational missional aims. Elder A. Campbell referred to a model of teacher evaluations and Elder M. Jarvie-Eggart suggested using a *Individual Professional Development Plan* model. It was decided that consistory members come prepared to April’s Meeting with carefully considered suggestions or plans for the pastoral evaluation.

New Business: Elder G. Campbell led a brief conversation about the updating of an utility easement that runs across our property. Relying on the expertise within the building committee, Pastor Peter will be the contact person to discuss any issues coming from the survey and transmission company. Pastor Peter will bring any issue that requires action to the consistory for consideration.

Financial Report

Received in March 2023

Pledge	\$4994.00
Unpledged	\$793.92
Loose Plate	\$40.15
Roof	\$1280.00

Holy Week Schedule

Good Friday	7:00 pm
Easter Sunday	
Breakfast	9:00 am
Worship	10:30 am

Breakfast Together Easter Morning

We will once again enjoy a delicious Easter morning breakfast prior to our Easter service on April 9th. We hope everyone can join us for great food and fellowship.

There is a sign-up sheet on the table in the the church lounge on which you can indicate what you would like to bring to the breakfast.

In Other News

Fellowship Guild Luncheon Recap

Submitted by Judy Albee

Thanks to those individuals that set-up the dining area and cleaned up afterwards for our potluck lunch on March 19th. The opportunity to dine with about two dozen friends on the fresh flower enhanced tables while enjoying a variety of homemade dishes was a real treat.

Seeing Rob and Sherry Middlemis-Brown’s slide presentation of their trip to view polar bears in their natural environment was also a treat. It certainly increased our knowledge of the creature’s challenges.

Perhaps OUR biggest challenge that day was to select something from the plethora of items on the dessert table. Sharing food and fellowship encourages us to anticipate future gatherings for all.

Church Rummage Sale - June 10

Submitted by Bobbie Dalquist

If you haven't already started spring cleaning, it's time to start. Our church rummage sale is scheduled for Saturday, June 10 from 10 am to 2 pm. Since we've had a sale a couple years in a row now, you may be running out of items to donate, so spread the word. Ask your friends for donations.

On June 4, after the church service we need your help to set up tables at the side and back of the sanctuary. That's a good day to bring in your rummage anything, but NO clothes. If you have furniture to donate, please send a picture to Bobbie at rbdalqui@gmail.com so it can be advertised ahead of time. Please bring your gently used cast offs to the church by 9 a.m. Tuesday, June 6, or at the latest, by Friday, June 9 at 2 pm.

Angel Mission

Submitted by Sherry Middlemis-Brown

Copper Country Angel Mission held its first Annual Meeting in which we invited interested parties from outside. The weather was terrible that evening and we had fewer than expected attendees at Jim Northey's conference room, but several joined us by Zoom.

Sharon King-Grieger received a \$1000 grant from Helping Hands (Bethany ELC, Mohawk) to purchase \$5300 worth of winter wear on clearance. Walmart further discounted the items by \$250 for a total cost of \$1085 with Sharon covering the \$85. Walmart donated out-of-season clothing in January. We expect that out-of-season

donations will continue which increases our need to install an improved entrance into our basement for storing items.

Despite a contractor's inspection prior to purchase, we discovered that the pantry's outer wall sill is deteriorated from dampness. We will fix the wall this spring and appreciate any contributions towards it. Our food pantry manager, Martha Staresnick, has been stocking up, using a grant from Portage Health Foundation. She took delivery on a new commercial refrigerator from the Michigan Dairy Association, increasing our capacity for dairy and produce distribution. Overall food requests have gone down in the last two months, which we hope is good news about our economy.

Everyone at Angel Mission thanks the church for its generous support, and in particular for the Lenten Alms Giving. Your consistent and kind partnership is appreciated.

Dancing at the Bluff's

Earlier this year a group of students who perform Finnish folk dancing gave a performance at the Bluffs. Robert Eggart is a member of this group and took some time to visit with some of our PLUC church members who are residents of the Bluffs. Everyone had a great time.



Yeah, I know it's bad but I couldn't help myself.

Beth's Buzz

The other day I sent out an email to the PLUC-Congregation list that was supposed to go to Pastor Peter. The email addresses are right next to each other and I clicked on the wrong one. Many of you might be asking what is going on so I guess I should explain a little.

I have been experiencing a couple of health issues for the past several months. Unfortunately, they have impacted my being able to spend as much time as usual in the office. I have made several trips down to Marquette to see different specialist, and I thank Dianne Sprague for driving me down when I had procedures done and could not drive myself home.

My doctors are still looking for answers to enable me to start to feel better, but we are ruling things out, and hopefully will soon hit on the solutions that will work.

I want to thank everyone who has been praying for me plus those who have helped with taking me places like the grocery store. I am getting to the place where I can do more myself so there is a light at the end of this tunnel.

I hope all of you are doing well and I hope to be able to join you again soon.

An Easter Devotion by Arthur J. Schoonveld

On the first Easter Sunday morning, two women were in for the surprise of their lives. Instead of finding a closed tomb, they found an open grave, and an angel greeting them with the words "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said." For them and for every follower of the Lord Jesus, life would never be the same. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead changed the course of history.

The resurrection is God's way of announcing that our life does not have to be a one-way journey to the cemetery. God is saying we don't have to be stuck in our past. The risen Savior has hit the delete button on our sins. We don't have to wonder who's in charge, because this Savior has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. And we don't have to wonder what's ahead, because nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" ([Romans 8:39](#)).

So let's celebrate today! If your church sings this song, sing it out: "Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia!" And if you are not able to attend church, take some time to praise God that Jesus is alive. With Christians around the world we can say, "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"

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General Office Hours:

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM – Mon.- Tues, Thurs-Fri

Pastor Office Hours:

9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon or by appointment

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April Volunteer Schedule				
<u>Date</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Prayer Writer</u>	<u>Coffee Fellowship</u>
04/02	Greg & Ann		Terry	Barb & Jon
04/09	Nancy & Dianne		Lois	Easter Breakfast
04/16	Lois	Lou Ellyn	Lois	TBD
04/23	Judy	Greg	Barb	TBD
04/30	Beth	Ann	Greg	TBD