



**PORTAGE
LAKE
UNITED
CHURCH**

PLUC

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

1400 E. Houghton Avenue, Houghton, MI 49931-1208

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March 2023

Consistory Highlights

Office Manager: Office Manager Smock gave Consistory an update on the Helping Hands program. In the first seven weeks of 2023 we have given out 8 gas vouchers and 4 food vouchers. She has also had to deny 3 other requests, one because the request was for something we do not offer (person was referred to Angel Mission) and the other two came from people who had already received help this year and therefore aren't eligible for help again until April. Smock informed Consistory that we are on track to give out over 60 vouchers this year. While she is not asking for help at this time, she did want to let Consistory know that funding for Helping Hands could become an issue later and she might come back to them for help in meeting this need. Consistory asked Smock to continue monitoring the need for Helping Hands and report back any trends she sees at the March meeting.

Building and Grounds: Elder G. Campbell reported that no further snow removal from the roof has been needed. Pastor Peter reported that he had spoken with the snow

removal person about trying to make the drive through wider.

Pastor Report: Pastor Peter reported that the Ash Wednesday service went very well with quite a few people attending from Trinity Lutheran and a few from Good Shepherd. Peter is working with Pastor Soren from Trinity and Good Shepherd on a ecumenical Holy Week schedule. He will inform Consistory of more specific plans at the March meeting. Pastor Peter informed Consistory that we have people who wish to become members of Portage Lake United Church. A discussion was held on the process to be used to welcome them to our church family. Consistory is glad to welcome new member to our church family with Pastor Peter working with them on the process. Pastor Peter will be taking vacation time March 23-April 1, including Sunday March 26th. Elder G. Campbell volunteered to lead the service that day.

Communion: Elder B. Brookhouse assisted with communion in January. She will again assist in February.

Old Business:

Pastor Peter presented the new online meeting policy. Consistory will review the

proposal and vote on the policy at the March meeting.

Elders G. Campbell and B. Brookhouse are still working on the “Leave” policy and hope to have it ready for action at the March meeting.

Elder G. Campbell reminded Consistory that the Building Use Policy calls for those “Standard Use” groups, those who meet regularly at PLUC, to be reviewed each year. These reviews will be conducted in the next month or two.

Pastor Peter informed Consistory that he continues to speak with people about becoming the UCC Representative or the Presbytery Commissioner. So far no one has volunteered for those positions.

New Business:

Pastor Peter will be attending the next UCC meeting in April. He invites those interested to join him at this meeting.

Elder G. Campbell recommended that the building be closed when schools are closed. At this time, International Neighbors does not meet when schools are closed but Recovery Groups meet under any circumstances. No final decision was made about closing the office. The city of Houghton will be working on widening the easement that runs from the MTU Campus into town. PLUC has received a letter that a company will be doing a survey of our property this summer as this easement does run through some of our property. Further details will be available during the summer.

Congregation/Corporation Spring Meeting Highlights

2022 Annual Report: The 2022 Annual Report was accepted

Pastor’s Report: Pastor Peter thanked the congregation for their support and prayers over the last year. He also thanked Susie Byykkonen for the music she provides each week plus those who have provided special music, Office Manager Beth Smock for keeping the office running, and Fellowship Guild for all that they did over 2022. Pastor Peter informed the congregation that we will be holding Lenten services with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran Church in Cassell. We will begin by holding Ash Wednesday services at PLUC, and then alternating between the three churches for Wednesday Lenten services. Pastor Peter will be working with Ann Campbell, chair of the Worship Committee, on Sunday services during Lent, plus possible services during Holy Week. We will have at least one potluck after service during Lent. Pastor Peter also asked anyone who would be interested in attending a book study or Bible study group to let him know. He would like to lead one. He also asked if people are interested in a “praying and caring” group to reach out to others in a more formalized way.

Election of Elders: The Nominating Committee’s nominations of Sherry Middlemis-Brown and Rob Middlemis-Brown, the Consistory class of 2025, were presented. There were no other nominations from the Congregation and the proposed slate of officers was accepted.

Election of Financial Officers: The Nominating Committee put forward Edward Lowther as the Church Treasurer and Beth Smock as the Financial Secretary. There were no other nominations from the Congregation and the proposed officers were approved.

Denominational Representatives: Pastor Peter, along with Jan Medlyn, past Presbytery Commissioner and Dianne Sprague, past UCC Commissioner,

explained the role of our Denominational Representatives. Anyone who might be interested in filling these positions was asked to speak to Pastor Peter or a member of Consistory.

2023 Budget: Bobbie Dalquist, Co-Chair of the Finance Committee, discussed the 2022 Budget results and presented the 2023 Budget. **(2022)** The income for 2022 was slightly lower than the Finance Committee had projected, mostly due to investments coming in lower than expected. On the other hand, expenses were also a little under what had been budgeted. Dalquist also reported on “Additional Funds”, those which had not been budgeted for. In 2022, \$9700.00 was received from pledges and other donations for the roof project. This amount will be returned to the VanGuard account (monies for the roof project were original taken from VanGuard with the intent to return this money once pledges and other donations for the roof repair are received). The plan is to put this amount into ESG funds, with Terry Monson, Finance Committee co-chair, investigating which funds would be best. The Building and Grounds committee used vonBatchelder funds to pay for improvements to the parking lot and sidewalk in front of the church. The cost of work on our audio/visual needs was a little under \$5000.00. Donations totally \$3500.00 were received from the congregation with the Memorial Fund covering the remaining \$900.00. Helping Hands received \$3000.00 in donations and spent \$2000.00. Requests for Helping Hands increased significantly in 2022 and we are seeing an increase again for 2023, so continued giving toward Helping Hands is needed. **(2023)** The Finance Committee anticipates the income for 2023 to have a slight increase. Their estimate of expenses for 2023 is based on actual costs from 2022. Dalquist reported that this a

“deficit” budget. The 2023 budget was approved.

Pastor Terms of Call: There are no changes in the 2023 Pastor Terms of Call from that of the 2022 Terms of Call. The 2023 Pastor Terms of Call were approved.

Approve the business of the Congregation meeting: Following adjournment of the Congregational meeting the meeting of the Corporation was held to approve the decisions made at the Congregational meeting.

An Invitation to Journey with Jesus

Join together in fellowship and worship with others who are walking with Jesus this season.

Midweek Ecumenical Lenten Services Wednesday evenings during Lent

"Soup & Bread" at 5:45pm.
Service begins at 6:30pm.



Feb. 22 Portage Lake **Ash**
Wednesday
Mar. 1 Holy Trinity
Mar. 8 Good Shepherd
Mar. 15 Portage Lake
Mar. 22 Holy Trinity
Mar. 29 Good Shepherd

The Meaning of Lent

Lent is the forty day period (not including Sundays) leading up to Easter Sunday. Once described as the “spiritual tithing of the year,” we are reminded of Christ's forty day fast before his temptation in the desert, and the forty hours he spent in the tomb before rising Easter morning.

This season of Lent provides a time to consider our faith, to be reconciled, practice penitence, and extend forgiveness. Lent is a time to renew our following in the ways of Jesus.

Financial Report

Received in January and February

Pledge	\$20,238.00
Unpledged	\$2,562,76
Loose Plate	\$45.00
Roof	\$1,540.00

In Other News

Easter Lilies

Easter lilies will be available again this year to help brighten our sanctuary for Easter Sunday. Flowers will be \$24.00 this year and you have an option of an Easter Lily or spring flowers which would be tulips, daffodils or hyacinths depending on availability. Orders will be due by Sunday, March 12th.

Fellowship Guild Luncheon

Submitted by Judy Albee

A sunny winter day in the Copper Country is a blessing as was the case Saturday, February 18th. Eleven women gathered for lunch at The Bluffs private dining room for

the first time in several years. It was great that we were able to meet face to face in that manner and catch up with residents we hadn't seen for some time. Although over a dozen individuals contributed to the eight 'Mid-Winter Cheer' baskets, it was a way for Fellowship Guild to support our PLUC friends who have not been able to join us for reasons other than Covid.

Besides food, fellowship and basket filling we looked forward to future gatherings. Lois Jambekar reviewed our recent survey results indicating opportunities and activities of interest. Our March 19th and April 9th plans at this time consist of an all church potluck lunch after the Sunday service and an all church Easter morning breakfast before the service the following month. Details will follow.

We departed The Bluffs leaving four filled baskets with resident friends and taking the other four to friends in the Houghton and Hancock communities. They all seemed quite appreciative and we look forward to keeping these lines of communication open. We can't control sunshine in the Copper Country, but to paraphrase something I read to Saturday's attendees, we can keep busy controlling things that benefit others – and have benefitted PLUC in the past.

Amos Norland's Special Scholarship

submitted by Lois Jambekar

Amos Norland has been honored by receiving the prestigious MHSAA/Farm Bureau Insurance Scholar-Athlete Scholarship. He is one of ten students from MHSAA class D Schools to receive this award. The award is a \$2,000 college scholarship.

Amos has been very active in the Dollar Bay Tamarack City High School sports as well a leader in his high school. His basketball coach and principal Jesse Kentala

praised Amos as a leader on the basketball court and in the high school. Amos ran four seasons on the varsity cross country team, played three seasons of varsity basketball, and will complete his fourth season of varsity track this spring. During his years at Dollar Bay he earned all-state in multiple track events which helped his team. the Blue Bolts, win a finals title two years. He also earned all-league in basketball and served as team leader of his cross country team and captain of the basketball team. This fall Amos won the Upper Peninsula Division 3 individual cross country championship as a senior. In school activities Amos served on the Student Council for four years and has served as class President all four years, is a member of the Honor Society and is serving as President, and is a member of the Student Leadership Advisory Council of the Keweenaw serving as director of resources. Amos is a saxophone player in the high school band and serves as the section leader.

The following paragraph is what Amos wrote in an essay for his application:

“As good as it feels to beat a rival basketball team or win a race, demonstrating good sportsmanship is valuable in a deeper way. Winning gives you a victory. Sportsmanship builds character, forms relationships, and provides you with important lifelong lessons. My cross-country coach teaches us how to be respectful almost as much as he teaches us how to run. As a result, we have grown as runners, but more so, we have grown to show the values of being a good sport.”

Amos will attend Michigan Technological University this fall and will run cross country for the Huskies team.

PLUC Church members are impressed and happy for Amos for receiving this well deserved honor.

It's Time to Share

On March 19th PLUC will be taking our Annual “One Great Hour of Sharing” offering. Why do we do this every year. Well, below is some background information about this offering (Taken from the UCC One Great Hour of Sharing Resource Guide).

“For over 70 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering (OGHS)—known as Week of Compassion (WoC) in the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ—has been helping American and Canadian Christians bring God’s hope and healing to hurting people both in the U.S. and around the world. Since the closing years of World War II, OGHS has raised funds to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, and bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by natural disaster. Each year, the Offering is gathered by several denominations under a single theme developed by the ecumenical OGHS Committee. “

Each week, for the next four weeks, we will have an insert in our bulletin which will introduce us to some of the work done with donations received for One Great Hour of Sharing. Please prayerfully consider your gift prior to the offering on March 19th. Note: That the PLUC offering is split equally between UCC and PC (USA).

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1400 E. Houghton Ave., Houghton, MI
49931

Phone: (906) 482-5224

E-mail: office@pluc.org

Website: www.pluc.org

Pastor: Rev. Peter Norland

Office Manager: Beth Smock

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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Return Service Requested

March Volunteer Schedule				
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<u>Date</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Prayer Writer</u>	<u>Coffee Fellowship</u>
03/05	Barb & Jon	Christina	Lois	Judy, Louisa
03/12	Greg & Ann	Nancy	Greg	TBD
03/19	Jon & Brian	Greg	Terry	TBD
03/26	Judy	Beth	Barb	TBD