



**PORTAGE
LAKE
UNITED
CHURCH**

PLUC

United Church of Christ & Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
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March 2025

Consistory Highlights

Discussion of Consent Agenda items: Treasurer Report:

1. A question was raised about why we appear to have already used half of the amount budgeted for water/ sewer. Information was provided that the Treasurer had mentioned that the bill was much larger after a leak in the men's bathroom was discovered (It has been fixed.) Treasurer E. Lowther will be asked for more information.

Pastor Report

1. Ash Wednesday: Pastor Peter may again offer "Drive-By Ashes" in the morning. It was decided to have Ash Wednesday service in the evening. Pastor Peter will be speaking to pianist Susie Byykkonen about her availability before deciding on the time of the service.
2. PLUC will again be joining with Good Shepherd Lutheran church for Lenten Evening Prayer on Wednesdays. The theme will be: Taste & See: Flavors of Christian Spirituality

3. Elder D. Sprague assisted with communion in February. Elder A. Campbell will assist in March..

Angel Mission:

1. Elder S. Middlemis-Brown reminded Consistory that the Angel Mission Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2025. All are invited.

Old Business:

Meeting of the Congregation/ Corporation:

1. Thanks was given to Elder R. Middlemis-Brown for the budget presentation. People find the graphics he uses to be easier to read and understand than a spreadsheet.

Personnel:

1. Elder A. Campbell shared a draft of a performance evaluation tool to be used for evaluating Office Manager Smock and Pianist Byykkonen.
2. Former member of the Personnel Committee Nancy Byers Sprague will speak with Custodian Christy Kerrtu about her position.

New Business:

Terms of Call:

- 1. The Terms of Call for Pastor Peter have been signed by Pastor Peter and Clerk T. Monson. and sent to the Presbytery. No changes will be made at this time.

Pastor vacation time:

- 1. Pastor Peter will be on vacation from March 24-March 31. Elder D. Sprague will be leading the service on March 30.

Furnace Problems:

- 1. The church is cold because one of the two furnaces is not working and it is difficult for the other furnace to heat the church on its own. A solution to this problem is being investigated with an answer soon.

**Consistory Question for the Month:
 What is God doing in the Keweenaw?
 (Consistory members share positive things
 happening in the community.)**

A person who was facing a need for a transplant has healed to the point of not needing the transplant.
 The work the Road Commission has been doing keeping our roads safe.
 A stranger who has been shoveling neighborhood driveways.
 All the people who help the community.
 Angel Mission

<p>Congregation/Corporation Meeting Highlights</p>
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Annual Report: . Sherry Middlemis-Brown stated that the Fellowship Guild report should include Jim Northey and Rob Middlemis-Brown as being involved in the work of Angel Mission. The Annual Report was approved with corrections.

Pastor’s Report: Pastor Peter expressed his gratitude to 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 (the hub of the congregation) for all that they did over 2024. Pastor Peter thanked the members and friends of PLUC for all they do for Angel Mission. He asked that during the next year members and friends discuss ideas with him for the growth of our congregation and ministry.

Election of Elders: Beth Smock, member of the Nominating Committee (members include Lou Ellyn Helman and Michelle Jarvie-Eggart) informed the congregation that the committee nominates Beth Smock and Biruta Lowther as the Consistory class of 2027. There were no other nominations from the Congregation. Approved.

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. Approved.

2025 Budget: Rob Middlemis-Brown, Member of the Finance Committee, reviewed the 2024 budget and presented the 2025 Budget. He presented a short slide presentation showing where our income comes from and where the monies are spent. Included in this presentation was a comparison between the income/expenses in 2024 and those expected in 2025. Due to the fact that pledges were down slightly for 2025 and expenses were slightly increased, PLUC will be again operating with a deficit budget for 2025. approximately \$5,100.00. However, even though the General Funds show a deficit in 2024, the actual amount received including vonBatchelder, Helping Hands, etc resulted in a surplus of \$600.00 more received in

2024 than budgeted. The same is expected for 2025. The 2025 budget was approved.

Clerk: Clerk Terry Monson is resigning at the end of the February 2025 meeting of the Congregation/Corporation. The members and friends of PLUC thanked him for his many years of service as the Clerk. Sherry Middlemis-Brown nominated Rob Middlemis-Brown as the PLUC Clerk. The nomination was seconded by Bobbie Dalquist. Rob accepted the nomination and was approved by those attending the meeting.

Adjournment: Dianne Sprague moved (Mary Eckhart second) to adjourn the Meeting of the Congregation. Approved.

The Corporation Meeting Convened Following the Meeting of the Congregation

Open the Meeting: Clerk Terry Monson opened the meeting of the PLUC Corporation

Approve the business of the Congregation meeting: Dianne Sprague moved (Sherry Middlemis-Brown second) to approve the business of the Congregation Meeting. Approved

Adjourn: Dianne Sprague moved (Sherry Middlemis-Brown second) to adjourn the meeting of the Corporation. Approved.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Peter closed the meeting with prayer at 12:22 pm.

Called Emergency Consistory Meeting

On Thursday, February 27, 2025, the Consistory held an emergency ZOOM meeting to discuss the need to replace the furnaces in the church. One furnace is no longer working, and the other may quite working in a matter of days. A quote had

been received from AireCare and this quote was unanimously accepted at the meeting. Pastor Peter will contact AireCare on Friday, February 28, 2025 to begin the process. It is anticipated that it will take 2 to 3 days for the need parts to be received and, once received, this should be a one day installation.

Cancelling service on Sunday, March 2, 2025 was discussed and Consistory decided to monitor the temperature in the church building. At this time, Office Manager Smock will put an article in the weekly email recommending that people dress warmly or bring a blanket. If it is decided to cancel Service, an email will be sent to the congregation.

Financial Report

Received in March

Pledge	\$8,818.00
Unpledged	\$1,431.92
Loose Plate	\$00.00
Roof	\$20.00

Taste and See: Flavors of Christian Spirituality

Join us these Lenten Wednesdays as we explore “flavors” of spirituality and practices from across the Christian tradition. We will follow the liturgy of Holden Evening Prayer. Wherever you are in your spiritual journey, there is a place for you in this Lenten community!

Theme Verse: “O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who take refuge in him.” - Psalm 34:8



TASTE & SEE

Exploring Flavors of Christianity

Liturgy: Holden Evening Prayer

We will gather Wednesday evenings this Lent at Good Shepherd Lutheran and Portage Lake United Churches. 5:30 p.m. soup; 6 - 6:40 p.m. Worship. PLUC folks are providing bread and soup when we gather here.

Date & Location

3/12 PLUC
3/19 GSLC
3/26 none this week
4/2 GSLC
4/9 PLUC

The Meaning of Lent

Lent is the forty day period (we don't count Sundays—every Sunday is a little Easter!) beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with the Saturday before Easter Sunday. Long ago, Pope Gregory I described Lent as “the spiritual tithing of the year.” This is a season in which we remember Christ's forty day fast, temptation in the desert, and the forty hours he spent in the tomb before rising Easter morning.

In the preceding liturgical season, from Epiphany to Transfiguration, we were invited to contemplate the identity of Jesus as the Christ and our call to follow. The focus of Lent is on the way in which Jesus chooses to embody this identity as Christ in the world, and so we also consider the shape of our lives as we seek to embody Christ's ways. In short, Lent is about spiritual renewal in the pattern of Christ. When we incorporate aspects of the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we cultivate our attentiveness to the work of God's Spirit in our lives. Such practices change us by changing our daily routines: the addition of prayer and giving or the

subtraction of fasting provide real, embodied opportunities to (re)turn to God and re-center our lives in the way of Christ.

Each Lent we get a clean start to seek the Spirit and to change our minds and our ways. From the reminder of our frailty and mortality at the outset on Ash Wednesday, throughout the 40 days, we renew our hope and place our trust in the God to whom Jesus points. And we will not be disappointed, for when the forty days come to an end, we will once again sing *Alleluia!* to the God of overflowing grace who raised Jesus from the dead and promises to incorporate us in glorious resurrection life.

Fellowship Guild's Mid-Winter Cheer

Submitted by Judy Albee

This year to date has been a challenge to feel very cheerful on many levels. The bitter cold, daily snowfall and biting winds is just one area that impacts all of our lives. Illness, travel, house guests and scheduled responsibilities have also limited our efforts to gather with PLUC friends as we have done in the past.

However, Fellowship Guild was able to work out a time and place to meet. I supplied Valentine themed cards and bags to hold a variety of items that were donated by many individuals, even if they weren't able to attend in person. The Bluffs' private dining room was beautifully set for a dozen residents and guests on February 12th with a timely Valentine theme.

We were able to order from their menu and hear a recap of our recently held rummage sale at PLUC. We made a determination as to the distribution of the proceeds. Angel Mission had supplied most of the sale items, but we had assumed the responsibility of setting up, pricing and

working at the event, thanks in great part, to the efficient organizational skills of Bobbie Dalquist.

Those attending the Wednesday noon luncheon enjoyed getting reacquainted with Fellowship Guild members. Residents took Valentine topped bags to their apartments or to others not present for the meal. Six other bags were delivered to individuals who were not able to physically attend. We trust the small packages of Kleenex, snack mix, post-it notes, pens, candy, oranges, notecards, small bags of q-tips and cotton balls, individual containers of applesauce and diced peaches, as well as valentines and notecards will be a source of cheer and friendship this winter.

There are still ample opportunities to visit with these and other friends that have been part of the PLUC fellowship over the years. Feel free to call or visit them in person and share some cheer. There's still plenty of winter remaining.

Winter Carnival Weekend Rummage Sale –

submitted by Bobbie Dalquist

We had a large crowd for the first two hours of the rummage sale held on Saturday, February 8. At every rummage sale there are always the questions: Will we have enough merchandise to sell? Will we have enough people to help set up the sale? Will we have enough buyers? What do we do with what's left over?

We had many tables full of items to sell. Our volunteers got the job done. We had lots of customers. We learned that someone came because she saw a sign at Jim's, others came because of the ad in the Gazette and others came because they saw pictures of items for sale on Facebook MarketPlace. Plus we had a lot of drop in Winter Carnival visitor traffic - both

students and parents. It was nice to get re-introduced to Katie Hepp Warren, who was a Winter Carnival visitor. She sang in our church choir while she was an MTU student and her brother, Eric Hepp, was our organist for a few years while he was an MTU student.

In the afternoon we continued to have happy buyers. Towards the end of the sale we moved merchandise around by where it would end up. We had two tables full of items that will be given away at Angel Mission. Another table was heaped full of like-new items that will be set out at Angel Mission for a shopping day for kids to choose a gift for their mothers. If you have like-new items to give away that someone's mom might like, including jewelry, please get them to Sherry Middlemas-Brown, Lois Jambekar or Bobbie Dalquist.

A bin full was given to the Habitat for Humanity Re-store and a car load and a pick up truck load full were delivered to Goodwill.

Total proceeds were \$1,077.50 and 20% of that was given to Angel Mission.

Let Us Know What Your Think

Submitted by Ann Campbell

Remember that a communication/suggestion box is available to all of you on the table in the lounge. Many good ideas have come to the consistory, pastor, and church staff via that box. Please continue to share your thoughts and suggestions!

OK, I Couldn't Resist (Plus I Needed to Fill Up Space

Why did the baker give up bread for Lent?

He kneaded a break

Copper Country Angel Mission

Submitted by Sherri Middlemis-Brown

Seasonal programs have wound down with only Coat the Copper Country still active. We spent much of January and February writing annual reports and consolidating them into a single report publication. The report was handed out at the Annual Meeting on February 20 at the Free Store. Invitees (mostly big donors, cooperating organizations, and grantors) received an electronic copy if they didn't attend the Annual Meeting. The church will have a copy, but if you would like an electronic copy also, please let me know.

The Annual Meeting and the Annual Report is how we show supporters what we have done with their generous support. It is a show and tell for us but also addresses our intentions for the next year.

We plan to host Kids' Shopping Day for Mother's Day after a hiatus of several years. We will open the store for kids shopping at no cost for one Saturday. We are collecting new and as-good-as-new items for the event, as well as crafts from a craft group in Gay. If you have a traditionally feminine item that you want to regift, please consider passing it on to Bobbie Dalquist or me. We currently have some new and some gently used jewelry, as well as some houseware and décor. I hope to start six-packs of annual flowers for the garden too. That was my usual gift to Mom for Mother's Day. Calling all gardeners, I could use some help!

Our best information to share this month is that we were generously gifted a substantial amount of money through #GiveCopperCountry on Giving Tuesday. Thank you to all of you who contributed to this wonderful opportunity to have donations augmented by a gift from the Copper Shores Community Health Foundation. We will not only be able to

support our programs, but we will be able to pay overhead and finish weatherproofing our building. God is good and continues to support the mission generously.

Helping Hands

Submitted by Beth Smock

Every few months or so, I write a little article letting folks know about the PLUC Helping Hands ministry. Usually, I end up asking people for donations as our gifts do not always match our need.

Something a little different this time. A big thank you to all those who give to Helping Hands from the anonymous cash that is put in the donation box, to those donations ranging from \$20 to a couple hundred dollars that are given consistently.

And a big thank you to whoever left the envelop on the bench in the entryway. I came in one day and found an envelop address to PLUC on the bench. The return address only said "PLUC" and it had not been mailed. When I opened it I found 24 \$20 bills. That's \$480.00. There was no name attached. As Sherry says about Angel Mission, God opens doors just when they are needed.

Be the Light

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery. Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international

response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities



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PLUC will be taking our One Great Hour of Sharing on Sunday, March 30, 2024. As always, donations will be distributed equally to our two denominations, UCC and PC(USA)

**One Great Hour of Sharing
Children’s Activity**

Write the letters S H I N E on a sheet of paper with the letters written down the left margin. Make words with each letter to create a phrase. An example: S – Son’s H – Heart I – Is N – Never E – Empty

Jesus’ heart is never empty and always giving and generous toward us.



Sunday, March 9th

Portage Lake United Church
United Church of Christ & Presbyterian Church (USA)
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:
8:30 AM – 11:00 AM – Mon.-Fri
Pastor Office Hours:
9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon or by appointment

**Portage Lake United Church
1400 E. Houghton Ave.
Houghton, MI 49931**

Return Service Requested

March Volunteer Schedule				
<u>Date</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Prayer Writer</u>	<u>Coffee Fellowship</u>
03/02	Sze Wenn	Christina	Pastor Peter	Judy & Biruta
03/19	Ann	Dianne	Lois	Ann
03/17	Nancy & Dianne	Beth	Jim	Mary & Lois
03/24	Beth	Lois	Pastor Peter	TBD
03/31	Judy	Nancy	Lois	TBD