



**PORTAGE
LAKE
UNITED
CHURCH**

PLUC

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

Consistory Highlights

Discussion of Consent Agenda Items:

Pastor's Report:

- Elder A. Campbell assisted with communion in March and will do so again in April.
- Pastor Peter installed the new thermostat on March 18th but needs to work more on the configuration.

Presbytery Meeting:

- Elder S. Middlemis-Brown who serves as PLUC representative to the Presbytery informed the Consistory of a child protection course that Elders need to attend. Pastor Peter will check into this.

Finance Committee:

- Elder R. Middlemis-Brown asked, on behalf of the Finance Committee, how many members of the Consistory read/understand all of the information provided by the Treasurer. The Finance Committee will be looking at the report presented by the Treasurer to find

ways to make them easier to read/understand.

Building and Grounds:

- While updating the wiring for the audio/visual equipment, it has been discovered that there is a gap between the roof and the ceiling. At some point, spray insulation will need to be installed.

Old Business:

Furnaces:

- The new furnaces have been installed and are working very well. They are also much quieter than the old ones. Consistory discussed how to fund the furnaces. Options included using Capital Improvement funds, Unrestricted Vanguard funds, and vonBatchelder funds. Consistory approved the use of Capital Improvement funds (with Vanguard funds used if needed).

Personnel:

- Elder A. Campbell shared the final performance evaluation tool to be used for evaluating Office Manager Smock and Pianist Byykkonen. Smock and Byykkonen will be given copies of the self evaluation and their job descriptions so they can complete this step of the evaluation.

New Business:

Trees in the Sanctuary:

- The trees in the sanctuary did not weather the cold well while the furnace was out. It is believed that they can be saved but need to be repotted. Elder S. Middlemis-Brown will repot them in April using vonBatchelder funds Consistory approved the use of up to \$400.00 from vonBatchelder funds for the repotting of the sanctuary trees.

Consistory voting over email:

- A question about voting over email was raised. In 2023 Consistory addressed this issue determining that voting cannot be done over email, but will be done when Consistory meets in person (ZOOM) This policy will continue.

Fire Safety:

- Elder A. Eckhart shared the results of the fire safety inspection of the church that was done by the Houghton Fire Chief on February 27, 2025. Several areas of concern were raised, including posted evacuation routes, fire extinguishers, and the lack of hard-wired fire detection devices. Cost of needed devices will be explored and Consistory (determined on results of costs) will make decisions on needed

equipment. Elder A. Eckart has already drawn up evacuation routes which will be posted. The Fire Chief will return in 90 days to review progress toward improving the church’s fire safety.

Audit:

- Finance Committee members B. Dalquist and R. Middlemis-Brown conducted an audit of the PLUC finances. There were no audit findings but a list of suggestions for improvement of accounting procedures were offered. A friendly amendment to Approve and Accept the Audit report was offered. Consistory Approved and Accepted both the Audit Committee report and the Friendly Amendment.

Next Meeting: April 15, 2025 at 6:00 pm

Financial Report

Received in March

Pledge	\$5,575.00
Unpledged	\$1,599.90
Loose Plate	\$0.00

In Other News

Breakfast Together Easter Morning

We will once again enjoy a delicious Easter morning breakfast prior to our Easter service on April 20 at 9:30 am. We hope everyone can join us for great food and fellowship.

A sign-up sheet will be available on the table in the lounge on which you can indicate what you would like to bring to the breakfast.

Angel Mission

Submitted by Sherry Middlemis-Brown

On February 20, we held our third annual meeting of CCAM. We invited about 50 people or organizations by email and postal letter, including our major donors. Despite an RSVP request, the attendance surprised us all as we squeezed into the narrow aisle between racks of clothing and shelving units of household items. Pastor Peter and other church members involved in Angel Mission programs attended. We talked generally about our programs, passed out the Annual Report for 2024, and then toured the building. If you would like an Annual Report, there are extra copies available from Peter or I can send you a digital copy. The meeting went well and as in prior years, we had several people that were shocked by our accomplishments.

We put in 420 hours of volunteer time in February. Despite a couple of weather-related school closings that shuttered the store, our food pantry served 178 people, providing each with a week's worth of food per person. We are expecting that the number of people served will soon begin to increase as the federal government reduces assistance programs. Our major source of food for the food pantry is Feeding America, a program that distributes surplus food from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to food pantries at a very low cost. Without Feeding America, we are unlikely to be able to meet the local needs. We will see what happens in the next months.

An Easter Story

Editor's Note: I spent some time looking for an Easter Story to share in this newsletter. I read several stories but did not find one I liked as much as this one. If this story sounds familiar it is because I used the same one in last year's Easter newsletter. But

when something sends you a message, there is nothing wrong with using it again. I hope this strikes a chord with you as it did me

A holy man was having a conversation with the Lord one day and said, "Lord, I would like to know what Heaven and Hell are like."

The Lord led the holy man to two doors. He opened one of the doors and the Holy man looked in. In the middle of the room was a large round table. In the middle of the table was a large pot of stew, which smelled delicious and made the holy man's mouth water. The people sitting around the table were thin and sickly. They appeared to be famished. They were holding spoons with very long handles that were strapped to their arms and each found it possible to reach into the pot of stew and take a spoonful. But because the handle was longer than their arms, they could not get the spoons back into their mouths. The holy man shuddered at the sight of their misery and suffering. The Lord said, "You have seen Hell."

They went to the next room and opened the door. It was exactly the same as the first one. There was the large round table with the large pot of stew which made the holy man's mouth water. The people were equipped with the same long-handled spoons, but here the people were well nourished and plump, laughing and talking. The holy Man said, "I don't understand." "It is simple," said the Lord. "It requires but one skill. You see, they have learned to feed each other, while the greedy think only of themselves."

"Remember this, when Jesus died on the cross, he was thinking of you."

HAPPY EASTER, EVERYONE!

More Than Just A Building

submitted by Beth Smock

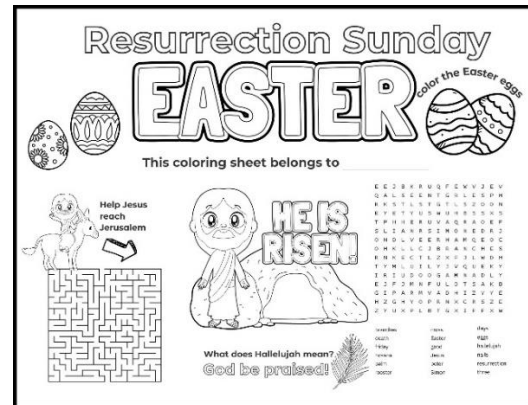
What is PLUC? Is it just a building located across the street from the MTU Administration Building? Is it just a place for people to come on a Sunday morning for an hour or two. That may be what some other's see, but we know it is much more.

I have been thinking about what I see during the six days a week I am in the building. Here are some of the things I see. What are some other things you see that I have missed

- Recovery group meetings 5 days a week (some days more than 1).
- International Neighbors (since 1970).
- Hancock Book Study
- MTU Piano Lessons
- PMMF concerts
- Other musical concerts
- A place where help is given food and gas.
- A place where people sometimes stop in to pray.
- A place where people come to speak with the pastor.
- The things I can't think of right now and all the things you can add.

Yeah. We are MUCH more than a building. Thanks be to God.

Children's Corner



Note: You can enlarge this by just clicking on the picture and using the corners to enlarge.

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United Church of Christ Presbyterian
Church (USA)

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8:30 AM – 11:00 AM – Mon.- Fri

Pastor Office Hours:

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

**Portage Lake United Church
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April Volunteer Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Prayer Writer</u>	<u>Coffee Fellowship</u>
04/06	Marla & David	Lois	Jim	Lois & Mary
04/13	Jon & Brian	Dianne	Peter	TBD
04/20	Beth	Marla	Lois	Easter Breakfast
04/27	Sze Wenn & Easter	Beth	Jim	TBD

