

October 26th 2025
Portage Lake United Church
Reformation Sunday



Martin Luther, John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Philip Melanchthon,
Ulrich Zwingli, William Farel, William Tyndale, John Knox, Thomas Cranmer

Welcome and Announcements

We gather in the name of the Holy Trinity, one God, source of all goodness and mercy. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

- The fall meeting of the Congregation/Corporation will be held on November 9th, following worship. The preliminary 2026 budget will be shared.
- The Holiday Decorations with a Side of Rummage sale is Saturday, November 8, from 10 am to 2 pm. Please bring your donations to the church the first week of November. There is a sign up sheet for workbees in the lounge.
- Keweenaw Faiths United is facilitating an Abraham Salon at Portage Lake District Library on Weds,. October 29, and November 5 & 12, at 6:30 pm. See the weekly email and Nov. newsletter for more.
- We are looking for people to host coffee time after worship for the month of November, including next week.
- The deadline for November newsletter articles is tomorrow. Beth is looking for personal fall stories. Hope to hear from some of you.
- Angel Mission needs: Honey.

*Flowers today provided by Rick vonBatchelder in memory of
Flossie Merrifield and Linus vonBatchelder*



Serving This Morning

Presider: Rev. Peter Norland

Musician: Susie Byykkonen

Greeter: Lois Jambekar

Reader: Nancy Byers Sprague

Prayer Writer: Carl Vilmann

Coffee: Lois Jambekar, Mary Eckhart

Children's Church: Olivia Byykkonen

PRELUDE AND MEDITATION

You don't need to push the river,
because you are in it.

Richard Rohr



✚ Call to Worship (responsive) Inspired by Psalm 46

The earth shakes, the mountains quake
—tempting our hearts to fear.

**God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.**

Storms rage and waters boil
—enticing us to outrage and discontent.

**Still, God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.**

Uproar in our communities and violence around
the world—we wonder if our prayers for peace are futile.

**Yet God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.**

For those mourning and rebuilding their lives,
God is their refuge.

For those living in fear of their neighbors,
God is their strength.

For those dreading masked agents in the streets,
God is present.

For the distraught and displaced and disappeared,
in Gaza and Ukraine, around the world,
and the streets and cities of our nation,

God is a very present help in trouble.

The Lord of hosts is with us, we will not fear.

**We will lay aside our weapons,
be still, and worship our God.**



Ann Campbell

GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

Gathering Hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” #260 BLUE

Used with permission.
One License #A-725614

GOD

Psalm 46

260

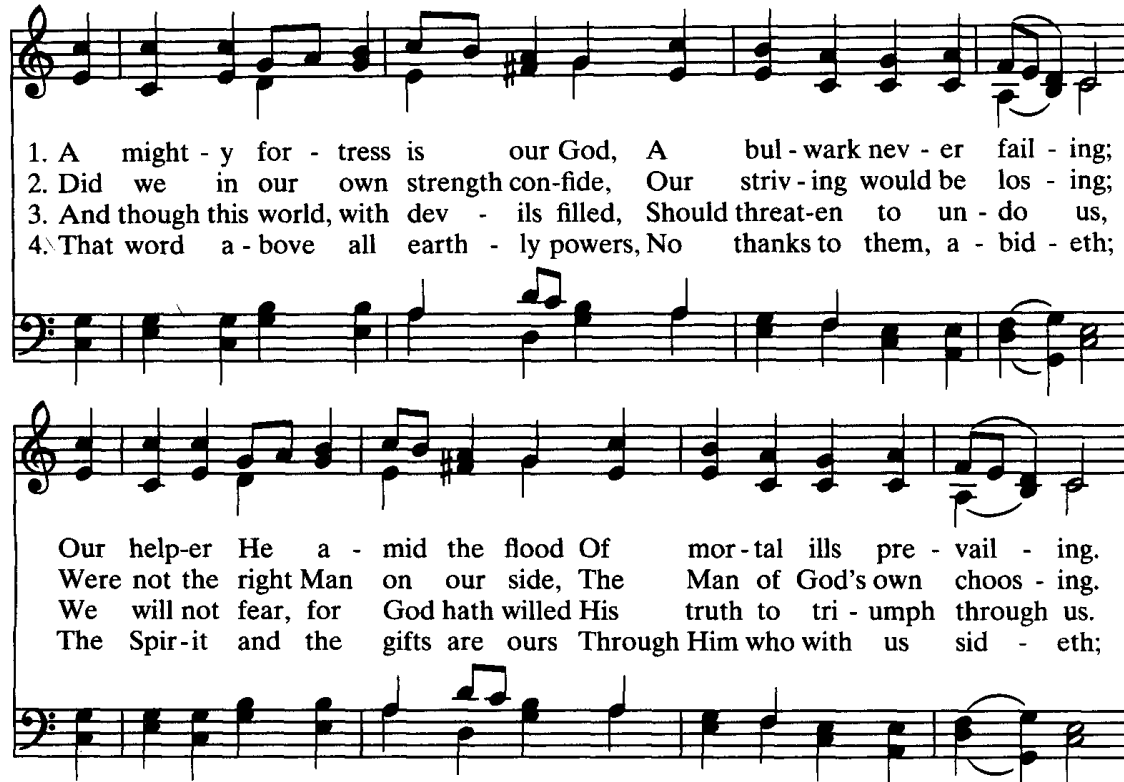
A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

EIN' FESTE BURG (isometric) 8.7.8.7.6.6.6.7

Martin Luther, 1529

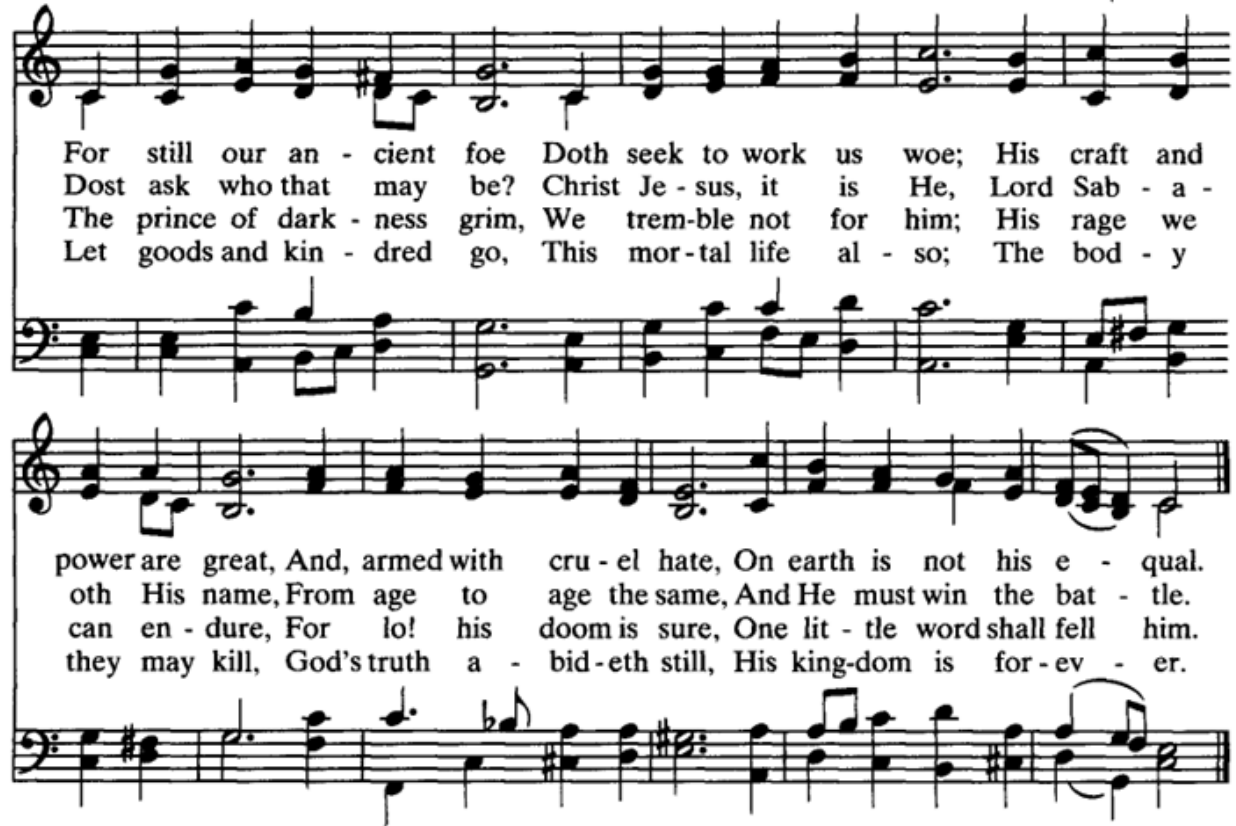
Trans. Frederick Henry Hedge, 1852

Martin Luther, 1529



1. A might - y for - tress is our God, A bul - wark nev - er fail - ing;
2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, Our striv - ing would be los - ing;
3. And though this world, with dev - ils filled, Should threat - en to un - do us,
4. That word a - bove all earth - ly powers, No thanks to them, a - bid - eth;

Our help - er He a - mid the flood Of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing.
Were not the right Man on our side, The Man of God's own choos - ing.
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to tri - umph through us.
The Spir - it and the gifts are ours Through Him who with us sid - eth;



For still our an - cient foe Doth seek to work us woe; His craft and
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus, it is He, Lord Sab - a -
The prince of dark - ness grim, We trem - ble not for him; His rage we
Let goods and kin - dred go, This mor - tal life al - so; The bod - y

power are great, And, armed with cru - el hate, On earth is not his e - qual.
oth His name, From age to age the same, And He must win the bat - tle.
can en - dure, For lo! his doom is sure, One lit - tle word shall fell him.
they may kill, God's truth a - bid - eth still, His king - dom is for - ev - er.

Rhythmic version, 259



✚ PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, gracious Lord,
we thank you that your Holy Spirit
renews the church in every age.
Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people.
Keep them steadfast in your word,
protect and comfort them in times of trial,
defend them against all enemies of the gospel,
and bestow on the church your saving peace,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

+ Prayer of Confession

God of transformation,
we confess that we are stuck in our ways,
resistant to change that would draw us closer to you
and to the beloved community you intend.

We refuse to hear your Spirit
who calls out to us in truth.

We seek freedom for ourselves,
ignoring the oppression of others.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Forgive our waywardness, our negligence,
and our inability to receive good news
and act upon it.

Grant that we may live our lives
through the faith we have in Jesus.

....

Believe the good news:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.



✚ PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of God's peace.

Children of God, we are the body of Christ.
By one spirit we were baptized into one body.
Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.
Amen. We are bound by the love of Christ.





Portrait of Martin Luther. *Engraved and printed by John Sartain after a painting by Hans Holbein, 1835.* [Click for full image.](#) [Image no. 4344]



Luther's thesis nailed to the church door in Wittenberg. *Engraved by Johann Leonhard Raab, from a drawing by F. Lessing. New York: T. Whittaker, ca. 1850.* [Image no. 4434]



Luther burning the Pope's Bull. *Engraved by Johann Leonhard Raab, from a drawing by F. Lessing, New York: T. Whittaker, ca. 1850.* [Image no. 4435]

Jeremiah 31:31–34

A New Covenant

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

Word of God, Word of Life. Thanks be to God

Romans 3:19–28 (19-24 shown here)

19-20 This makes it clear, doesn't it, that whatever is written in these Scriptures is not what God says *about others* but *to us* to whom these Scriptures were addressed in the first place! And it's clear enough, isn't it, that we're sinners, every one of us, in the same sinking boat with everybody else? Our involvement with God's revelation doesn't put us right with God. What it does is force us to face our complicity in everyone else's sin.

21-24 But in our time something new has been added. What Moses and the prophets witnessed to all those years has happened. The God-setting-things-right that we read about has become Jesus-setting-things-right for us. And not only for us, but for everyone who believes in him. For there is no difference between us and them in this. Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

Romans 3:19–28 (25-28 shown here)

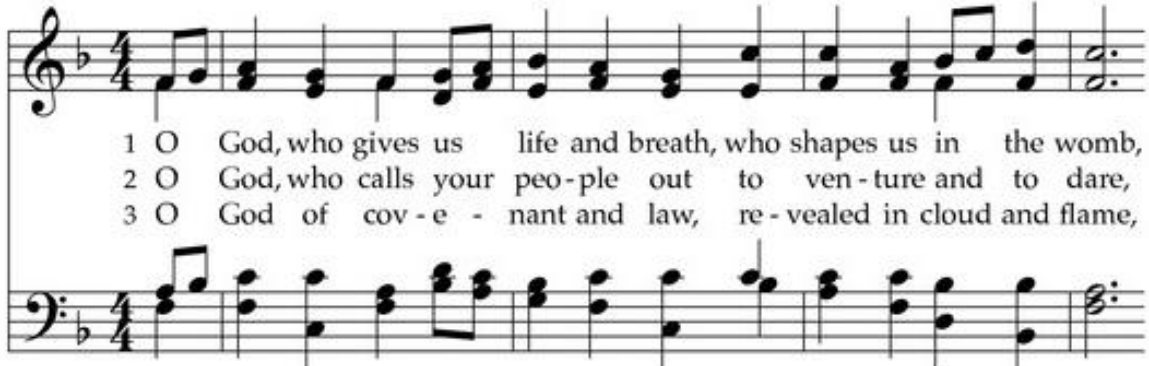
25-26 God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear. God decided on this course of action in full view of the public—to set the world in the clear with himself through the sacrifice of Jesus, finally taking care of the sins he had so patiently endured. This is not only clear, but it's *now*—this is current history! God sets things right. He also makes it possible for us to live in his rightness.

27-28 So where does that leave our proud Jewish insider claims and counterclaims? Canceled? Yes, canceled. What we've learned is this: God does not respond to what *we* do; we respond to what *God* does. We've finally figured it out. Our lives get in step with God and all others by letting him set the pace, not by proudly or anxiously trying to run the parade.

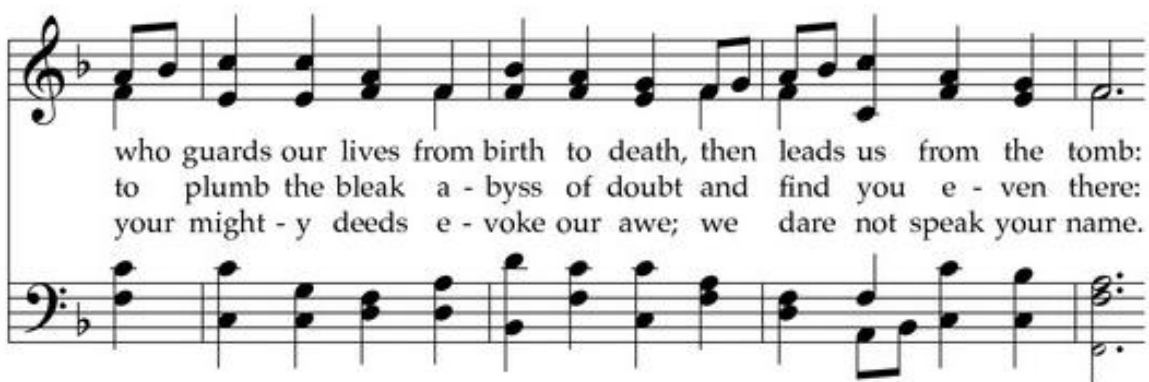
Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

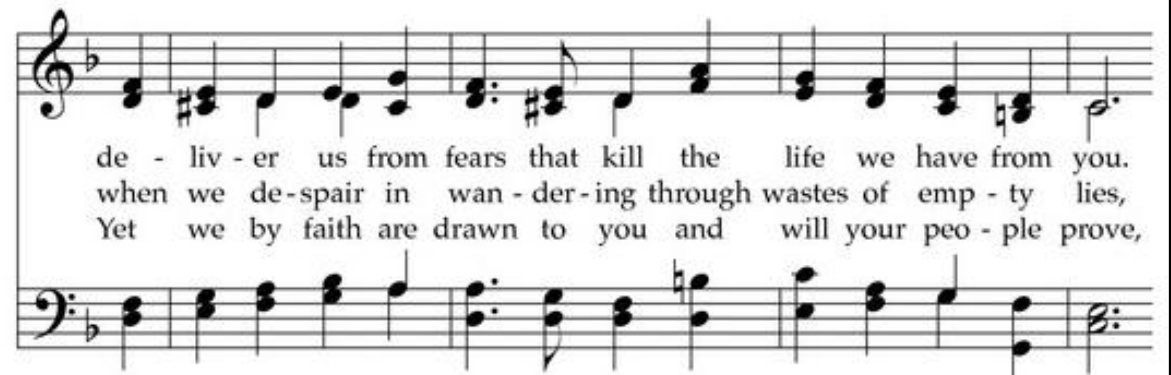
53 O God, Who Gives Us Life



1 O God, who gives us life and breath, who shapes us in the womb,
2 O God, who calls your people out to venture and to dare,
3 O God of cov-e - nant and law, re - vealed in cloud and flame,



who guards our lives from birth to death, then leads us from the tomb:
to plumb the bleak a - byss of doubt and find you e - ven there:
your might - y deeds e - voke our awe; we dare not speak your name.



de - liv - er us from fears that kill the life we have from you.
when we de-spair in wan - der - ing through wastes of emp - ty lies,
Yet we by faith are drawn to you and will your peo - ple prove,



Help us to know your Spir - it still is mak - ing all things new.
re - fresh us with the liv - ing spring of hope that nev - er dies.
as on our hearts you write a - new the cov - e - nant of love.

Christians often fail to appreciate how much we can learn about God from the Hebrew Scriptures. This text draws on a variety of passages that call attention to God's faithfulness toward the Chosen People and the promise of a new covenant written on the heart (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

✚ GOSPEL READING John 8:31-36

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free’?”

Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

The Gospel of the Lord. Thanks be to God

Sermon



Philipp Melanchthon (left), Martin Luther (center), Johann Bugenhagen (aka Pomeranus, second from right), and Caspar Cruciger (right) translate the Bible. *Lithograph by Alphonse Léon Noël from a painting by Pierre-Antoine Labouchère, ca. 1846.* [Image no. 4433]

Offering and Prayer of Dedication (unison)

Eternal God, use our gifts and our lives to advance your ways, to gather and grow the community of your followers, and to truly love one another. Let us continue to find creative ways to contribute to your ongoing work.

Enable us to hear your voice still calling us to reform Christ's church for your glory and our neighbor's good.

Amen.



+ Hymn "Open My Eyes That I May See" #324 BLUE

Used with permission.
One License #A-725614

324

Open My Eyes That I May See

Psalm 119:18 

Clara H. Scott, 1895

OPEN MY EYES 8.8.9.8 with refrain

Clara H. Scott, 1895



1. O - pen my eyes, that I may see Glimps - es of truth Thou hast for me;
2. O - pen my ears, that I may hear Voic - es of truth Thou send - est clear;
3. O - pen my mouth, and let me bear Glad - ly the warm truth ev - ery - where;



Place in my hands the won - der - ful key That shall un - clasp and set me free.
And while the wave notes fall on my ear, Ev - ery - thing false will dis - ap - pear.
O - pen my heart, and let me pre - pare Love with Thy chil - dren thus to share.



Refrain



Si - lent - ly now I wait for Thee, Read - y, my God, Thy will to see;



eyes,
O - pen my ears, il - lu - mine me, Spir - it di - vine!
heart,



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

ECUMENICAL

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever.
Amen.



O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

466

AZMON CM

Charles Wesley, 1738; alt.

Carl Gotthelf Gläser, 1828

Arr. Lowell Mason, 1839



1. O for a thou-sand tongues to sing My dear Re-deem-er's praise,
2. Je - sus, the name that charms our fears, That bids our sor - rows cease;
3. Christ breaks the power of reign - ing sin, And sets the pris - oner free;
4. My gra - cious Mas - ter and my God, As - sist me to pro - claim,



The glo - ries of my God and King, The tri-umphs of God's grace!
 'Tis mu - sic in the sin-ner's ears, 'Tis life, and health, and peace.
 Christ's blood can make the sin - ful clean, Christ's blood a - vailed for me.
 To spread through all the earth a - broad The hon - ors of Thy name.



SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

CHARGE AND BLESSING

As we leave this place today,
understand that is the beginning.
The best of our faith is yet to come.

And may the exhilarating mystery of God,
the courage of the Great Reformer Jesus,
and the dynamic nudging of the Spirit
excite us as we become reformers for the Divine.
Amen!



Postlude and Reflection

Historians give the date October 31, 1517 as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. It is a convenient way to mark the sweeping renewal and changes to theology, worship and congregational life which accompanied a time of profound cultural and political change. Some scholars point out that this reformation was the third such sweeping twice-a-millennium change in the history of the church. The first major transition occurred when the early church transitioned to the early orthodox catholic church. An additional monumental shift occurred after 1054, often called the Great Schism, in which the Latin speaking, Roman Catholic and Greek speaking, Eastern Orthodox churches formally parted ways.

Five hundred years after the Protestant Reformation, we are again in a time of dramatic cultural and religious change. Where do you see the Spirit of God at work?

How might churches and traditions like ours, be transformed or reformed in light of new understandings of the world, of God, and God's work in the world?

What does it mean for you personally to trust God, even in a time when the churches and theologies that have shaped us may be challenged by a coming reformation?

Thanks to

Presider: Rev. Peter Norland
Musician: Susie Byykkonen
Greeter: Lois Jambekar
Reader: Nancy Byers Sprague
Prayer Writer: Carl Vilmann
Coffee: Lois Jambekar, Mary Eckhart
Children's Church: Olivia Byykkonen

Serving Next Week

Presider: Rev. Peter Norland
Musician: Susie Byykkonen
Greeters: TBD
Reader: TBD
Prayer Writer: TBD
Coffee: TBD
Children's Church: Olivia Byykkonen

Next Sunday's Scripture

Daniel 7:1-3; Psalm 149; Ephesians 1:11-23;
Luke 6:20-31



Portage Lake United Church

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) & UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1400 East Houghton Avenue, Houghton Michigan 49931
www.PLUC.org office@pluc.org (906)482-5224

Rooted in the Trinity. Growing in God's Word.
Branching out to those in need. Nourished by many waters.

Visio Divina

Photos by

Ann Campbell
Sherry Middlemis-Brown

Additional descriptions can be found at the Art in the Christian Tradition image library, a service of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/>. All images available via Creative Commons 3.0 License.

1. All Scriptures taken from NRSV, copyright Thomas Nelson publishers.
2. All songs used with permission. One License #A-725614
3. Portions reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from Feasting on the Word® Worship Companion. Copyright 2013