

January / February 2024



PORTAGE FAITH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

9922 St. Rt. 44, Mantua, Ohio 44255

Mission Statement: "To be a family of faith in Christ through caring, serving, and fellowship"

The Bridge

Pastor's Corner

I admit it, I was a sceptic about Portage Faith's Living Christmas Card. Weeks of planning for a couple of nights of "shine?" And then it all gets stored away for another year.

Last year my wife, Diane, and I, were drive-through spectators of the Living Christmas Card. This year Diane and I were Mary and Joseph, thanks to some age-forgiveness clause. I found out that the Living Christmas Card began in the 1980's, an idea hatched by Kay Hinchman with help from Dorothy Caldwell.

Why does Portage Faith do a Living Christmas Card? Community outreach? Yes! Sharing the spirit of Christmas? Yes! Perhaps the idea is to get people to drive around the outside of the church so that they will eventually want to come inside the church and . . . grow their life of faith and serve others. Yes!

Portage Faith's Living Christmas card does what every Christmas card does—it connects people. Our "card" is a living, walking, flesh and blood, drive-by card. We organize ourselves with a steady stream of text messages. We talk with each other while we're setting up, while we're standing out in the cold, while we eat supper together. Personalities inevitably come out. We get to play a part and wear a costume. There's something for everyone to do. It's this "in it together," "find all the volunteers we can," that vitalizes the life of our church and attracts guests.

This year I learned that Portage Faith's Living Christmas Card has a powerful lingering effect. I will never forget watching Mary Tipton cross the church driveway, flap her angel wings, and proclaim "Fear not. I bring you good news." The "certain poor shepherds" were Roy with his shepherd-appropriate cane, Rick, hands raised in amazement, Nathan bundled up in his wheelchair, and Tom down-home comfy in his camp chair. Mary, Roy, Rick, Nathan, and Tom put themselves into their roles. I saw them in a new light. I can still see them! What if we all lived our lives like we were in a Living Christmas Card. Well, I know life is not that simple, but it's a good thought.

In November 2023 I led a memorial service for Mae Davis. Mae's grandson told me, "The thing I remember about this church is participating in the Living Christmas Card." Several kids have already told me that they want to be in next year's Living Christmas Card. It's certainly something to look forward to.

Our deep gratitude to Bev and David Fletcher, Taylor Electric, the Horner girls (and bros), and a huge supporting cast for all their hard work. Until next year!

Sunday Schedule

Sunday Worship at 9:30 am.

Children's Church will be held at 9:30 am on every Sunday except the first Sunday of the month.

Adult Sunday School will be held on the first and third Sunday at 8:30 am. Come join us as we study the word of God.

***Pastor's Walk-in Office hours at Portage Faith: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 to 11:00 am.** Other times by appointment.

***Weekly Prayer time with Pastor Bill, Tuesdays, 7:00 to 7:45 am.**

***Pastor Bill's Coffee Shop Hours at Restoration 44 Coffee in Mantua on Wednesdays, 3:00-4:00 pm.**

***Check announcements for any schedule changes that may come up.**

If you have any updates to your membership status, name, address, phone number or email, please notify the church office. Call or email the office at 330-274-8987 or pfumcoffice@gmail.com.

Committee Meeting Reminders:

Worship Committee:

Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 7:00 pm

Finance Meetings:

Thursday, Jan. 11 at 6:30 pm

Thursday, Feb 8. at 6:30 pm

Trustee Meeting:

Tuesday, Jan. 11 at 7:00 pm

The Ad. Council:

Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 7:00 pm

UMM Breakfast Meetings:

Sunday, Jan. 14 at 7:30 am

Sunday, Feb. 11 at 7:30 am

UWF Breakfast Meetings:

Sunday, Jan. 28 at 8:00 am

Sunday, Feb. 25 at 8:00 am

Liturgist Schedule

- Jan 7 Doris Gharky
- 14 Chris Chaykowski
- 21 Ted Taylor
- 28 Steve Weinkamer

- Feb 4 Ted Taylor
- 11 Linda Weinkamer
- 18 Matt Ruchalski
- 25 Debbie Bahr

Ash Wednesday Service will be on **February 14 at 7:00 pm.**

The prayer chain is a source of comfort to all. It's easy to submit your prayer requests; either by writing it on the church prayer card during worship service, (check add to prayer chain) or by Cindy Pearce by phone 330-274-0507.

If you would like to be a prayer warrior, please let Cindy know.



A big **thank you** to everyone for being so generous in giving \$100.00 and donating fifty items to Safer Futures Women's Shelter. This was a successful mission to help others.

Another big **thank you** goes out to everyone who donated their delicious cookies and those who helped with the Cookie Walk. This wonderful event raised \$631.05.

On behalf of the United Women in Faith we would like to **thank everyone** who helped with the Bazaar! We really appreciated ALL the crafts, soup, baked and canned goods, along with all the ladies who helped price, set up, ladled 75+ quarts of soup, worked in the kitchen and/or cashiered. We couldn't have done it without your help and generous donations! With your tremendous support we raised over \$2,300. Thank you so very much!

I want to say **thank you** to everyone who participated in the Living Christmas Card! It was a great weekend! We received \$612.00 in donations for the Crestwood Sunshine Club and \$320.00 for future Outreach. We gave out 300 candy canes and 400 cookies to over 120 cars that drove through. A huge thank you to the 70 people who made this all possible and a special thanks to all who helped set up, baked, organized, created costumes and helped tear down everything - Tom Kennedy, David Fletcher, Kevin Horner, Kathie Baumgardner, Linda Shaulis, Mary and Jerry Tipton, Erika Barnett, Ted and Tim Taylor, Michael and Marilyn Horner, Linda Weinkamer, John Spence, Matt and Amanda Ruchalski, Cindy and Kevin Pearce, Debbie Sike, Gera Kennedy and kitchen crew! Thanks again and again! I so appreciate your dedication and hard work.

Bev Fletcher

Thanks to the congregation of Portage Faith for your generous Christmas gift. We appreciate your care and the way you've made us both feel at home in the last six month as Bill made the transition from retirement to pastor. We look forward to growing deeper roots and serving with you in the year ahead. Gratefully, Bill and Diane Graham.

My heartfelt **thanks** to everyone at Portage Faith for your generous Christmas gifts, cards, prayers and the all the love you shower upon me throughout the year. I am richly blessed by all of you! In Christ, Jeanette

Our most grateful **thanks to Connie Lienicke** for donating her time and talents in creating our new website. **Please visit our new beautiful website at PortageFaith.com**

United Methodist Men's Utility Fund. This fund is dedicated for an upgrade in our water and sewage utilities. This is an entire church project and the U.M.M. are **actively seeking donations.** For more information, please contact Tom Kennedy 330-388-1356 or Rick Bahr 330-414-7145.

Update: Water lines are now expected to reach Portage Faith later in 2025. Continued support is very much needed and appreciated.

GOT SCRAP? The United Methodist Men would like to take it off your hands. The United Methodist Men's scrap drive has been a great fundraiser. For pick up, just call Tom Kennedy (330-388-1356)

The United Methodist Men's group earned \$273.00 in scrap sales in October thanks to all the metal donations. Please continue to place any scrap donations beside the storage building.

The 4C's - Donations of non-perishable food, paper products, and personal care items are needed to help keep the 4C's well stocked for those in need. Bring donations to the church and put in the shopping cart near the entry.



Thank you for the blessing of beautiful Altar Flowers:

November flowers were given by Lynn and Sharon Wright in memory of Marie Herberth and by Kirk and Karon Mooney in honor of church family.

December flowers were given by Deb Sike in celebration of Chris Chaykowski's birthday and by Kirk and Karon Mooney in celebration of their 55th wedding anniversary!



January Anniversaries

- 5 Lynn & Sharon Wright married 44 years
- 13 Kyle & Carlye Pearce married 6 years
- 29 Mickey & Pamela Braden married 47 years

February Anniversaries

- 3 Doug & Carol McIntosh married 56 years
- 23 Roger & Linda Hammel married 16 years

Happy January Birthdays

- 3 Jerry Tipton
- 5 Maxine Hill
- 6 Cressinda McCrady
- 6 Doris Gharky
- 8 Anne Spence
- 8 Justin Shannon
- 9 John Peters
- 11 Kummel Hammel
- 12 Tana Shaulis
- 18 Shane Chaykowski
- 19 David Fletcher
- 20 Trent McCaul
- 20 Olivia Shaulis
- 23 Don Bowker
- 25 Betty Bednar
- 25 Sharon Wright
- 27 Linda Weinkamer
- 29 Kim Weingart
- 29 James Dennis

Happy February Birthdays

- 3 Jeff Kennedy
- 4 Carrie Pearce
- 4 Jaxson Barnett
- 5 Tim Pearce
- 7 Autumn Richards
- 9 Patric McCon
- 10 Bob Lange
- 13 Kyree Kerkan
- 14 Everett Lange
- 17 Randy Weingart
- 17 Wendy Ullman
- 24 Kaeley Taylor
- 25 Willis Sands
- 28 Terri Wilde

UWF elections happened in November for the upcoming year of 2024. Recia Ragle is the new President and will be in charge of meetings and will attend Administrative Council meetings. Doris Gharky is the Vice President and will still be in charge of funeral dinners and any programming to be done for UWF. Also re-elected to the positions they have held for years, Cindy Pearce as Secretary and Debbie Bahr as treasurer. We are so blessed and we appreciate their willingness to continue in those positions.

The Prayer and Praise section are prayers on behalf of the parishioners and friends.

For Healing and treatment for

- Sandy Ferguson
- Jamar Copeland
- Susanne Fleming
- Karen Rubinett
- Jeff Johnson
- Megan Shelley
- Terri Wilde
- Gayle Jones
- Zackery Monhart
- Nancy Infante
- Lynn Wright
- Lois Pfeiffer
- John Kline
- Mike Pietro
- Mrs. Hanford

Praise and Thanksgiving for Drew Pfost's sports successes and The Advent Celebration was wonderful.

For Comfort and Peace

Doris Pearce on the passing of her sister.
Friends and family on the passing of Joseph Duriak.
Friends and family on the passing of Dave Kennat.
Friends and family on the passing of Dale Lacan.
The Wilterdink family on the passing of daughter Cora.
The Austin-Walrath family on the passing of grandson.
Family and friends on the passing of Rita Kline

Prayers for families who are caring for their family members with physical and mental health concerns.

*Psalm 121:1-2 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?
2 My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

PORTAGE FAITH UMC
9922 ST. RT. 44
MANTUA, OH 44255
(Address Service Requested)