

January/February 2026



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

Sunday Schedule

Sunday Worship at 9:30 am

Children's Church: Children are invited to stay in church on 1st Sundays when Holy Communion is served. Children's Church all other Sundays.

*Pastor's Walk-in Office

hours at Portage Faith:

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 to 11:00 am. Other times by appointment.

Please make an appointment with Pastor Bill for Coffee Shop Hours at Restoration 44 Coffee in Mantua.

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

Important:

If you have any updates to your membership status, change of marriage status, had a child, new phone number, new address or email, please notify the church office. Call or email the office at 330-274-8987 or officeadmin@portagefaith.com. Thank you!

Speaking the Truth in Love

We turn off the sanctuary lights. We let the darkness seep in for a couple of minutes. We light our candles. Then together, we sing "Silent Night, Holy Night."

Christmas Eve candle-lighting worship at Portage Faith Church is the heart of the Christmas celebration for me. From my perspective as a pastor, I get to see everyone's face lit in the glow of candlelight.

On Christmas Eve we gather as extended families who are surrounded by adult children and grandchildren, as single people who come by ourselves, as couples whose family lives far away, as people new to this congregation. We come to worship even as we miss loved ones; are uncomfortable being in church; are feeling guilty for something we've done or said; are struggling with our faith in God or our hurts inflicted by other people. Whoever we are, whatever we are dealing with, we all want to be with others as we celebrate Christmas and are illuminated by the light of Christ's love. It wouldn't be Christmas without this candle-lit night.

But the candlelight moment never feels like it lasts long enough. We tell each other, "The light has come into the world, and the darkness can't extinguish it," and then we gently blow out our candles.

How do we shine the light of Christmas after Christmas? How do we carry the light of Christ into our everyday routines, into a new year?

The real work of Christmas begins after Christmas. "To find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among others, to make music in the heart." (From "The Work of Christmas," a poem by Howard Thurman).

Remember that lit candle we held on Christmas Eve? We are the light of the world! We are people responsible for carrying that light into the world. Oh, and BTW, God promises to go with us. Happy New Year!

Pastor Bill

Committee Meeting Schedules:

Finance Meetings:

Thursday, January 8 at 6:30 pm

Trustee Meeting:

Thursday, January 8 at 7:00 pm

The Ad. Council:

Tuesday, January 20 at 7:00 pm

Worship Committee:

Thursday, January 22 at 7:00 pm

UMM Breakfast Meetings:

Sunday, January 11 at 7:30 am

Sunday, February 8 at 7:30 am

UWF Breakfast Meetings:

Sunday, January 25 at 8:00 am

Sunday, February 22 at 8:00 am

Liturgist Schedule

January

4 Linda Weinkamer
11 Steve Weinkamer
18 Cindy Pearce
25 Matt Ruchalski

February

1 Ted Taylor
8 Debbie Bahr
15 Terri Wilde
22 Steve Weinkamer

Vision Mini-Retreat

All members and friends of Portage Faith United Methodist Church are cordially invited to participate in a "Vision Mini-Retreat", Saturday, February 14, 2026, 9:00 am-12:00 noon, to help our congregation set a direction for future ministry and build an annual calendar.

Your help is needed as Portage Faith Church discerns

- What God is doing in our community
- What are the unique talents and abilities of our congregation
- How we will focus our energy as God's servants

Refreshments will be served.

(This mini retreat was originally scheduled for October 2025)

Lent is a 40-day season of preparation for the celebration of Easter, stretching from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday (April 2, 2026). Sundays are not included in the count of days, because they are considered "little Easters." When it was first observed, in the early church, it was a time when "converts" [new members] would prepare for baptism through fasting, prayer and instruction. Today, Lent is an opportunity for us to intentionally grow in faith through practices that deepen our connection to God and our connections with neighbors. We grow best when we grow in the company of others. You are invited



Ash Wednesday worship, February 18, 7:00 pm in the sanctuary with the imposition of ashes and an invitation to observe a holy Lent.

Pastor Bill will lead a 6-week Lenten Study Group, Thursdays, 10-11:30 am, February 19-March 26, 2026. We'll consider how loving our neighbors helps us deepen our love of God. Our time together will include discussion and sharing.

January Anniversaries

5 Lynn & Sharon Wright married 46 years
13 Kyle & Carlye Pearce married 8 years
29 Mickey & Pamela Braden married 49 years

February Anniversaries

3 Doug & Carol McIntosh married 58 years
23 Roger & Linda Hammel married 18 years

Thank you for the blessing of Beautiful Altar Flowers:

November

For All Saints Day by Doug and Carol McIntosh
For Jim and Darlene Dennis' Anniversary by Jim
and Darlene Dennis
For the 10th anniversary of Ben and Olivia Wilde
by Terri and Jeff Wilde

December

In Celebration of Advent by the United Women
in Faith
In Celebration of Kirk and Karon Mooney's
Anniversary by Kirk and Karon Mooney.
To the Glory of God by Doug and Carol McIntosh

Happy January Birthdays

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

Happy February Birthdays

2 Jeanine Kuhlman
3 Jeff Kennedy
4 Carrie Pearce
4 Jaxson Barnett
5 Tim Pearce
7 Autumn Richards
9 Patric McCon
10 Bob Lange
13 Kyree Kerkkan
14 Everett Lange
17 Randy Weingart
17 Wendy Ullman
19 Griffin Wilde
20 Jeremiah Butcher
20 Roy Harris
20 Larry Kuhlman
22 Sharon Harris
22 Karon Mooney
24 Kaeley Taylor
25 Willis Sands
28 Terri Wilde

Special thanks to everyone who helped make the 2025 Bazaar and Country Store such a success! We had a wonderful assortment of soups, tasty goodies, beautiful handmade ornaments, 3-D jewelry, diamond art, wreaths, pottery, koozies, and so much more! Delectable refreshments were also served in the kitchen. On behalf of UWF, we sincerely appreciated all the donations and helpers! With your tremendous support we raised over \$2,500. Thank you so very much!

Thank you!

Diane and I thank the congregation of Portage Faith United Methodist Church for the generous Christmas gift we received. In so many ways you care for us and let us know we are appreciated. It's a privilege to serve you in ministry at Portage Faith.
Gratefully, Bill and Diane Graham.



Special thanks to everyone for the Christmas greeting cards with heartfelt sentiments! I'm truly grateful to serve as your church secretary, it fills my heart with happiness. Also, Thank you for the \$100 Amazon gift card! I appreciate your generosity!
Sincerely, Jeanette Ryman

HELP WANTED: The Bursars are looking for two members to join our team to help us count the offering after church on Sundays. Individuals will be teamed up with another experienced Bursar, and you normally only have Bursar once, maybe twice per month. If you would like to help, please contact Debbie Bahr at 216-408-5278.

Special Message:

Portage Faith Church received 50th Anniversary greetings from Connie Matthews Webber and the Rev. Vernon Shepherd. The land our church now occupies was purchased from Connie's family. Vern was pastor of Portage Faith Church, 1985-1992. Read their messages on the "Church News" bulletin board between the church office and Pastor Bill's office.

In November 2025, Portage Faith United Methodist Church received a gift of \$25,000 in loving memory of James L. and Doris L. Pearce. The gift is presented by Jim and Doris' children: Kevin and Cindy Pearce, Tim and Tammy Pearce, Lisa Cutlip, Rhonda (posthumously) and Ken Grudowski, and Tracie Simon (posthumously) in recognition of Jim and Doris Pearce's steadfast love and support of Portage Faith United Methodist Church for 50 years. Jim and Doris were involved in the building of Portage Faith UM Church. For Jim and Doris there was really no separation between church and home. They treated their church like it was home and they lived their faith by welcoming everyone as a child of God. At the Pearce family's request, the memorial gift is designated for the update of our sanctuary's audio and visual equipment. With thanksgiving for Jim and Doris Pearce's lives, the congregation of Portage Faith United Methodist Church receives the generous gift from the Pearce family.

Please send cards and letters with encouraging words, love and best wishes to Drew Pfost currently serving our Country! Below is his current address. Military members do move around, so watch for address changes in the announcements.

Andrew V. Pfost IV
437 Tully Street
P.O. Box 4035
Hurlbert Field, Florida 32544

Wish List for the 4C's in January

- Instant boxed potatoes
- Tuna skillet dinner
- Hamburger skillet dinner

Please consider giving monetary donations so that the 4C's can purchase perishable items like milk, bread and eggs. Make your check out to Portage Faith UMC with 4C's in the memo line, place check in the offering plate or just mail it to the church. Thank you!

From the Treasurer's Desk
Income-Expense Comparison Report

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2025 notes</u>
	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Net</u>	
January	\$12,359	\$11,964	\$395	
February	\$10,031	\$17,500	\$(7,469)	gas, plow, heat
March	\$10,479	\$13,182	\$(2,703)	furnace repair
April	\$9,040	\$11,632	\$(2,592)	furnace repair
May	\$9,136	\$13,452	\$(4,316)	furnace repair
June	\$9,876	\$9,731	\$145	
July	\$12,187	\$10,571	\$1,616	
August	\$10,600	\$11,029	\$(429)	
September	\$9,866	\$9,159	\$707	
October	\$10,274	\$13,449	\$(3,175)	3x payrolls
November	\$15,766	\$13,293	\$2,473	
December	\$14,789	\$13,584	\$1,205	
Total	\$134,402	\$148,546	\$(14,144)	
Year-to-date	\$134,402	\$148,546	\$(14,144)	
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024 notes</u>
	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Net</u>	
January	\$11,632	\$17,880	\$(6,248)	gas, plow
February	\$12,172	\$11,212	\$960	
March	\$11,943	\$10,546	\$1,397	
April	\$8,904	\$11,815	\$(2,911)	
May	\$8,058	\$10,112	\$(2,054)	
June	\$11,761	\$15,775	\$(4,014)	air conditioners
July	\$10,223	\$10,866	\$(643)	
August	\$9,123	\$16,901	\$(7,778)	tree removal
September	\$9,369	\$11,796	\$(2,427)	
October	\$9,560	\$10,553	\$(993)	
November	\$9,797	\$10,022	\$(225)	
December	\$27,877	\$13,011	\$14,866	year-end giving!
Total	\$140,419	\$150,489	\$(10,070)	
Year-to-date	\$140,419	\$150,489	\$(10,070)	

PORTAGE FAITH UMC

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MANTUA, OH 44255

(Address Service Requested)

Pastor Bill Graham

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Website: [Https://Portagefaith.com](https://Portagefaith.com)



The prayer chain is a source of comfort to all. **If you have a prayer need**, just submit your prayer requests; either by writing it on the church prayer card during worship service, (check add to prayer chain) or by contacting the Pastor Bill, Cindy Pearce or Linda Weinkamer. If you would like to be added as prayer warrior, please let Cindy or Pastor Bill know.