

Bridge Newsletter

July – August 2026

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

Speaking the Truth in Love

Portage Faith United Methodist Church responds with food, personal hygiene items, and monetary donations needed in our community through the 4-C’s. Our Summer 2026 VBS has selected “Kids Weekend Meals” as our local mission project. In the fall, every year, we celebrate Blanket Sunday. As a congregation we respond to the needs of our community with generosity. However, in order to grow as disciples Jesus wants something more.

Phil Maynard, church development coach and consultant, makes the distinction between “missional gestures” and “the ministry of engagement”. “‘Missional gestures’ provide resources that are needed, but without involvement in the lives of those in need – without ‘getting our hands dirty’.” Maynard, who died this past year, believed that “every congregation should be involved in at least one ‘ministry of engagement’ where the congregation interacts directly with people receiving the services [it provides].” Maynard continues, “Direct contact with those being served . . . fosters the building of relationships with people so they may come to know the love of Christ. It engages our hands and feet rather than just our pocketbooks.” (Phil Maynard, *Shift 2.0*, p.159)

A ministry of engagement helps us better understand the needs of our community and it helps us address societal issues with justice and mercy in a way that “missional gestures” cannot. People who build relationships with those they serve often report that they receive back more than they give. Youth service projects like Appalachian Service Project and the Nehemiah Project, in which Portage Faith UMC once participated, are examples of the ministry of engagement.

As your pastor, I have observed that we at Portage Faith are great at taking care of our own. Jesus is now challenging us to turn from a church focused inward to become a church that also focuses outward, providing direct ministry to those who are not already part of our family. Exactly what our ministry of direct engagement will be, I do not yet know – though I have some ideas. I feel God’s nudge. The risen Christ who lives among us is calling us to serve.

Pastor Bill

WORSHIP SERVICE:
Sundays 9:30 am

Committee Meetings:

Finance & Trustees Meeting

Off for the summer

The Ad. Council

Off for the summer

UMM Breakfast Mtg.

Sunday, July 12 at 7:30 am
Sunday, August 9 at 7:30 am

UWF Breakfast Mtg.

Sunday, July 26 at 8:00 am
hosted by Doris Gharky
Sunday, August 23 at 8:00 am
hosted by Cindy Pearce

Book Club is held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am. All are welcome, just show up in the library!

Our next Book Club will be on Tuesday, July 14. Each member will be selecting an Amish Book to read and report on. After each book is reviewed, we're planning to go to an Amish Restaurant for Lunch, perhaps, Mary Yoder's in Middlefield.

**PASTOR'S walk-in
Office hours at Portage
Faith:**

Feel Free to walk-in
or call ahead on
Tuesdays and
Thursdays 9:00 to
11:00 am. Other times
by appointment.

Check the weekly
announcement sheet
for any changes that
may occur.

Liturgists:

July

5 Chris Chaykowski
12 Linda Weinkamer
19 Ted Taylor
26 Steve Weinkamer

August

2 VBS Sunday
9 Debbie Bahr
16 Terri Wilde
23 Ted Taylor
30 Doris Gharky

July Birthdays and Anniversaries:

1 Joshua Cutlip
1 Warren & Recia Ragle married 48 yrs
3 Tom & Laura Taylor married 27 yrs
7 Torrey Taylor
7 Bonnie Marek
11 Cindy Pearce
11 Iris McCon
11 Kim Schwesinger
12 Vicki Schrecengost
13 Darlene Dennis
15 Adalynn Brand
17 Kimberly Tipton
20 Jim Marek
21 Laura Taylor
21 Chad Roberts
23 Connor Pearce
23 Tim & Lynne McDermott married 32 yrs
24 Mary Tipton
24 Scott Weinkamer
25 Brian Wolff
27 Rowen Kerkan
28 Jeff & Erika Barnett married 14 years
28- Connor & Rachel Pearce Married 8 years
31 Amelia Kennedy

August Birthdays and Anniversaries:

1 Jackie Combs
1 Barb Burgess
1 Steve & Mimi Donnie married 53 years
2 James Peters
3 Gera Kennedy
3 David Hluch
4 Justina Horner
5 Christopher Fletcher
5 Amanda Ruchalski
6 Kaitlyn Roberts
8 Catherine Harbaugh
8 James Hoover
8 Roy and Sharon Harris 39 years
9 Sharron Bysura
10 Margaret MacLearie
10 Cameron Wolff
11 Harold Ullman
12 Alie Ruchalski
14 Harold & Joyce Ullman married 61 years
15 Erika Barnett
18 Henry Hoover
19 Debbie Sike
19 Eugene & Doris Ann Gharky married 54 years
20 Kathie Baumgardner
21 Tom Shaulis
21 Katrina Richards
27 Linda Shaulis
28 Douglas McIntosh
29 Jocelyn Soard

Hope Circle will meet on Thursday, July 23rd in the Blue Room. It's our annual Potluck Picnic, so everyone is asked to bring food to share. To honor our Country's 250th Birthday, we'll be hearing from Five Women of the American Revolution: Margaret Corbin, Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley, Hannah White Arnett, Nancy Morgan Hart, and Deborah Sampson Gannett.



You are all invited to this year's VBS program. All ages are welcome to join in the fun and learning.

Rainforest Falls VBS will run Tuesday, July 28th from 5:30 to 8:15 PM through Friday, July 31st, with our VBS Sunday Program August 2nd at 9:30 AM in the sanctuary.

An online registration form is available from the QR Code, and paper registrations are located on the table in the narthex.



Sign up today! We look forward to seeing you in the Rainforest.

VBS for Adults. Not a kid anymore? Fret not! You're never too old for Vacation Bible School! You're invited for supper, opening and closing celebrations, and a lesson with Pastor Bill, **5:30 pm-8:30 pm, July 28-31, 2026.** This summer's VBS theme, "**Rainforest Falls**" plunges us into the abundant grace of God and calls us to do our part to care for and restore a flourishing rainforest community. We'll explore what's distinctive about the way Methodists speak and act in "the jungle" of everyday life. Come for the fun of it and grow in faith. Please sign up on the narthex table or contact Pastor Bill.



VBS Mission Project: As we step through the mist of Rainforest Falls and plunge into an adventure discovering the nature of God, we'll also be taking a collection for Kids Weekend Meals. This program feeds kids from preschool to age 18 in the Crestwood Local School district. Each night during VBS (July 28-31), and again on VBS Sunday (Aug 2), we'll be taking a collection to support this mission project. Please help us by bringing any of the following items. Our goal is to overflow our shopping cart and/or raise \$300. Your support is greatly appreciated and will make a real difference in our community. Thank you!

Cans of mini ravioli, beefaroni, etc.	Green beans or mixed veggies (15 oz size)
Fruit cups with no added sugar	Shelf stable pudding cups
Juice boxes with no added sugar	Monetary donations*

* If paying by check, please make payment to Portage Faith UMC and note VBS Mission in memo line.

Dear Congregation, The Vacation Bible School Committee

is seeking donations of nonperishable items for our upcoming **VBS "Rainforest Falls Exploring the Nature of God" July 28 through July 31 from 5:30 pm to 8:15 pm.** The following items are needed and would be greatly appreciated: **Six 64 oz. 100% Fruit Juice (any flavor), 4 Bottles Unsweetened Iced Tea, 200 Dixie 9" Plates, 200 Clear Plastic Forks, 200 White Napkins and 100 Salad Bowls.** The signup sheet is on the table in the Narthex, and the donation tote is below the table. Thank you and hope to see you there.

SAVE THE DATE: Our Bishop, the Rev. Hee-Soo Jung, will be visiting Portage Faith Church on **Wednesday morning, August 19th.** This is our congregation's opportunity to welcome and meet our bishop in-person. Come and introduce yourself. Bishop Jung is gracious, supportive, compassionate, and enthusiastic about the ministry of every local United Methodist Church he serves. Pastor Bill would like as many members of the Portage Faith family as possible to come and greet Bishop Jung. Bishop Jung has a goal of visiting every congregation in his East and West Ohio Episcopal Area – about 1,000 churches – in his first four years as bishop. Since July 2025, Bishop Jung has visited about 400 congregations. More details will be announced as we get closer to August 19th.



SAVE THE DATE: The annual Church Picnic is planned for Saturday, August 22 starting at 4:00 pm at Deb Sike's home. Come for the food, fun and fellowship!

Congratulations to our 2026 Graduates:

- ❖ **Alie Ruchalski** (daughter of Matt and Amanda Ruchalski) graduated from Berkshire High School as valedictorian. Alie distinguished herself in athletics and was a member of the National Honor Society. Alie will attend the University of Chicago this fall.
- ❖ **Johnny Peters** (grandson of Larry and Phyllis Peters) graduated from Ohio State University with a master's degree in accounting.
- ❖ **Katrina Richards** graduated from Crestwood High School. Katrina was selected as a May Senior of the Month by the Portage Senior Board.



SAVE THE DATE: Ladies mark your calendars for Saturday, October 17th for the UWF Retreat at Camp Asbury. Our program will be a study of lighthouses and God's light in our lives. More details in September. Hope you will be able to come!

Thank you note from the Schrecengost Family: “Dear Portage Faith Family, We would like to thank you all for the tremendous outpouring of love to our parents on their 70th wedding anniversary celebration. Thank you for letting us use the fellowship hall as well as takeover the church coffee hour to do a small celebration on their behalf. We felt it was very fitting to include their much-loved church family as you all have been such a treasured part of their lives. Thank you again for everyone’s part in making this a memorable experience for them. We appreciate you all! Love, the entire Schrecengost family.”

Dorothy Caldwell Legacy Gift Received:

On June 16, 2026, Portage Faith United Methodist Church received a legacy gift of \$60,992 from the estate of our beloved Dorothy Caldwell.

For almost 65 years Dorothy made Portage Faith Church her home – for 43 of those years with her husband, Merritt Caldwell. Our church and our Shalersville community bear the marks of Dorothy Caldwell’s dedication and leadership. Dorothy was the person who took charge of the church kitchen for funeral and memorial dinners. As a long-time Trustee of our church, Dorothy was influential in the care of our church. The Living Christmas Card and other annual fundraising projects were initiated by the dynamic duo of Dorothy Caldwell and Kay Hinchman. Dorothy gifted our church with a stairlift, connecting downstairs fellowship and ministry with upstairs worship and praise for people with mobility challenges.

Dorothy made sure her faithfulness and her love of Portage Faith United Methodist Church would continue long after her death. Dorothy designated her \$60,992 gift for future capital improvements at Portage Faith Church.

Pastor Bill and Diane will be on vacation July 4-11, 2026. In an emergency, Pastor Bill can be reached with calls and texts on his cell phone. The Rev. Sue Ritts will be our guest preacher on July 5, 2026.

The men of Portage Faith want to say thank you to the ladies for the wonderful pie social after church on Father's Day. The pies, cookies and brownies were delicious, and we deeply appreciate your kindness.

The 4C’s wish list for July is Peanut Butter, Sloppy Joe Sauce and Canned Pasta.

Please no expired food. Place your items in the shopping cart near the entrance. Please consider giving monetary donations so that the 4C’s can purchase perishable foods. Make your check out to Portage Faith with 4C’s in the memo and place the check in the offering plate. Thank you!

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