

The Open Door

Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
We believe in God and in each other.
The People of The United Methodist Church

April 2024 Volume 22 Issue 4



Syzygy

On Monday, April 8th, a solar eclipse will cover the land in darkness. A solar eclipse occurs when the sun, moon, and earth are in complete alignment with one another, a phenomenon known as syzygy. Syzygy is of Greek origin, and is tied to the words zygote and zygon, which is later modified to the English word yoke. Syzygy denotes alignment; the three bodies must be in line in order for an eclipse to occur. Similarly, a yoke that is intended for two animals doesn't work if the animals aren't tied to it, or if the animals are yoked facing opposite directions, or if only one animal is secured.

In Matthew 11, Jesus offers his yoke to us. With him, our load is lighter. With him, our burdens are borne more easily. With him, our weary souls may find rest. But we must choose to put on the yoke of a follower. We must choose to walk alongside Christ as we share our load. We must choose to align ourselves with his will. And that isn't always an easy thing to do, an easy load to bear. There are times where we want to go in the opposite direction. There are times where we want to sluff off our yoke. There are times where we want to ignore Christ completely and put the yoke from our minds altogether. But when we do, we must ask with whom are we aligning ourselves? To what are we yoked? What is our aim, our purpose, our destination? When we cast Christ's yoke aside, we are no longer in syzygy with the Godhead. We are off-balance. We are off kilter. We are heavily burdened and wearied by the toll that life takes on us. Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden is light; willingly put it on and experience the freedom found in aligning yourself to his will. Amen.

Rev. Lenora Whitecotton

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OUR USHERS:


1st	The Feldpauschs
2nd	The Bengels
3rd	Bruce & Linda Croel
4th	Bill & Connie Almy



Portland United Methodist Church
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<h1>March Attendance</h1>	
Week Of:	Online Facebook Live & In Person Views/Shares/Sign-in
March 3	59 In Person, 11 Online 195 Views/3 Shares
March 10	62 Person, 6 Online 182 Views/ 3 Shares
March 17	62 In Person, 5 Online 164 Views/2 Shares
March 24	88 In Person, 5 Online 150 Views/3 Shares
March 31	78 In Person, 14 Online 241 Views/ 2 Shares

FEBRUARY SERMON SCHEDULE:
May 5: Guest Speaker, Michelle VanSlambrouk
May 12: Hymn Sing
May 19: Breathing on Dry Bones
May 26: Love to the Power of Three



Hello April

News and Notes from the Leadership Board

On behalf of the Leadership Board, I am hoping this finds you well and that you are gearing up for sunshine and warmer weather. He is Risen...He is Risen INDEED and He is doing great things through all of us at PUMC! We have so much to be thankful for and one of the ways we can give back is through volunteerism. As we all know, we have very few paid positions in this church. That being said, at the very basic level, we can't "do" church without our volunteers who faithfully show up and help things run smoothly. Many hands truly do make light work. I would ask that you prayerfully consider where you can give of your time. Below is a list of areas in need:

1. Usher/Greeters: All you need is a warm smile and an understanding of the building so you can point people in the right direction. There are some tasks that happen during service: counting those in service, collecting offering, locking up after service. Please see Connie Almy to sign-up.
2. Counters: Are you good at math? Me neither! Thanks goodness we have adding machines! Seriously though, we are in need of people to count the offering after service and prepare the deposit each week. Training is available! Please see Beth Bengel to sign up!
3. Children's Ministry/Nursery: Praise God that this is an area of ministry that we continue to see growth in!! As a result, we need more volunteers to teach our little people the love of Jesus! Please see Mary Bresnahan to sign up!
4. Media Team: Running the sound board and the computer are not skills that many people feel confident in and that is OKAY! We have a great team to teach you! Please see Dave Duffield or Eric Sutherland to sign up!

In addition, we have a couple "one time a year" type of volunteer opportunities.

1. Connie Almy is looking for volunteers to help with the Annual Chicken BBQ on Monday, May 27th. This year, as in the last several years, we will be partnering with the VFW to put on this event.

There are tasks that can be done before the event like baking cookies and washing potatoes but the majority of volunteers are needed the day of the event. Please see Connie to sign up!

2. Spring has sprung which means that our annual church clean-up day is near! This year it is scheduled for Saturday April 20th , rain (or snow) makeup day is the 27th . There are many tasks on the list and Bill Almy would be happy to sign you up for one of them! Please see Bill for more information.

Last but certainly not least. One of the goals we set as a Board, is to better communicate training opportunities through the UM denomination. I am excited to share that there are Lay Speaker classes being offered in 3 different locations in mid-Michigan in April and May. If you are interested, please reach out to Pastor Lenora for more information.

Blessed to be a Blessing,
Jen Thomas, Leadership Board Chair
517-803-8080
Jthoma403@aol.com

The Neighborhood!

Hello Friends,

I hope you all are having a wonderful Spring and a relaxing Spring Break. It has been crazy weather that is for sure.

Just an update to those that have not been in Church the last few weeks. We have separated the Sunday School into 2 groups. We have the lower elementary classroom, from dk to 2nd grade, and the upper elementary classroom, from 3rd grade to 5th grade. This allows the older group to dive deeper into the lessons, and the younger group will be taught the lesson at their level.

The Kids did a great job for the Easter Skit. I was so proud of them all. I would like to thank all the parents, Susan, Brandon, Pastor Lenora, and the congregation for all their help and support for this Ministry. It means a lot to us all.

See you all on Sunday.

In Christ,
Mary

Chicken BBQ

volunteers needed

Volunteers needed for the annual Memorial Day Chicken BBQ. To Volunteer, contact Connie Almy: 616-443-9436

HELPING HANDS MINISTRY

Thank you to those who have donated to this ministry. We are one of the churches called upon by PAMA (Portland Area Ministerial Association) to assist people in the Portland School District with financial problems. We have contributed to 7 different needs since the beginning of 2024. If you wish to contribute to this ministry, which over the years has helped so many of our neighbors, please make your check payable to PUMC and be sure to indicate Helping Hands on the memo line. Donations can also be done online.

Prayer Requests



If you have a concern to be addressed by our prayer chain, please contact the church.

Bruce Daman	George Becker
Barb Gillis	Allen Randall
Bruce Jackson	Vickee Balsar
Sharon (Hill) Longstreth	
Amy Kahn	
Kelly Mosser	
Susan Smith	
Diana Spangler	

Please contact the office if you would like a name added next month.

Please pray for our Service Men & Women:
Jared Thomas



Please pray for our Homebound

Jean Almy
6876 Reeder Road
Lyons, MI 48851

Bruce Daman
4000 North Michigan Rd
Dimondale, MI 48821

Bud Moyer
4775 Village Dr. Apt 147
Grand Ledge, MI 48837

Thank You

Thank you, Maureen Wallace, for volunteering to be the new Prayer Chain Coordinator.

wallacemd7204@yahoo.com

OUR CHURCH'S FINANCIAL HEALTH

Year-To-Date as of March 30, 2024

Income

Offering	\$ 42,819.29
Misc. Income	\$ 461.81
Total	\$ 43,281.10

Expenses

Pastoral Support	\$ 19,704.10
Lay Support	\$ 6,840.11
Ministry Shares	\$ 6,778.40
Administration & Building	\$ 20,322.65
Ministry & Mission	\$ 440.04
Total Expenses	\$ 54,085.30
<u>Difference</u>	\$ -10,804.20

To set up electronic giving go to:

<https://www.portlandumc.org/giving.html>

Spring Clean Up Date

April 20th, 9am – 12 noon (rain date April 27)

Portland United Methodist Church is planning a "Work Day" at the church for needed outside maintenance. If interested, please contact Bill Almy (616-540-0917) for sign up.

Projects include but are not limited to:

- Power wash cement & wood –
- Landscape improvements –
- Sidewalk edging - Bill Almy
- Trim trees –
- Prune shrubs – Connie Almy
- Spread landscape chips –

Note: Please bring special tools you prefer to use. Such as, rakes, shovels, push brooms, pruning scissors, elect hedge trimmer, edger, telescoping saw, wheelbarrow.

Volunteers: Bill & Connie Almy, ,



United
Women
in Faith

-Jan Mosser

After a two month hiatus, the United Women in Faith will resume our monthly meetings on Thursday, April 4th, at 10 a.m.

Even though we didn't meet in February and March, we were involved with planning and serving at the funeral luncheon of a beloved friend, Marylou Tannery. Marylou had been a co-chair of funeral luncheons for many years. We also had a "moving shower" for Patsy Buckley, one of the past residents of Edgemont Apartments, which was destroyed by fire in January. Patsy will be moving into another apartment building in the near future, and we gave her an assortment of cleaning supplies, and many other useful and fun items.

We welcome our snowbirds back at the April meeting and invite all women who are interested to come and join us at the meeting. Hope to see you there. Hope to see you there.

Thank you!

Dear church friends,

Thank you for all your prayers and thoughts the last 6 weeks. Doing much better every day. Once again, thank you for your prayers.

Bless all of you,
Allen and Arlene Randall

Thank you to Jan Mosser and Judy Braman for hosting the shower for me. Thank you, friends and family, for the wonderful gifts and being there for me. Thank you, Pastor Lenora, for giving a special prayer for me.

-Patsy Buckley

APRIL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April Sunday Services:

Worship 9:30am
Live Worship streamed to Facebook 9:30am

1st Sunday-of-the-Month Food Drive

April 7th, donations may be left at the church

2nd Thursday Meals – Monthly

April 11th, Contact Sherry Miller
517-285-0640, sherrymillersings@gmail.com

United Women in Faith

April 4th, Esther Rm. 10:00 am

Bridal Shower for Pastor

April 14th, Fellowship Hall 10:30 am

Leadership board Meeting

April 16th, Esther Room 7:00 pm

Staff Meeting

April 25th, Lounge 6:30 pm

Community Food Bank & Clothes Closet

Mondays 9:00 am - Noon
Thursdays 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Contact Steve @ 616-902-0645 for Food Bank

Contact Linda @ 517-899-9848 for Clothes Closet

Backpacks for Bellies

Delivered Thursdays 9:00 am
Contact Michelle VanSlambrouck @ 517-285-6518

The Soup Project

Tuesdays, Kitchen 9:30 am