

The Open Door

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

March 2024 Volume 22 Issue 3



A Lenten Fast

By the time you read this article, we will be nearly halfway through Lent. I hope and pray that this season has blessed you and challenged you. Lent is a season of contemplation; a season in which we contemplate all that Christ showed and shared during his time on earth as well as his great sacrifice for us; a season in which we contemplate who we are and whose we are, and how we

might grow closer in relationship with God. As part of the Lenten tradition, many folks will choose to fast from something. For many, it is a temporary fast; one where- the moment Lent ends- the participant will go right back to the way they were before. Unchanged by their experience, uninformed of the importance of sacrifice, unaware that their spiritual growth is impeded by their lack of understanding of the purpose of a Lenten fast.

I had a friend in college who loved Doritos, so he gave them up for Lent. He complained every day that he desperately needed to eat some of those cheesy chips. On Easter morning, he was gifted a party size bag and proceeded to eat the entire thing. He was the same at the end of his fast as he was in the beginning; he had learned nothing from his fast and had, frankly, annoyed all of those around him in the process. Christ tells the people that when they fast, they aren't to mope about and complain that they are fasting. Rather, they are to wash their faces and put oil on their heads so that no one else knows they are fasting. They aren't to tell others about their fast because it is meant to be between the person and God. The purpose of a fast isn't to merely deprive oneself of something. It is to remove something that distracts one from their relationship with God so that they may grow in intimacy and continue to be perfected in love by the Holy Spirit. My challenge for you this Lenten season is the same as my prayer for you: may you fast from all of the things that turn your attention away from God and feast on your relationship with God. Amen.

Rev. Lenora Whitecotton

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OUR USHERS:

1st	Connie A. & Jen T.
2nd	Bill & Connie Almy
3rd	Bruce & Linda Croel
4th	Dan & Kacy Goeckel
5th	The Feldpauschs
5th	Jen T. & Michael M.



Portland United Methodist Church
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February Attendance

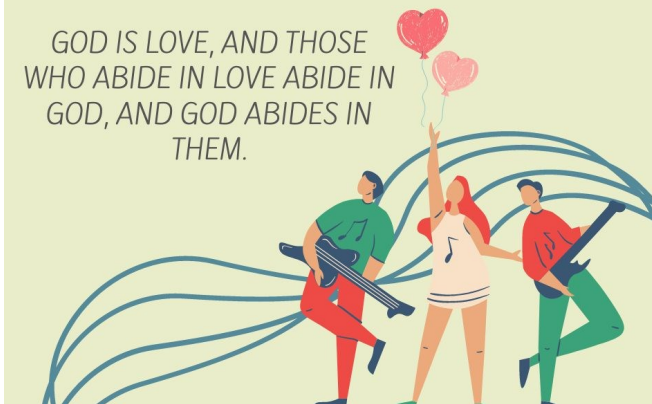
Week Of:	Online Facebook Live & In Person Views/Shares/Sign-in
February 4	71 In Person, 5 Online 225 Views/4 Shares
February 11	59 Person, 11 Online 410 Views/ 5 Shares
February 18	60 In Person, 9 Online 210 Views/4 Shares
February 25	58 In Person, 8 Online 220 Views/3 Shares

FEBRUARY SERMON SCHEDULE:

March 3: Silly Love Songs– Everything I do
March 10: Silly Love Songs– Because You Loved Me
March 17: Silly Love Songs– Umbrella
March 24: Palm Sunday
March 31: Easter

Silly Love Songs

GOD IS LOVE, AND THOSE
WHO ABIDE IN LOVE ABIDE IN
GOD, AND GOD ABIDES IN
THEM.



News and Notes from the Leadership Board

Happy almost spring everyone! So many exciting things in the month of March. We get to “spring forward” March 10th, the official first day of spring is March 19th, and of course we will celebrate the resurrection of our savior Jesus Christ on March 31st . God is good!

Pastor Lenora is in the final phase of her ordination process and as such will be taking time away from the office to prepare. Starting after Easter, she will take Wednesday mornings to begin the arduous writing and preparation process (25-30 pages in total). Please pray that God will give her the right words and clear thoughts and that He continue to guide her way through this process.

General Conference is being held this April in North Carolina. This conference is typically held every 4 years; however this is the first one in 8 years because of covid. There is a short video on the Denomination website that outlines the structure of General Conference. This video can be found <https://gc.michiganumc.org/>. They are expecting 862 delegates, half clergy and half lay leaders, from all over the world to be in attendance. Please pray for these delegates as they come together to consider some divisive topics for our denomination.

Annual conference for the Michigan chapter of the UMC is being held May 30—June 1 in Traverse City. Pastor Lenora and Beth Feldpausch will be our representatives to this conference. Thank you both for representing PUMC!

After much discussion and prayerful consideration, we are moving forward with our already bare bone budget despite a sizeable deficit. Please be in prayer for our church and the Leadership Board as we faithfully continue to trust that God is leading us, guiding us and walking beside us every step of the way.

Blessings today and always,
 Jen Thomas
 Leadership Board Chair
 517-803-8080
 Jthoma403@aol.com

The Neighborhood!

Greetings,

This year sure is flying by fast. I can't believe it is March already. I guess the old saying of "Time flies when you are having fun," is true.

Just a reminder that we will not be having Sunday School or Nursery on Easter, as they will be part of the service that day and for Palm Sunday we will start downstairs and then head upstairs for the lesson.

I would like to take a moment to thank you all for all your support and volunteering to help upstairs. I do so appreciate you all. We wouldn't have been able to grow as much as we have without you all.

I am still looking for a few more volunteers for Sunday School. If you are interested please let me know. If you want to see what we do each week, please come on up and hang out with us all. I would love to show you how fun it is. Or you can call me at 517.526.7571.

See you all on Sunday!

Blessings,

Mary



Year-To-Date as of February 29, 2024

Income

Offering	\$ 25,711.41
Misc. Income	\$ -73.32
Total	\$ 25,638.09

Expenses

Pastoral Support	\$ 11,960.73
Lay Support	\$ 4,750.40
Ministry Shares	\$ 5,223.60
Administration & Building	\$ 13,511.12
Ministry & Mission	\$ 217.44
Total Expenses	\$ 18,213.74

Difference \$ -10,025.20

To set up electronic giving go to:

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

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

March 24th: Palm Sunday. Worship @ 9:30 am

March 28th: Maundy Thursday. Dinner and Handwashing @ 6:00 pm

March 29th: Good Friday. Service @ 7:00 pm

March 31st: Easter Sunday. Sunrise Service @ 8:00 am. Breakfast @ 8:30 am. Worship @ 9:30 am.

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 Balsler
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

HELPING HANDS MINISTRY

This ministry was set up many years ago to help people in financial distress. All calls for assistance are referred to the Portland Area Ministerial Association. The person making the request talks with the treasurer of PAMA and fills out a short form detailing the number of persons in the household, how many of these are children, wages of any adults in the home currently employed, and what help he or she may have received from other sources, such as food stamps, 8-Cap, family, or other churches or organizations. When the PAMA treasurer is satisfied that the person meets the criteria set up by PAMA, she sends an email to the representatives from participating churches, telling of the need and including a copy of the form filled out. Each of us decides if and how much our individual church can give to this need. The PAMA treasurer collects the checks and sees that the checks are delivered to the proper place, whether it be a landlord, the City of Portland, Consumers, Tri-County or wherever the payment needs to be made. Persons may only apply for assistance once a year.

In 2023, PUMC helped 40 individuals or families. We generally give \$100 to each request. Sixteen payments were made to help cover bills for rent, seventeen for utilities (electricity, water, gas, propane), three for auto repairs/parts, three for homeless lodging in a hotel, and one for cell phone usage payment. \$4,278. 88 was given from the Helping Hand Fund in 2023.

Income for this same year includes the 2022 Advent Offering of \$1,287.76, \$850 from the Lynda Russman memorial, \$300 in church donations, \$1,111.27 from the 2023 Lenten offering, and a special World Day of Prayer offering of \$803.33. Total income: \$4,352.36. PUMC Helping Hands ended the year with \$153.49 in the account.

If you would like to contribute to the Helping Hands Ministry, you may do so online or make check payable to PUMC and indicate Helping Hands on the memo line. Thank you for your continued support. The needs increase as the cost of living increases.

MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS**March Sunday Services:**

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

1st Sunday-of-the-Month Food Drive

March 3rd, donations may be left at the church

2nd Thursday Meals – Monthly

March 14th, Contact Sherry Miller
517-285-0640, sherrymillersings@gmail.com

Silly Love Songs Study

Ends March 17th, Esther Room 10:30 am

Flower Order Forms Due

March 17th, Office 10:30 am

Leadership board Meeting

March 19th, Esther Room 7:00 pm

Staff Meeting

March 21st, Lounge 6:30 pm

Maundy Thursday

March 28th, Fellowship Hall 6:00 pm

Good Friday Service

March 29th, Sanctuary 7:00 pm

Sunrise Service

March 31st, Sanctuary 8:00 am

Easter Breakfast

March 31st, Sanctuary 8:30 am

MARCH CALENDAR OF EVENTS**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

