



Congregational Connections

Monthly E-Newsletter of First Congregational Church, UCC | Port Washington, Wisconsin | December 2022

"I LOVE THOSE J-I-N-G-L-E BELLS"

It started for me as soon as the 896 Trick-or-Treaters had finished up Halloween festivities on my street. We were still putting away the graveyard decorations when the Bing Crosby and the Andrew Sister's version of "Jingle Bells" began to play in my head. I'm sure you all know "Jingle Bells", perhaps some of you even know the particular version I'm referencing. But the "ear-worm" has remained playing in my head throughout the month of November.

While I love Thanksgiving and feel a great fondness for the story of Pilgrims and Native Americans sharing in a feast celebrating a successful harvest. I mean we are, after all, the church of the Pilgrims. Whenever I try to quickly explain to someone what a Congregationalist is, I usually say something like, "Ever wonder what happened to the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock? As years went by, they began to be called Congregationalists—and that's us." That terrible over-simplification is near and dear to my heart. However, even that, for me, can't compete with Christmas.

I'm looking forward to celebrating another Advent and Christmas season with all of you. Please read all about the many ways we are hoping to celebrate the season in this month's newsletter. Sunday worship, Advent Vesper Communion, the Advent Workshop and Cookie Exchange, the Christmas Tree Sale, Church School Gift Giving, Confirmation Service Project, Christmas Eve services, Lighthouse Fundraiser, Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross. There is so much to look forward to, so many opportunities to participate in, and so much to celebrate! It's going to be a great month!

Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy,
Scott

ADVENT VESPER COMMUNION SERVICES

Join us on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 in Advent for a brief service of reflection and communion by candlelight in the sanctuary. The midweek services, (November 30), December 7, 14, and 21, uses scripture, prayer, and a Christmas carol to create a calm and peaceful space amidst the hurry and busy-ness of the season. Pastor Scott will be telling the story behind the writing of a different carol each week, and then the services will conclude with a simple sharing of Communion. Come and enjoy a respite from the December rush in the beauty of our church; fill your spirit as we bring the light of Christ into our lives and into the world.



37th ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

Our 37th Annual Christmas Tree Sale is underway! Please help spread the word! Sales are going well. Of the 472 trees that were delivered, over 150 have been sold!

Thank you to all those who have already worked a shift. We need help to fill the rest of the sign-up. Please take a look at your calendar and sign on to help. There are plenty of spots left. [Click here](#) to be directed to the SignUpGenius page. Thanks!



WORSHIP WITH US

We celebrate two Sunday morning worship services at 8:00 and 10:00. Nursery care is available at the 10:00 service.

HOLY COMMUNION

The first Sunday morning of each month we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Communion is open to all who seek to follow in the way of Christ, both children and adults.

CLICK AWAY

If you are reading this newsletter online, be on the lookout for orange text - it's linked up to documents and web pages that you might find helpful or interesting.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER

If you have a celebration, prayer request, or other contribution for the newsletter, please email us 7-10 days before the first day of the month.

ADVENT CRAFT WORKSHOP *plus cookies!*

A reminder that the Fellowship Team is planning another fun event to help celebrate Advent and Christmas! Join the team in creating cork angels, stamp-your-own gift wrap, tags, and cards, as well as exchanging cookies on Sunday, December 4, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. If you would like to participate in the cookie exchange, simply bring three dozen Christmas Cookies.

This free event is open to all ages! Invite your neighbors and friends! Light snacks will be offered. Please sign up in advance (if you know you will be attending) by contacting Jennifer Dimmer, our Fellowship Team Chair, at jenniferdimmer@gmail.com or (414) 303-1813. If it works for you to come at the last minute, you are welcome to simply show up!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4

11:00am - 1:00pm



A sneak peek at the crafts - cards, cork angels, and stamp-your-own gift wrap and tags.



ADVENT HOME COMMUNION THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The Congregational Care Team will be helping to bring communion to some of our members and friends who aren't able to attend worship this holiday season. Team members in a symbolic way bring the fellowship and prayers of the congregation with them as they visit along with Pastor Scott and together all are able to celebrate and unite through Advent Communion. If this sounds like something you might enjoy being a part of, whether joining with Pastor Scott in bringing communion, or receiving communion at your residence, please let Pastor Scott know.

FAMILY SERVICE IN DECEMBER

Please note that in December, our 10:00 Family Service will be held on the third Sunday, December 18. The Children's Choir will sing and the Confirmation Class will assist Pastor Scott.



CHRISTMAS GIVING AND POINSETTIA ORDERS

In celebration of Christmas, it is one of our traditions to invite members and friends to order a poinsettia and/or donate to one of the six community organizations that our church supports on an ongoing basis: Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity, The Food Pantry, Ozaukee Family Services, Balance, and Advocates. Your poinsettia will help decorate our sanctuary for Christmas (you may take your poinsettia home anytime after the Christmas Eve services). Your gift of money will help lift the spirits of those who are in need within our own community. You may give in honor or in memory of loved ones. Names will appear in our Christmas Eve bulletins. [Click here](#) for the form. Please submit the information to the Church Office by Friday, December 20. You may contribute using a check or submitting a payment through our church [PayPal](#).



DECORATING ORNAMENTS FOR TREE SALE CUSTOMERS

We are, once again, decorating ornaments to give to customers as a 'Thank You' at our Christmas Tree Sale. Both kids and adults are invited to decorate wooden ornaments. Our Church School kids already decorated a bunch, but we can use more help! The wooden ornaments are available in the church's Little Free Library off the parking lot. Simply grab a pack, paint/decorate them, and return to church or the Little Free Library.

You may be interested to know that the ornament is adhered to an [Advent pamphlet](#) inviting one and all to join us this season and includes information about our special services.

Thanks for helping to complete the many ornaments needed for distribution!



JULY 2023 MISSION TRIP WITH PILGRIM UCC

This past summer's mission trip was such a great experience that we plan to offer it again. This coming summer, July 9-15, 2023, our church will again partner with Pilgrim UCC for a youth mission trip. This time the destination will be St. Louis, MO, and the combined group will be working with the "St. Louis Urban Mission Experience." It would be extremely helpful to have a sense of how many of our youth and adults are interested in participating this coming summer. Please contact Pastor Scott ASAP with any questions.

Interested in
going on the trip?
Want more
information?
Scan this and fill
out the form!





CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

We have three services on Christmas Eve, and each of them is different. While they all involve the festive music and carols of the season and telling the story of Jesus’ birth - each one is unique. This year, be sure to make room in your Christmas schedule to remember the “reason for the season”. Plan to experience the rich joy of the coming of God’s Son into the world!

5:00 p.m. Christmas Pageant

Led by our Confirmation Class, this worship service for the young, and young at heart, is a wonderful celebration of Christmas joy for the whole family. We will join Mary and Joseph as they journey toward Bethlehem and encounter angel messengers with the shepherds as they discover a child wrapped in swaddling cloth, laying in a manger.

7:00 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols

With sacred text and Christmas carols this service tells the story of salvation beginning in Old Testament prophecy and continuing through the gospel proclamation. A beautiful and inspiring narrative with our Chancel Choir leading the way in song. This is a classic and meaningful service with all the joy of the season brought forward; “O come let us adore him! Christ the Lord”.

9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

Our late service includes the story of Jesus birth, singing the beloved Christmas carols, and adds an essential element of Jesus’ ministry as we break bread together and celebrate Communion. What could be more meaningful on a Christmas Eve than sharing the sacrament with one another and with Christ in the beauty of our Sanctuary.



ONE SERVICE AT 10:00 ON CHRISTMAS DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 25

This year Christmas falls on a Sunday. We will celebrate with one service at 10:00. Ken Matthews, a life-long member of our church, will conduct the service for the 33rd year, he started this tradition back in 1989! Ken has been leading this service as a gift to the minister/pastor after a busy season.

THEMES FOR WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

December 4: Isaiah 11:1-10 Matthew 3:1-12

Second Sunday of Advent Communion Sunday

The Prophet Isaiah invites us into a wild possibility of tiny buds of hope and animals finding harmony together on God's holy mountain. Can we hold on to this vision amidst the violence and vitriol that seems to be ever-present around us?

December 11: Isaiah 35:1-10 Luke 1:47-55

Third Sunday of Advent Chancel Choir

Both Isaiah and Mary speak of miraculous reversals bringing justice and wholeness to the world. In Luke, we hear Mary's song of praise. With elegant power and directness, Mary preaches as the prophet of the poor.

December 18: Isaiah 7:10-16 Matthew 1:18-25

Fourth Sunday of Advent Family Service Handbell Choir & Children's Choir

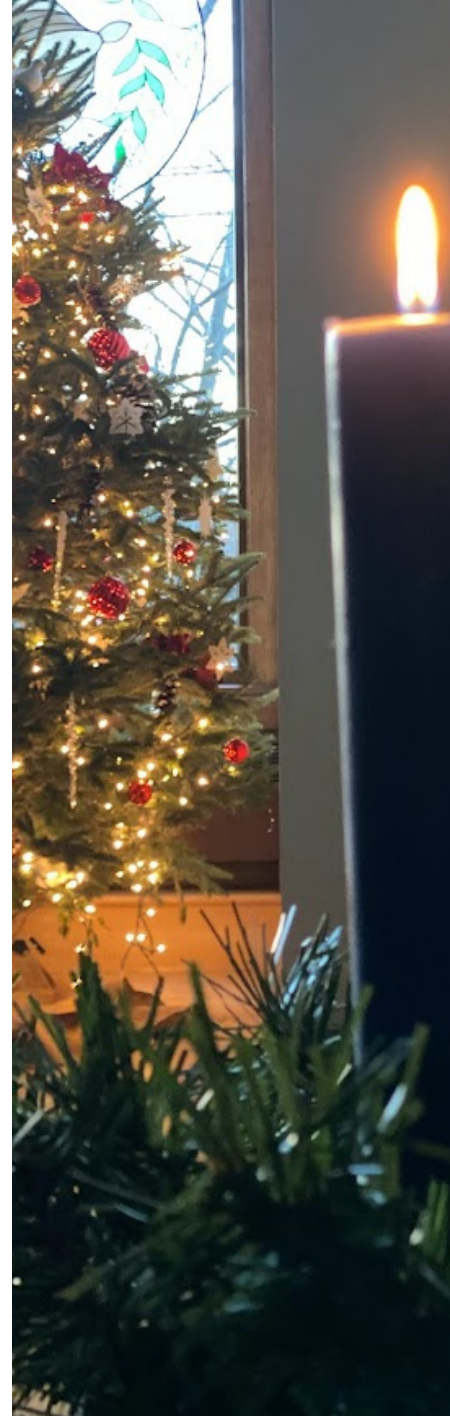
Matthew shares the good news that Joseph will become a father of a child he is to name Emmanuel, which means, "God with us". Together we become more aware of how God is with us every day.

December 25: Isaiah 52:7-10 John 1:1-14

Fourth Sunday of Advent Handbell Choir and Children's Choir

Christmas Day One Service at 10:00 a.m.

As we celebrate the joy of "God-with-us" in the birth of Christ, our joy is full of quiet wonder and joyous song. Join us on Christmas morning as Ken Matthews leads the congregation in worship for the 33rd year.



CHILDREN'S CHOIR UPDATES

Our Children's Choir, directed by Sherri Melichar, will continue to rehearse the 2nd and 5th Sunday of each month from 11:00-11:30 in the sanctuary (following the 10:00 worship service). For many years, the Choir rehearsed on Monday nights, but this has proven to be difficult.

The Choir typically performs on the 4th Sunday morning of each month during the 10:00 worship service with a rehearsal at 9:15. The Choir doesn't rehearse during Winter and Spring school breaks. We always welcome new faces and it is not necessary to be a member of the church. Friends are always welcome!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MODERATOR

What an honor and challenge it has been becoming our Church Moderator as we open our doors wide into this new post pandemic world. It has been very comforting to have two worship services with choirs singing, Church School Sundays, Fellowship Hours, and best of all Passing the Peace. If you haven't had a chance yet to join us in-person, I highly encourage you and your family to do so.



Coming off our Fall Congregational Meeting, held on November 13, our church financials have certainly been top of my mind personally. First, I would like to thank

Phil Stepanski, our Financial Administrator, for his hard work in putting together our first draft of the Proposed 2023 Church Budget. Second, I would like to put in a request for everyone to pledge as part of our annual Stewardship Campaign which is now in full swing. Pledges are by far our greatest source of income, so they are very much a determining factor in how our budget will look when finalized. The good news is that, despite our initial proposed budget showing a deficit, we will be able to continue our church's mission through our prayers, faith, and reserves.

Jason Jacque, Church Moderator



CONFIRMATION CLASS GOINGS-ON IN NOVEMBER

The Confirmation Class had a busy November. The class worked at The Food Pantry for their monthly Mission Experience on Wednesday evening, November 9. They helped to assemble special Thanksgiving gift bags for families who would be coming in prior to Thanksgiving and also helped to prepare and organize some of the non-perishable items that families will be receiving. On November 20, the class helped lead our 10:00 worship service as we celebrated Thanksgiving and Reign of Christ Sunday. The next evening, November 21, they had their Confirmation Class session in which they studied the documentary "Jesus: The Complete Story" as part of learning more about Jesus, the second "person" of the Trinity.



Confirmation Mission Experience at The Food Pantry



Confirmation Class in action on November 20

Front row l-r: Andrew Arthur, JJ Bergin, Addie Chandler, Maile Thompson, Elaina Perez,
Back row: Pastor Scott and Rhonda Thompson (parent helper)



Thank you to all those who have responded to our "Beloved" Stewardship Campaign this fall. We have had a steady flow of pledges coming into the church through the Sunday morning offering plates, returned in the pledge box in the narthex, dropped off at the office, arriving in the mail or submitted online. If you have not already filled out a pledge card, please do so at your earliest convenience. It is so helpful and encouraging to have those pledges coming in so we can plan for the new year. The church relies upon the extravagant generosity of our members and friends to keep our ministry going! The Stewardship Team will be making calls this month to gently remind folks to return their forms.

Here is a report as of November 30:

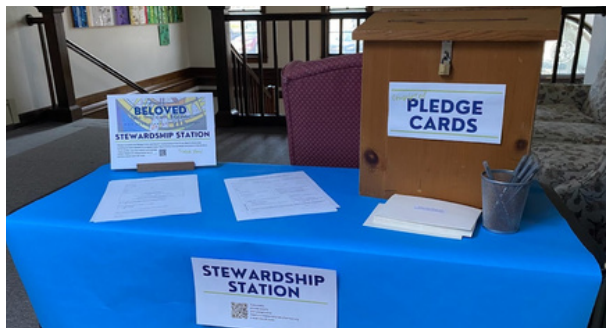
Pledges Received to date - 54 (*Last year 97 total pledges were received*)

Pledged Amount to date - \$104,558 (*Increased-27, Decreased-2, Same-21, New-4*)

Thank you to Jodi Cowen, Bev Mueller, Craig Modahl, and Pastor Scott for serving as the Stewardship Team this year. Thank you also to Ken Matthews, Chris Fraser, Phil Stepanski, and Meg Tackes for providing testimonials about the importance of the church in their lives and their love for the congregation. Thank you to Brett Dimmer for his help in editing and producing the video testimonials. Thank you to Amy Gilhooly for making the work of the team look incredible on brochures, inserts, and on social media and thanks to both Amy and Beckie Perez for editing, producing, and getting all the materials out to the congregation so quickly and efficiently.

Ways TO COMPLETE YOUR PLEDGE

<p>Send In Mail</p> <p>Print out the Pledge Form and send to the church (131 N. Webster Street, Port Washington, WI 53074).</p>	<p>Use Stewardship Station @ church</p> <p>There are forms available in the upper Narthex at our Stewardship Station.</p>	<p>Submit Online</p> <p>For ultimate ease, you may complete an Online Pledge Form.</p>
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Those who requested offering envelopes can pick them up at the Stewardship Station.

SCRIP/RAISERIGHT GIFT CARD FUNDRAISING PROGRAM FOR CHURCH

**NEXT FCC ORDER
IS DECEMBER 11TH**



Through our gift card fundraising program, also called Scrip fundraising, by a company called RaiseRight, the church can raise money when members and friends use retail gift cards to pay for everyday purchases (like gas and groceries) and more (Christmas gifts), instead of paying by credit card, cash, or check.

Gift cards make great Christmas gifts! We run Scrip/RaiseRight as an church fundraiser all year round, but utilizing this gift card service for the holidays is a no brainer! The church benefits, as do you by receiving gift cards to just about any retailer you can think of! Head to RaiseRight's [Facebook page](#) to learn more about their current promotion called "Dazzle Days".

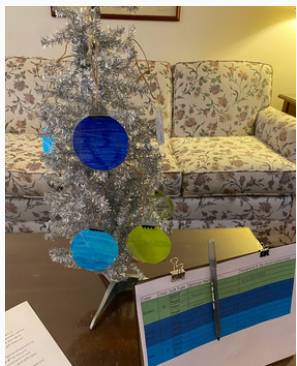
There are a ton of options and hundreds of gift cards you can purchase from retail stores, online merchants, restaurants, gas stations, entertainment, even flights and travel purchases; and each can be turned into a small percentage of money that will go directly to our church. You have options to buy eGift cards (available immediately), physical gift cards, and reloadable gift cards. For every gift card purchased, earnings are up to 20%, with an average earning of 6% that goes to the church. The earnings come from the gift card brand you are purchasing - their way of supporting organizations and communities like ours. You do not pay anything extra, for example, if you buy a \$50 gift card, you pay \$50.

Jennifer Dimmer and Rhonda Thompson, our church Scrip/Raise Right Coordinators, will be placing an order on Sunday, **December 11**. The gift cards will be available at the church for pick up starting on Sunday, **December 18**. You can enroll and place an order ahead of time on the company website, [RaiseRight.com/enroll](#). Our church enrollment code is **P8I47VHNX56H**. Or, you can complete the [paper form](#) and write out a check to the church and mail it to church or bring it to the office or with you to church on Sunday. Jennifer Dimmer will be available on Sunday, December 4 and 11 to help you place an order. Please contact the church office if you have any questions, and we will connect you to Jennifer and Rhonda. Thank you!



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

We invite all 4K-7th graders to our next Church School Sunday at 10:00 on **December 11!** We will present and discuss our Christmas stories - "Mary Visits Elizabeth", "Joseph's Dream", and "A Baby Is Born". [Click here](#) to view them online.



As a group, we will discuss the results of our service project of collecting gifts for The Food Pantry's Christmas "Gift-A-Child" program. Over two dozen "gift ornaments" were placed on a tree with gift ideas for eight local children. Thank you to everyone who took an ornament and purchased gifts! A reminder that the unwrapped gifts need to be returned back to the church by Sunday, December 4. Please place the gifts in baskets located just outside the Music Room with the ornament attached so we can make sure it is given to the correct child. If you were not able to take an ornament, and would like to participate, you may bring in gift wraps and tags for the gifts. Thanks!

Also on December 11, we are so fortunate to have church member, Jane Spalding, join us. Jane has prepared a clothes pin nativity craft for each child to complete and take home!

We thank all of the families who have joined us this fall. We have had a great few months and have lots of wonderful things planned for the new year. As always, join us when you are able!



COME FOR CHURCH SCHOOL AND STAY TO SING!

See page 6 for current information on the Children's Choir rehearsals.

LOOKING AHEAD

12/11 - Church School
"Mary, Joseph, & Jesus"
Toy Drive Recap and
Nativity Craft

12/18 - Family Service
and Children's Choir
Sings at 10:00 Service

1/8 - Church School
Thank You Notes &
More

1/22 - Family Service
and Children's Choir
Sings at 10:00 Service

NURSERY CARE

A reminder that every Sunday morning during the 10:00 service we provide Nursery Care for children newborn through elementary. Care is mostly provided by our 8th grade Confirmation students and their families. Please note that the current nursery location is in the Gilomen Room across from the restrooms.

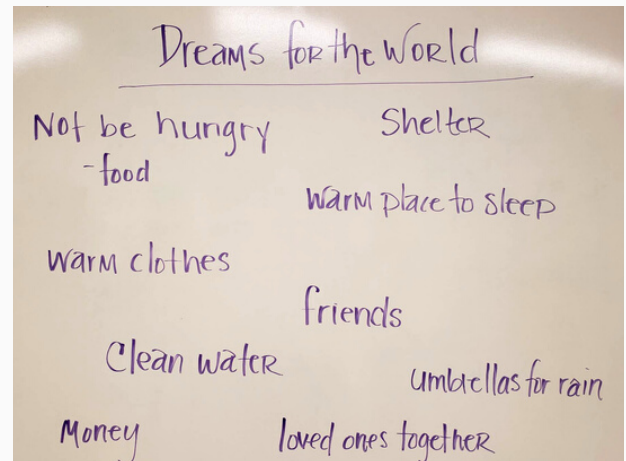
CHURCH SCHOOL IN NOVEMBER



Congratulations to the kids in gathering a wagonload of canned goods for The Food Pantry! Thank you to those who donated!



Thank you to the Church School kids for painting dozens and dozens of wooden ornaments to give to the customers of our Christmas Tree Sale!



THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING



The Christmas Fund is one of several United Church of Christ special offerings and has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. We receive this offering during Sunday worship on December 18 and 25. You may contribute anytime through the end of the month. To give directly via PayPal, please [click here](#) and note "The Christmas Fund".

United Church of Christ retired clergy, servants of the church, have spent lifetimes baptizing and blessing, teaching and preaching, marrying and burying, comforting and empowering God's people. Now, through the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, we have the opportunity to sustain and empower them.

Our gifts of gratitude and love bring hope to the hopeless, joy to the sorrowful, and deep love to those who have ministered in God's love for so long. By giving generously to the Christmas Fund, we help retired clergy, church staff, and their families to pay bills, maintain health insurance, and meet emergency needs. Year after year, our gifts make a difference, easing the anxiety of constant financial worries.

Last year, the Christmas Fund, administered by the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, provided over \$1.6 million in assistance to retired servants of the church and their families. Every cent of that money came from the pockets of people like you. Please give as generously as you are able this year!



BOOK DONATION BY FRIENDS FOR JUSTICE



As part of the Indigenous Peoples' recognition activities last month, Friends for Justice donated a book to the children's book cart located in the upper narthex. "We Are Water Protectors" by Carole Lindstrom is a Caldecott Medal winning book, beautifully illustrated by Michaela Goade. The author is tribally enrolled with the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwe and describes herself as "a fierce water protector". In the story, the child narrator shares the lessons she's learned from her grandmother about the sacred nature of water. We hope you take the time to read this story and enjoy the beautiful illustrations.

Submitted by Louise Mollinger, on behalf of Friends for Justice Team

A SUMMARY OF OUR FALL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our Fall Congregational Meeting took place immediately following worship on November 13. The Church Council had scheduled the meeting to begin following a slightly shortened worship service in hopes of increasing attendance. By starting the meeting at 10:50 a.m. most folks seemed happy to stay and the meeting was very well attended. Church Moderator Jason Jacque called the meeting to order and made preliminary remarks about creating and presenting the budget for 2023. The initial proposed budget was passed out to people and our Financial Administrator, Phil Stepanski, walked everyone through the major parts of the budget. The budget that was presented will be further modified by Church Council according to the pledges that are received.

Actual voting and approval of the budget will take place at the next congregational meeting January 29, 2023. The proposed draft of the 2023 budget shows a potential deficit of \$51,205, which is less than the approved \$83,761 deficit passed for 2022. Phil is predicting that the actual deficit for 2022 will be far less due to budget adjustments, careful spending and additional fundraisers like "Adopt-a-Bill" and Scrip/RaiseRight. It was also noted that a large part of church income was lost due to Port Pre-School closing their doors. Everyone was reminded that we are still searching for new tenants, and to please bring any ideas for using the space to a Council member or Pastor Scott.

There were some questions asked about the church's reserve funds that might be necessary to use in case of a budget deficit, and at this time there is about \$90,000 that could be used to help cover deficit spending. There were also questions about our current membership. And it was discussed that membership numbers were last counted in the fall of 2019 and steps are being taken for a revised membership count before the end of the year. Membership numbers could affect the amount paid for SE Association dues, which were believed to be about \$20 a member. There was other discussion about some of the terms and categories used in the budget which Phil was able to answer and clarify.

With no further questions, a motion was made to end the meeting at 11:16. Thank you to all who attended.



FELLOWSHIP HOUR ON SUNDAY MORNINGS

We host a Fellowship Hour following our 8:00 service on the first Sunday of each month, and following our 10:00 service on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit with other families and friends in the church. Please make an effort to introduce yourself to people you haven't met. Help newcomers to feel that, wherever they are on life's journey, they are welcome here. Please consider signing up to host a Fellowship Hour in the near future. [Click here](#) for the sign-up list. If you have any questions, please speak to Jennifer Dimmer, our Fellowship Team Representative on Church Council.

A THREE-PART SPOTLIGHT ON Lighthouse YOUTH MINISTRY

1 DECEMBER EVENT

2 OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

3 YEAR-END LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR *(next page)*

We are one of the five founding churches that began the ecumenical youth ministry program in Port Washington/Saukville known as “Lighthouse”. Our church partners with Grand Avenue United Methodist Church, Christ the King Lutheran Church, Living Hope Lutheran Church, and Parkside Community United Church of Christ. Lighthouse's Youth Director, Christin Flucke, welcomes all middle school and high school youth to join the group for their event this month.

LIGHTHOUSE AND FAMILY PROMISE CHRISTMAS PARTY

1

Wednesday evening, December 14 from 5:30-7:45

Help spread some Christmas cheer to some kids in our community as we partner with Family Promise of Ozaukee County for a fun, family Christmas party! We'll be helping to lead crafts and other activities for the kids at the party. If you'd like to help, please come to Parkside Community United Church of Christ (166 W. Dekora St. in Saukville) at 5:30 on December 14.

2

OUR GOAL: RAISING \$2,500 FOR LIGHTHOUSE YOUTH MINISTRY

Each year, for the past four years, we have contributed \$2,500 towards the ongoing ministry expenses of Lighthouse from our church budget and then sought additional funds from church members who care deeply about this youth programming effort.

We will again be turning to our members and friends with hope that everyone recognizes the potential for this ministry in Port Washington. Beginning on December 4, there will be a Lighthouse display with giving tags of different dollar amounts (\$25, \$100, \$250) in the narthex outside the sanctuary. You are invited to take one (or two!) of the tags and contribute that amount to Lighthouse's ministry by putting it in the offering plate or dropping it off in the church office. If it is easier, you may also donate to Lighthouse through the **church's PayPal account** - just be sure to note that “Lighthouse” is where your gift is to be directed. Thank you!

If you have questions about Lighthouse's ministry, please talk to Pastor Scott, who serves on the Pastoral Advisory Committee. And, by the way, we are still looking for a volunteer to help represent the church on the Lighthouse Board of Directors. If you want to support youth ministry in our community, volunteering on the Board would be a great way to help!

A sample tag:



First Congregational Church
2022 Church Fundraiser to Support Our Partnership
with Lighthouse Youth Ministry

☐ \$25 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250

Name(s): _____

☐ Check Enclosed ☐ FCC PayPal
Payable to FCC "Add a Note" indicating donation is for Lighthouse

(Please place your gift in the offering plate or submit to church by December 25)

3 YEAR-END LETTER FROM LIGHTHOUSE YOUTH DIRECTOR, CHRISTIN FLUCKE

Dear First Congregational Church,

In this season full of reminders to give thanks and celebrate all that 2022 has brought us, I wanted to take a moment and say THANK YOU on behalf of all members of the Lighthouse board as well as all of the students we were able to serve this year!

- *Thank you* for your prayers and your financial support!
- *Thank you* for encouraging the middle and high school youth in your families and congregations to participate in Lighthouse programming (and know that we ALWAYS welcome new faces)!
- *Thank you* for your warm welcome as I stepped into my role as Lighthouse's new Director!

Our vision for Lighthouse Youth Ministry is to be a safe and affirming community where all youth are:

- * **WELCOMED** regardless of religious affiliation or beliefs,
- * **EMPOWERED** to explore questions of faith and life, and
- * **EQUIPPED** to serve their community and the world.



We've been able to accomplish these goals this year in new and exciting ways as we have resumed regular youth programming, meeting roughly twice a month for a variety of fellowship and service activities. We have been getting anywhere from 7-15 students participating in these activities this fall. Participants have enjoyed getting to know one another through events such as a bonfire and a trip to Spieker's Pumpkin Farm. They've also had fun serving their neighbors by packing sack lunches for Milwaukee Rescue Mission, holding a "Trick-or-Treat So Others Can Eat" food drive for the Saukville Food Pantry, and serving dinner at two different meal sites in Milwaukee.

Later this month, on Wednesday, December 14, we will be helping to host a Christmas party for children bring supported by Family Promise, and we look forward to partnering with them again in the spring to put together Easter baskets. Other things on the horizon for 2023 include a skiing/tubing outing, a youth conference in Wisconsin Dells, and a multi-day mission trip this summer (stay tuned for more info on these events coming soon!)

Lighthouse, like all of us, has been on quite a journey over the last few years. It has not always been easy, but as we look back at 2022, we are thankful for the many hands and hearts that have shaped this ministry and are very excited about where God will lead us in the year(s) to come!

If you would like to learn more about Lighthouse, get involved, or offer additional support, please do not hesitate to contact me or any members of the Lighthouse board. Thank you, and may God continue to bless our work together as we serve God's beloved children!

Christin Flucke - Lighthouse Youth Director

THE EXAMEN(ED) CHURCH WITH MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

Beginning next month our church is going to begin participating in a Marquette University sponsored program called, "The Examen(ed) Church" at Marquette University. We will be joining five other congregations from the region as part of this new endeavor to help our congregation look toward the future. Pastor Scott is already working with Marquette in a program designed to help support clergy called "Companions in Ministry". He has been meeting on a monthly basis with an ecumenical group of clergy from the greater Milwaukee area for over a year. Because Scott was already working with their "CIM" group, our congregation was given an early invitation to take part in this program designed to support the whole congregation.

The "Examen(ed) Church" program starts on January 21 and maps out a series of meetings and events over the next 18-24 months. The church is being asked to create a "Thrive Team" to attend these gatherings and to help bring the materials back to the congregation, so that the entire church might learn and grow from the experience. The Thrive Team, consisting of 5-7 members of the congregation, would participate in training sessions, workshops, and a series of guided conversations seeking to clarify the church's mission and values, to deepen Christian practice, and to enrich our congregation's engagement with the community around us. Throughout this process the church will receive updates as well as ways for the whole congregation to share in the experience.

We are looking to create this "Thrive Team"! Does this sound interesting to you? The process is designed to engage individuals on the Thrive Team in prayer and spiritual growth through use of Ignatius Loyola's "Daily Examen" which then grows into spiritual discernment work with the congregation. If you would like to grow spiritually, if you have been curious about the future of our congregation and to what ministries God is calling us, then this might be a great opportunity for you! Please talk to Pastor Scott ASAP to discuss getting involved. Space is limited!

Participating in this program, with all the resources, staffing, and support that we will receive comes to us free of charge because of a grant the University received through the Lilly Endowment. Furthermore, because this is a "pilot" program upon completion of the 18-24 month "Examen(ed) Church" process, the church will receive several thousand dollars, plus if we come out of the program with specific ministry directives, they will even give us seed money to get the ministry started.





Church Team Spotlight

OUR LITURGY TEAM

The Liturgy Team assists and supports the minister in the production of worship services. We make sure every pew has hymnals, bibles, visitor cards, offering envelopes, and sharp pencils. We arrange the altar table with flowers and candles, and hang the stained-glass window panels, to mark the seasons, both natural and liturgical. We prepare the Communion elements. We keep the Christ Candle lit; we decorate the sanctuary for advent and Christmas. We select hymns and other music for each service which will reinforce or illuminate the theme or message of the service. And, behind the scenes, we manage the procurement, maintenance, and storage of liturgical supplies in the sanctuary closets.

Unlike other teams, we rarely hold meetings, but we do coordinate with each other and with the minister. We are Pastor Scott's logistical support team.

An area where we could use some help is with the recruitment and scheduling of ushers. The online signup has the potential to become self-sustaining, but as we get it started, it would be helpful to have someone monitor the signups and fill the vacancies.

Mike Spalding
Liturgy Team Representative on Church Council



WEDNESDAY LUNCH GROUP

You are invited to come to church on Wednesdays at noon for lunch and Bible study. The group meets in the Dennett Room and everyone brings their own bag lunch and beverage. After they eat together, the group reads through the Bible passages that will be used in worship on the next Sunday. Pastor Scott provides some Biblical background materials and some questions for discussion and then the conversation begins. You don't need to be a Bible scholar to participate, just a curiosity to explore and reflect on the text. The conversation is always interesting and there is usually laughter and sharing of stories, opinions and an insight or two. Give it a try, there is always room for more around the table! The group will not meet the Wednesday after Christmas, and will reconvene on January 4 in the new year.

TREE LOT SET-UP



Thank you to everyone who helped set up our Christmas Tree Lot on November 12: *Pictured l-r: Austin Lemke, Angelo Lopez, Matt Schlehlein, Joe Rychtik, Tom Roehrig, Bill Bond, Scott Symes, Jordan Arendt, Gary Tackes and Ralph Perez.*



CHRISTMAS TREE UNLOADING



Our thanks to church members Connor Cowen, Hope Gilhooly, Sam Pasten, and 17 other Port Washington High School students who unloaded 472 Christmas trees in just under one hour on November 22. The students earned Port Pride volunteer hours and enjoyed pizza and refreshments after unloading and taking the string off the first batch of trees.

NOVEMBER ACTIVITY



Soup and Salad Potluck Lunch on November 6



Increasing our understanding of Indigenous Peoples



Pastor Scott at the Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Service on November 22



Church School Bulletin Board

AWARNESS CAMPAIGN - THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED

The Capital Campaign Planning Team would like to thank all of those who stepped forward to host an Awareness Campaign meeting either in their homes or at church. Thank you to Craig and Carolyn Heatwole, Joe and Bev Mueller, Alice Ruffin, Claude and Jana Zimmerman, Kathy Bretl and Sherrie Dimmer for being hosts. Also want to thank all of those who attended one of these meetings and experienced the great conversation and meaningful dialogue that were a part of each one. Thanks, and apologies, to Kitchie Allen, Bill Bond and Dawn Guschl, Doug and Vicki McManus, Karen Oftedahl, Gary and Meg Tackes, and Rhonda Thompson for their willingness to host one of these meetings, but then had it cancelled or postponed due to low attendance. We do want to thank them for being ready to help when asked! The team made hundreds of calls and while almost everyone was willing to try to come to one of the meetings, the reality of the busy world we live in was plain to see. In October and November, out of the scheduled 12 meetings, we were only able to host six meetings, attended by 52 people from the church. The team will share a full report of ideas and feedback discussed in the coming months.



SPECIAL THANKS

To Jennifer Dimmer and the Fellowship Team for organizing the Soup and Salad Potluck on November 6.

To the Confirmation Class for packaging meals at The Food Pantry on November 9.

To our Congregational Team members, Alice Ruffin and Jane Schwacher, for sending out birthday and anniversary cards to our members and friends in October and November.

To our Friends for Justice Team. As part of the Indigenous Peoples' recognition activities last month, the Team donated a book to the children's book cart in the narthex, "We Are Water Protectors" by Carole Lindstrom, a Caldecott Medal winning book.

To Jeanne Mantsch, Jane Spalding and Beckie Perez for planting 200 daffodils in Creekside Commons and around the church grounds on November 14, a 70 degree day!

To our November Worship Leaders: Gary Tackes, Scott Symes, Meg Tackes, Don Niederfrank, Ken Matthews, and our Confirmation Class.

To our November Fellowship Hour Hosts: Shandy Roehrig, Carolyn Heatwole, Friends for Justice Team, and Bob and Jess Korup.

To our November Ushers: Kathy Bretl, Jeanne Mantsch, Mike and Jane Spalding, Adele Richert, Jodi and Ryan Cowen, Joe and Bev Mueller, and our Confirmation Class.

To the Cowen Family for selecting and trimming the sanctuary Christmas Tree.

To Ralph Perez for recruiting Port High students to unload the Christmas Trees.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Katja Cira and Graham Garthus for participating in the Port Washington High School musical "Legally Blond."

To the cast and crew: Addie Chandler, Simon Gilhooly, Kylee Olson, Chloe Rychtik, and staff member/set constructor Ryan Cowen for participating in the Thomas Jefferson Middle School musical "Mary Poppins".

To Elyse Karrels, a junior middle hitter, who led the Pirates in hitting and was named to the first team Northshore All Conference Girls Volleyball.

To Bonnie Jacque who was called as a licensed settled minister at St. Paul UCC in the town of Erin.

To Hailey Bergin who performed at the Wisconsin School Music Association state honors choir in Madison on October 27.

To Dani Peiffer, head coach of PWHS Girls Swim & Dive Team who had their most winningest swim season in years. Congrats also to senior Eva Perez who competed in the 200 freestyle at Sectionals. The team placed 5th overall.

To John Bunyan and Ralph Perez, PWHS varsity football coaches, who led the Pirates to their final run at the WIAA Round 3 football game on November 4. The Team finished with a 9-3 record.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Prayers of comfort for Tina Olson and family. Tina's brother, Joe Kelley, is 48 years old and has been in a coma since November 15. Joe has two sons who are 5-years-old and 22-years-old.

Prayers of sympathy for Janet Maechtle and her family. Janet's mother, Carol Koller, died on November 22. She was 87 years old. Pastor Scott led a funeral service for family and friends on November 28 at Eernisse Funeral Home.



Baptism

Congratulations and a lifetime of blessings to Bennett Robert Korup, son of Jess and Bob, who was baptized into the Christian faith at the 8:00 service on Sunday morning, November 27.

APPROVED OCTOBER CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

(The October Minutes were approved at the November 8, 2022 Church Council meeting.)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Church Council Minutes

October 13, 2022

Called to order by Jason Jacque @ 6:34 p.m.

Present: Pastor Scott, Shandy Roehrig, Jennifer Dimmer, Mike Spalding, Claude Zimmerman (for Bill Bond), Jason Jacque, Phil Stepanski, Pastor Scott, Jodi Cowen (via Zoom), and Kathy Bretl.

Opening Meditation — Kathy read “Very Good/Not Perfect” by Anthony B. Robinson from a UCC publication titled *This is How We Begin - Devotionals and Prayers to Start Meetings*.

Approval of Minutes — Mike moved to accept minutes as corrected (Jody Cowen to Jodi Cowen). Jennifer seconded. Minutes approved as changed.

Monthly Budget Review (Phil) — Phil went over notes related to Statement of Activity, September 2022; Budget vs. Actuals, January - September 2022; and Budget vs. Actuals, January - December 2022. He shared a listing of the account balances as of September 30, 2022. In reviewing expenses, he feels the anticipated deficit will be less than projected in the 2022 Budget.

He has begun work on the 2023 Budget. An item of note is that an increase of 15-20% is expected for property insurance (he will check into whether not having Port Preschool as a tenant any longer will affect insurance). Phil anticipates having the proposed budget completed by the end of the week.

Pastor’s Moment — Combined with Awareness Campaign Update

Old Business

Awareness Campaign Update — Pastor Scott shared that hosts have been secured for the Awareness Campaign Meetings. The team has divided up the majority of members and is calling them and asking them to commit to attending a meeting. There have been two meetings and they have gone well. The conversation has been great. A packet of materials related to the building needs is given to each participant. Pastor Scott will be present at all of the meetings, taking notes which will be compiled into a report. In December he will let people know what has been collected.

Property Team/Building Maintenance Updates — Claude Zimmerman, appearing for Bill Bond, told the Council that the Property Team is looking for proposals for the HVAC system to have a “heads up” before something breaks. None of the system is under warranty any longer.

There were issues with the boilers, and both have been fixed. The exit lights are still being worked on.

They are still looking into a handrail for the Sanctuary. Bill is getting a quote for a metal one like the one he has for his patio. Jennifer and Kathy said that it would be preferred to have a wooden railing instead of a metal one. Kathy will talk with Craig Modahl to see if this is something he could help with.

(continued on the next page)

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES continued...

Stewardship — Jodi said the team is on track to send out the mailing in a couple of weeks. They have a live testimonial from Phil Stepanski and Craig Modahl will work with Chris Fraser to write a testimonial. Brett Dimmer is willing to help with whatever needs to be done. The team is executing the plan.

Rental Space Update — Pastor Scott asked whether, to encourage groups to use our space, we could suspend building usage fees for 12 months. Kathy moved to suspend building/room use fees to promote use by outside groups, through the end of 2023. Claude (for Bill) seconded motion. Motion carried.

Associate Moderator Position — Pastor Scott will have a candidate by the November Congregational Meeting.

"The Examen(ed) Church" — Pastor Scott handed out the Timeline for The Examen(ed) Church-Journey of Discernment. There will be a team of 6-8 people. The program will be explained in the next newsletter to encourage participation. The application is due at the end of the month.

Outreach — Eric Olson was not able to attend the meeting, but he sent an email regarding participating in The Food Pantry holiday gift match program, in addition to the Church School participating in a Food Drive for November (from the November class to the December class).

New Business

Fall Congregational Meeting — Pastor Scott said the meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2022. The 2023 Proposed Budget will be presented and a preliminary report on the Awareness Campaign will be presented. The service will be cut short and the meeting will be held in the Sanctuary. The Benediction will be given after the meeting. (The Proposed Budget will be handed out with the Bulletin.)

Any Other New Business? — Jennifer shared that there is a Birthday Card-Making Event scheduled for October 16, 2022, after the service.

There will be a Soup and Salad Lunch after the service on November 6, 2022.

There will be an Advent Craft Workshop on Sunday, December 4, 2022.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment — Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Submitted by Kathryn Bretl, Treasurer (filling in for Rhonda Thompson, Secretary)



PROPERTY TEAM UPDATES AND MEETING MINUTES

Our Property Team is an active church team comprised of a handful of folks from the church. The team keeps a close eye on our church and works to maintain all aspects of our church building and grounds. Bill Bond is their Team Representative on the Church Council. Bill invites anyone who is interested to join the team. They meet around noontime on the last Friday of each month. The team would like to share their minutes with the church:

October 2022 Property Team Minutes

DECEMBER BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

5-	Jessica Clements	18-	Kelly Blum
	Kelly Perket	20-	Nicole Nelson
6-	David Wickesberg	21-	Taylor Peiffer
7 -	Mark MacRae	22-	Maximus Shupe
14 -	Lily Dimmer	25-	Courtney Cowen
15 -	Jim Schmit	26-	Vegas Mantsch
16 -	Kyle Schneider		Emma Riemer
	Cory Schneider	27-	Michael Rego
	Elijah Perez	29-	Aila Bretl
	Gary Tackes	31-	Scott Briese

DECEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

26 - Howard and Alice Clausing
27 - Steve and Cheri Farnsworth

*Please contact Beckie Perez, at
office@portucc.org, if you would like to
add a Birthday or Anniversary.*



SUNDAY SERVERS - ONLINE SIGN-UP

We are utilizing the online SignUpGenius tool which allows for easier scheduling. Below are the areas we need your participation. Simply click on the links and choose which Sundays you would like serve. Sign up once, or as many times as you'd like! Together we can fill in all the gaps. If you have any questions, please reach out to Beckie in the church office.



You may click the button to see all of the Sunday Servers sign-ups or click below to view the individual sign-ups.

USHERS

Greet congregants, hand out service bulletins, and collect the offering at the 8:00 or 10:00 Sunday morning worship service

ACOLYTES

5th, 6th, and 7th graders are invited to light the altar candles just before the start of every 10:00 worship service

WORSHIP LEADERS

Help Pastor Scott lead the congregation in responsive readings, unison prayers, and scriptures during the 8:00 or 10:00 worship service

NURSERY CAREGIVERS

Watch over children newborn through elementary in our nursery (currently in the Gilomen Room) during the 10:00 service. The 8th grade Confirmation Class will still be helping, but with a smaller class, we need some additional help. Please note, 8th graders and high schoolers must be accompanied by a parent

FELLOWSHIP HOUR HOSTS

Serve coffee and provide simple treats following the 10:00 service on the second and fourth Sundays - two families preferred

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
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DECEMBER 2022 CALENDAR

				1 8 am Men's Breakfast - The Beacon 6:30 pm Executive Team	2	3
4 Second Sunday of Advent 8 am Communion Service 9 am Fellowship Hour 10 am Communion Service, Nursery Care 11 am Advent Craft Workshop & Cookie Exchange	5 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	6 9:30 am Staff Meeting	7 12 pm Lunch Group 6:30 pm Advent Vesper Service 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	8 8 am Men's Breakfast - The Beacon 6:30 pm Church Council Knellsville 4-H Club	9	10 5 pm PW Pride
11 Third Sunday of Advent 8 am Worship Service 10 am Worship Service Church School Chancel Choir Nursery Care 11 am Fellowship Hour 11-11:30 am Children's Choir Rehearsal	12 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	13 9:30 am Staff Meeting	14 12 pm Lunch Group 5:30 pm Lighthouse Youth Group- Assist Family Promise Christmas Party 6:30 pm Advent Vesper Service 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	15 8 am Men's Breakfast - The Beacon 6 pm Confirmation Class Mission-Family Promise	16	17
18 Fourth Sunday of Advent 8 am Worship Service 10 am Family Service Confirmation Class Assists Children's Choir Nursery Care 11 am Fellowship Hour 11 am – 12:30 pm Confirmation Class Christmas Pageant Rehearsal	19 6:30 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:30 pm Confirmation Class	20 9:30 am Staff Meeting	21 12 pm Lunch Group 6:30 pm Advent Vesper Service 7 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	22	23 1 pm Property Team	24 Christmas Eve Services 5 pm Christmas Pageant 7 pm Worship Service 9 pm Worship and Communion

25

Christmas Day

10 am Worship Service

(Limited Office Hours the Week Following Christmas)

Happy 2023!

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FREE BUILDING USAGE FOR MEMBERS

In an effort to bring back more activity to our church building, especially since the departure of Port Pre-School during the week, the Church Council recently approved free church building usage for Members through the program year. Are you having a family get together and need a larger space? Use Fellowship Hall! Do you need a meeting space? Use the Dennett Room!

Contact Beckie in the church office to reserve a date.



CHURCH INFORMATION

First Congregational Church - *United Church of Christ*
131 North Webster Street
Port Washington, WI 53074
(262) 284-2022
website - portucc.org, email - office@portucc.org



Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday mornings from 8:30 - Noon

Pastor Scott's Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays, and by appointment

Financial Administrator Phil's Office Hours

Mondays from 4:30 - 6:30

Office Staff

Rev. Dr. Scott McLeod, Pastor - pastorscott@portucc.org

Amy Gilhooly, Communications Director - amyg@portucc.org

Beckie Perez, Office Manager - office@portucc.org

Phil Stepanski, Financial Administrator - phil@portucc.org

STAY CONNECTED

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"First Congregational Church of Port Washington"

Receive our E-Blasts (emails)

Please let us know if you have a new email address

Check out the church website - **portucc.org**

ONLINE GIVING WITH PAYPAL

PayPal is an easy way to give to the church to pay your pledge and/or make an extra financial gift. You can find the **PayPal** button on the home page of the church website (portucc.org) or use this QR code. Thank you!

