

The Witness

ISSUE III

MARCH 2019

Portage First United Methodist Church

Pastors Michael Lawson & Tara Keehn

MARCH NEWSLETTER



*Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 10th at 2:00 AM.
Don't forget to set your clocks forward one hour Saturday night!*



From Pastor Michael...

I Keep Meeting Jesus at Meijer

A couple weeks ago I told the story of how I met Jesus at Meijer on Black Friday. Upon encountering a person who looked just like every picture of Jesus I found myself tongue tied. Something in my brain misfired and I could only say to him: "Um... I read your book."

Well, I just had another deeply spiritual experience at Meijer so naturally I have to tell you about it. As you know, this last month has seen my mother return to the hospital and though she is doing better now, we have come to the place where we have had to make some incredibly difficult decisions. If we can add onto this, we also have beginning of Lent, the Special Session of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, various technology issues at the church and I admit to feeling overwhelmed.

So as I was pushing my cart out the store I walked past the floral counter. I didn't even notice at first but a familiar fragrance hit my nose... Easter lilies and hyacinths! All of a sudden grief, fear, and stress dissolved away and I was transported in my memory to Easter at my home church in Frankton. I moved across time to all the many Easters I have had since my baptism in 1995. All the churches and all the celebrations of the Resurrection. We celebrate God's ability to bring life in the midst of death.

In this season of Lent, as we repent and examine ourselves before Easter, this experience the other day reminded me that God gives us what we need to make safely through all our trials and tribulations. It seems like I cannot say it enough... Yes there is Good Friday suffering, but Sunday is coming.

Michael



Pancake Breakfast

Cub Scout Pack 487 will be having a pancake fundraiser Saturday, March 9 from 8:00-11:00 AM here at the church. All donations will go toward upcoming Blue & Gold Banquet Awards and summer events. If you are unable to attend or you don't like pancakes, your donation is always welcome. Please make checks payable to Cub Scout Pack 487 and contact Chris Adkins.



Church Scholarships

Our church sets aside certain Gold Can Offerings and donations for our scholarship fund which is used to help reduce the cost for higher education for members and active attendees.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2019-2020 school year. Anyone seeking a higher education may qualify for a scholarship. The application process is very straightforward and may be obtained at the church office or requested by email at pfumc2000@yahoo.com. All eligible persons are encouraged to apply and past or current recipients of scholarships remain eligible to apply for the new school year. Applications are due by April 26, 2019 and can be dropped off at the church office or placed in the Finance Committee folder in the Narthex. Please pass this information along to anyone that may be eligible for this scholarship.

Finance Committee



Note from Pastor Tara...

Hello! I have a few things I'd like to share with you!

Pie Ministry: In March we are going to restart our pie ministry. There will be a sign-up sheet on the Connection Center for those interested in participating in a variety of ways. For the Month of March the scheduler will be Wendy Smith. I would like to rotate all of the responsibilities to prevent burnout. If you are interested in assisting by

1. Going though attendance pads
2. Baking Pies
3. Delivering Pies
4. Scheduling by calling people on a list for holes in the schedule

Please ask Pastor Tara or call or text me at 219-608-6150.

Congregational Care Ministry

Our last meeting was cancelled due to weather conditions. I will be scheduling another meeting, but unfortunately do not have it as of the time of this newsletter. I am looking to have a retreat for some training and bonding time. More information to come! If you would like to become part of our Congregational Care Ministry, we have many ways to become involved.

1. Prayer and card writing team.
2. Communion to Shut-ins
3. Hospital Visitation.
4. Grief follow up for members who have lost someone.
5. Follow up with absentee members.

If any of these sound like roles you may be interested in, please contact Pastor Tara by call or text at (219) 608-6150.



From Kate Blakely, Director of Spiritual Formation...

The **MPK Annual St. Patrick's Day Luncheon** fundraiser will be on March 17th between services. Come join us for corned beef & cabbage (and hot dogs for kids). We'll be taking up a freewill offering to help support camp scholarships.

A **BIG THANK YOU** to everyone who came out to support camping ministries at our annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser on February 16. Camp helps our youth and children to explore their faith through various activities: devotions, small group discussions, relationship building, worship and more! Camp costs over \$449 per kid, and your generosity is helping PFUMC provide much needed scholarships so our youth and children can experience this memorable, life-changing week.

Youth & MPK March Meetings

March 3, 12:30-2:00 PM

March 17 we will be doing our corned beef & cabbage fundraiser to help raise money for camp scholarships.



United Methodist Men

Hello gentlemen friends at Portage 1st UMC. Daylight savings time and spring are just around the corner, and we've almost survived now another blustery winter here in northwest Indiana. Yes – and we have many other things to be thankful for too. I am truly grateful for so many things. My wife Kathy and I retired in June of 2018 after serving over 50 years in the employment scene. Kathy has been my mainstay for over 43 years of marriage and has helped me in so many ways to strengthen our marriage, family, and our spiritual journey. We've been members here at Portage 1st UMC since around 1979. We want you to know our church family means more than words can say. You have helped us through many rough spots, celebrated with us in many milestone events, and nurtured us to help us to where we are today. Yes, you are all a wonderful blessing to us. You have been a part of our Holy Moments.

I'd like to share with you (below) from a book by author Matthew Kelly who has offered some incredibly insightful, and also encouraging, information to his readers.

“In a world that can seem so dark at times, God gives you and me a candle and a match and says – You are the light of the world. You?? Me?? I know, it seems impossible, but it is both the story of Christianity and the legacy of each of us Christians. And yet, all these words can feel like little more than a theory. He lists below a couple everyday life examples that some men have done.

- 1) John Miller discovered that his neighbor three houses down had broken his leg. He had never met his neighbor, but on Saturday when he was mowing his lawn he noticed the lawn three houses down was getting a little long. So when he was finished mowing his own lawn, he went down and mowed his neighbor's lawn. This was a Holy Moment. John mowed his neighbor's lawn every Saturday for the next eight weeks.
- 2) Martin Coster picks up seventy-eight year old Michael Williams every Wednesday night and drives him to Bible study. This is a Holy Moment.

He goes on to share that there are so many small and anonymous things that we can be a part of, and do, as Holy Moments for God's glory. Here is a listing of but a few.

- Begin each day with a short prayer of gratitude thanking God for giving you another day of life.
- Go out of your way to do something for your spouse that you would rather not do, as an intentional act of love.
- Offer the least enjoyable task of your day to God as a prayer for someone who is suffering.
- Control your temper, even if you are fully justified in losing it.
- Be patient with that person who drives you crazy.

Portage 1st UMC men I want to encourage you to be “Light Bearers” in a dark world and to try to live each day of your life sharing Holy Moments - being the light and witness of Jesus that our world is in so much need of. You know yourself how richly God has blessed you. He wants you to reciprocate and be a blessing to the many in your world that could use His blessing too. So get out there and share some Holy Moments guys.

Looking forward to seeing you gentlemen at our next Saturday morning breakfast UMM meeting. It is Saturday March 2nd at 8:00 AM. Good food, great fellowship and sharing of our men's ministries. Take a chance, get out of your rut. Invite a friend or neighbor to join you. Hope to see you then.

*Because of Him,
Mike Matthew*

First Friday Fellowship

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2019

5:00 PM

MARQUETTE YACHT CLUB

1218 Crisman Road • Portage

Please RSVP to:

Sandra Robinson at (219) 764-8433
no later than Thursday, February 28

United Methodist Women

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2019 • 9:30 AM

☘ ***You're in Luck!*** ☘

We're having a meeting and you're invited!
Join us for fellowship, conversation,
breakfast snacks and our speaker,
Megan Johnston, coordinator for
RECOVERY CONNECTION.

We hope to see you there!!



Trustees Corner...

Royal Family Kids Camp Breakfast

What an event! Over 100 people came for breakfast to help support Royal Family Kids Camp. The table of August had the most registered in at 13, followed by April at 12, November at 11, and July with 10. We raised over \$1,029 to help provide backpacks filled with basic camping needs. Along with your monetary support (which was fantastic) we also collected 4 pillows, 73 toothbrushes, 61 toothpastes, 3 towel sets, 3 fitted sheets and one fitted set, 10 one-piece swimsuits, 6 body washes, 21 3-in-1 shampoo, rinse, and bodywashes, 17 2-in-1 shampoos & rinses, along with a multitude of combs, brushes, hair nets, bars of soap, and 27 deodorants. ONE BIG THANK YOU to those who adopted a table, prepared and served breakfast, did dishes, and helped clean up the kitchen and fellowship hall. Royal Family Kids Camp is specifically designed to serve children ages 7 to 12 who are currently living in out-of-home placements. Our camp is all about building good memories for the children. We treat the kids with respect and understanding and spent a whole lot of time having fun and being shown the love of Christ. Thank you on behalf of 80+ children who will be attending camp this year for your generous support. We do make a difference here at Portage First.



Missions and Outreach Committee...

Hello, Church! This month we are asking for donations of canned fruit for the Portage Township Food Pantry. We frequently receive heartfelt thank yous from the folks who manage the pantry. They are so very grateful for your support, and we are, too!

Also, the Community Meal for March will be a movie night! Join us on March 15 at 6:00 PM to enjoy a good meal, visit with friends, and watch "Green Book"! Remember to invite friends. This is a great way to help folks you know stretching their food budget!

Also, a big "thank you" to everyone who helped prepare for and staff the children's fishing activity booth at Portage's Fish-On Fishing and Outdoor Show in February. We made lots of good contacts, gave out general information about our church, and brightened the smiles of many children and adults. (Everybody loved that dancing shark!)

*With Blessings and Gratitude,
Your friends on the Missions and Outreach Committee*

Thank you!

Virginia Spurlock wishes to thank you for your cards, phone calls, flowers, food, and visits following the death of her son, Shaw Wayne Spurlock, Jr.

THANK YOU, PORTAGE FIRST!!!!
Thank you for purchasing tickets for Shrek The Musical and supporting Family Promise in February. It was a lot of fun and was a great fundraising success.



Here is a convenient way to tithe!
Try PushPay with your mobile device or online!

Have you ever come to worship and realized you left your offering envelope at home or learned of a worthwhile mission you want to support only to realize you did not bring your checkbook? Wouldn't it be a blessing to be able to give back to God in a matter of seconds using your smartphone or tablet, laptop or desktop?

We have partnered with a company named Pushpay to help us move into the 21st Century with our financial stewardship. Fewer people write checks much less use cash, especially younger adults.

Pushpay will allow us to give one-time gifts, recurring gifts or special gifts using debit or credit cards or ACH transactions from our bank accounts. It is quite easy to get started. Simply text 'pfume' to 77977 and follow the instructions on your screen. As part of the process you will be able to download the Pushpay app for either iPhone or Android.



Happy March Anniversary to...

04	Scott & Sandy Holtzman	17	James & Marcie Jordan
08	Steve & Deb Massow	27	Paul & Denise Pollacheck

Happy March Birthday to...

03	Lori Seberger	16	Virginia Spurlock	25	Alexandra Medina
03	Mia Lopez	16	Elizabeth Seberger	25	Jason Bush
04	Conner Welch	20	Shari Warne	26	Helen Wright
04	Scott Holtzman II	20	Rich Coates	27	Robert Liesch Jr.
09	Larry Darnell	20	Joselynn Medina	28	Kirk Harbart
09	Ethan Warne	21	Amy Kegley	29	Mitch Gale
10	Diana Gymrek	23	Rob Hoover	31	Katie Tarnow
11	Heather Shebel	23	Dave Mantz	31	Melissa Sullivan
13	Dennis Whitfield	24	Gloria Bowen	31	Margaret Brutout
15	Jamie Whitfield	24	Zachary Smith		