

April/May 2026

THE CHALLENGE

The Official Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Port Huron

811 Wall Street, Port Huron, MI 48060 - (810) 985-6191

PASTOR POINT

“Why Church?”

It's a question being asked today in American society. At one point in our country, church was part of local community formation – you picked a church, and stayed in it as a family for generations. The church was the primary source of friendships, and for some the primary source of education (if your church had a day school.) It supported people from birth to death, and the rhythm of life centered around the activities that your particular church offered. These are beautiful things that a church can offer to support each individual in the journey of life.

But – there is a downside to this model of church. It becomes insulated from the world, allowing those that participate in its membership to believe that everyone does and SHOULD think and act and live exactly as the people with whom you spend the majority of your time. It becomes a little like a bus station on the bus ride of life. A place that lets you get off, stretch your legs, get a little “comfort,” and refuel for the next leg of the trip. Those things are necessary for the long journey of life. We need ways to mark time, to feel comforted after difficult life events, and to be refueled in the Spirit to keep going on the journey. But if we decide we only want comfort – well, we'll have to stay in the bus station for that. That means staying off the bus. No more jostling and bumps, nauseating diesel fumes, but also – no forward motion. And later, we may look back and ask: what was the point? In the old

workout mantra: “no pain, no gain.” Without some discomfort life stagnates, and we delude ourselves that our comfort is actually what is important. When we insist on only being comforted, we lose sight of what real life is all about. Living in community as God created us to live is full of challenge and change that at times is exhilarating, and at times messy, frustrating, disappointing, painful – the exact opposite of comfort.

Why church? Because it is what Jesus called us to create and to live within. You cannot be a Christian alone; Christianity is a faith that requires relationship, living in community. Worshipping together, breaking bread together at the Lord's Table and in picnics and potlucks, learning together, reaching out and serving the outcast in our society – it's what our faith, as expressed in Scripture, requires us to do.

On March 14, I attended a gathering of ministers and lay leaders of the Presbytery of Detroit entitled “Why Presbytery?” For a full day, we explored the timeline of amazing and Spirit-empowered accomplishments of this historic Presbytery, as well as the messiness of hurt feelings, rejection, selfishness and failure to listen to each other that led to the need to have outside guidance to bandage this particular body of Christ and start its healing process. The Presbytery of Detroit is not the centralized office with a few paid staff members. The Presbytery is all of us, clergy and local church members, every PC(USA) congregation in

southeast Michigan. And the uncomfortable challenge I came away with was: each of us is called to be a part of the healing. Because “the church” is not just the building sitting on 811 Wall Street in the small city of Port Huron, MI; the church is not 69 congregations in the Presbytery of Detroit, or the thousands of PC(USA) churches across the United States. It’s ALL of our Christian brothers and sisters that worship Jesus Christ across denominations and nations. If we don’t see ourselves as part of a larger community, whether in the local church or worldwide, we fixate on our own comfort. The bus stops, the journey stagnates, and we wither away in our vitality. We exhibit many of the “marks” of a vital and healthy local congregation. As I talk with leaders in other churches, I quietly celebrate all that First Presbyterian of Port Huron is – a church that has weathered change and continues to be open to change as the Holy Spirit guides us. A church that has experienced discomfort, and shows

willingness to continue to accept occasional discomfort as part of the life of the church. Together we live the occasionally uncomfortable journey that God takes us on together. Your Session and church committees are exploring this year the ways we are a Vital Congregation, and the Seven Marks that healthy, growing, alive churches exhibit. Some marks we clearly hold; some need a little shoring up. But a commitment to leaning into the joys and messiness of life together, the discomfort AND comfort it provides, is living out the life God created us to embrace. We cannot avoid the conflict, the hurt, the discomfort that comes from living as a community. We each need to be part of helping it move through those moments, with the acceptance that our only true comfort comes in a life lived in subservience to God and faith in the ultimate eternal comfort through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

-Rev. Kathy Tessin

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Session Highlights**
- **Office Hours Changed**
- **Children Christian Education**
- **Church Life Photos**
- **Upcoming Events and Important Dates**

CHILDREN’S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Growing in Faith Together (G.I.F.T.) (K-3rd grade) and Mountain Movers (4-8th grades)
 Children meet Sundays at 10:00 a.m. during the Traditional Worship Service. After the Children’s Message, the children will go to their classrooms with their teachers.
Christ Corner (ages 13 - 19) *after worship from 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Thank You

We would like to thank the congregation for your expressions of sympathy and prayers as we grieve the passing of our Father, Father-in-law, and Grandfather. The many cards and messages have been a great comfort.

In Christ,
 Laura, Chris, Jonathan, and Benjamin Nurnberg

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Shelley Kamer, Clerk to Session

FEBRUARY 2026

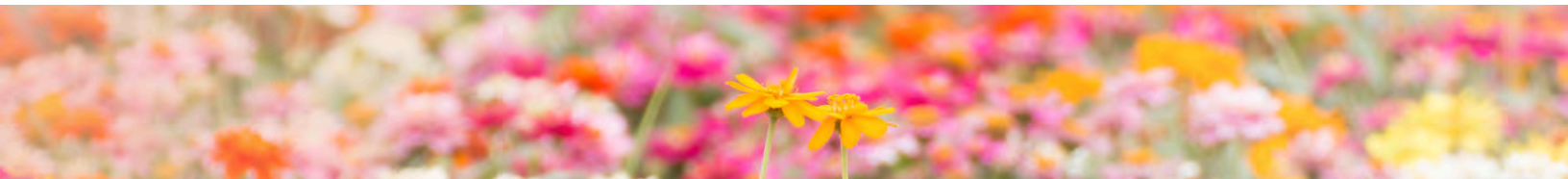
The following actions were taken at the Regular Session meeting on February 9, 2026:

- Approved the use of the building for the Golden Agers Luncheon on September 26, 2026.
- Approved an off-site activity for lunch and the play "The Hobbit" on March 15, 2026.
- Approved an off-site activity at Sperry's Movie House for a faith based movie on Good Friday, April 3, 2026.
- Approved a second "Parent's Night Out" on May 15th from 6:00-8:30 p. m.
- Approved Vacation Bible Camp for August 4-7, 2026.

MARCH 2026

The following actions were taken at the Regular Session meeting on March 16, 2026:

- Approved the use of the building by BWROC for a closed AA group on Friday evenings in the lower level room of the church.
- Approved an off-site activity for the Children/Youth group end of the year outing at Sawmill City on June 24, 2026.



OFFICE HOURS CHANGE

Effective March 19, we will no longer have the gift of Laura Gaffney's support as our Administrative Assistant. She has been a blessing to this congregation over the past three years, helping to move our office administration forward by effectively utilizing technology, organizing us in new ways, and providing a pastoral presence as she served members and visitors to our building. She has been a joy to work with, and will be deeply missed. But we celebrate this new season of life for her and her family as she returns to her career as an Occupational Therapist serving the Port Huron School District.

The Personnel Committee is hard at work recruiting and interviewing candidates for this critical part-time position. In the interim, we will not be able to offer the same level of office support until new staff is hired and trained. Effective the week of April 6, the office will be closed on Thursdays, to give Pastor Kathy time to catch up from some of the administrative tasks she'll have to handle alone until a new Administrative Assistant is hired. Also, when you call the office you may need to leave voicemail messages, which the pastor or a volunteer will try to return within the day. Thank you for your understanding as we navigate this time of transition as a congregation.

CHURCH LIFE PHOTOS



Holy Week

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 29th
Worship 10:00 a.m.



Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 2nd
Worship 6:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 5th
Worship 8:00 a.m.
Breakfast 9:00 a.m.
Worship 10:00 a.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A TIME FOR SHARING



The annual **One Great Hour of Sharing** campaign will conclude on **Easter Sunday** (April 5). One of three churchwide special offerings collected by the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s General Assembly, it has been a mainstay on the ecumenical church calendar

since 1949, the money raised is used to support various causes - disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, immigration/migration and refugees - serving individuals and communities to provide them with safety, sustenance and hope. Last year, our church raised \$1,622.10, which included the money given by the children and youth in our GIFT and Mountain Movers programs as well as "older children" in the congregation in the Fish Banks collection.

MAUNDY THURSDAY MEAL AND WORSHIP

April 2, 2026 - Dinner at 6:00 p.m.
Worship following

A Middle Eastern dinner of chicken shawarma, rice pilaf, grilled vegetables, salads, pita bread and desserts will be served at **6 p.m. Thursday, April 2nd**, in the Fellowship Hall prior to the **Maundy Thursday** service. There is a suggested donation of \$17 for the meal. If you would like to participate in the dinner, a sign up sheet can be found on the church office desk.



GOOD FRIDAY MOVIE NIGHT



April 3, 2026

The Membership and Outreach Committee will be showing the film, "Heaven is for Real," on **Good Friday, time TBD** at the SC4 Cinema (formerly Sperry's Moviehouse). The 2014 film is based on a true story about the young son of a small-town pastor who claims to have visited heaven during a near-death experience. The film explores faith, family and the impact the child's account has on the community as he recounts details about things he couldn't possibly have known or experienced.

GREEN EGGS AND HAM?

April 5, 2026 - 9:00 a.m.



No, Dr. Seuss will **NOT** be on the menu but pancakes bathed in syrup, several scrambled egg combinations (one of which will include ham), sausages, yummy muffins, Danishes and fruit salad will be when the Membership and Outreach Committee dishes up its annual Easter Sunday Breakfast. The breakfast will be served between the April 5 Sunrise and traditional worship services beginning at about 9 a.m. A free-will offering will be taken at the breakfast to benefit Harbor Impact's Food Giveaway program.



MOTHER'S DAY COLLECTION

May 10, 2026

On **Sunday, May 10**, the Mission and Community Ministry Committees will be donning aprons for their fourth annual **Mother's Day Special Offering** to benefit Pathways and Carolyn's Place, Port Huron's two shelters for women and families. A free-will offering will be taken at the 10 a.m. worship service as well as coffee hour by apron-wearing committee members. This year, the congregation is also being invited to donate in memory or in honor of their mothers. Offerings can be designated with forms provided in the bulletin or on the office counter. Last year's collection raised \$811 for the two shelters.



DATES TO REMEMBER

APRIL

- April 2: Maundy Thursday Worship 6:00 PM
- April 5: Easter Sunday- Sunrise Service 8:00 a.m., Easter Breakfast 9:00 a.m., Traditional Worship 10:00 a.m.; One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering Ends
- April 6: Easter Monday - office closed
- April 12: April Birthday and Anniversary Celebration
- April 13: Deacon Meeting at 4:00 PM; Session Meeting at 6:30 PM

MAY

- May 3: Holy Communion; May Birthday/Anniversary Celebrations
- May 10: Mother's Day - Special Mother's Day Offering
- May 11: Deacon Meeting at 4:00 PM; Session Meeting at 6:30 PM
- May 24: Neighborhood Clean Up and Church Grounds Beautification

JUNE - JULY - AUGUST

- June 20: Habitat for Humanity Rock the Block
- June 21: Father's Day; First Beach Worship Service 8:00 a.m.- Special "Nail Sale" Collection to benefit Habitat for Humanity
- June 24: End of the School Year Outing
- July 17: Boat Week- Family Night 5:00-9:00 p.m.
- August 4-7: Vacation Bible Camp (VBS)
- August 8: Family Night

TO THE FPC CONGREGATION

It is with many feelings of excitement, grief, and anticipation that I write this letter. As I depart from my positions here at the church, I hope to impart my feelings of thankfulness and gratitude. There may be those who did not know that I have a Masters degree in Occupational Therapy. I worked at a nursing home for many years, as well as home care. I stopped working in 2021 with the intention of pursuing a new career path which led me to working here at the church. I have thoroughly enjoyed working here at the church. I have learned many new skills, but



most importantly I was able to build relationships and join a welcoming community. All of you are what makes this transition so bittersweet. I truly am thankful for the countless ways you have all touched my life. Your thoughtfulness, giving hearts, kindness, and unending grace will always be cherished. Please accept this note as I try to thank you all for continuously sharing God's love with me and for opening your hearts as I worked for the church. I will miss being here and with you all. I pray for God's blessings in your lives.

Peace be with you -Laura



WORSHIP WITH US!

Sunday Worship

Traditional Worship - 10:00 a.m.

Fellowship time immediately following Traditional Worship.



OUR MISSION:

KNOW the love of God,

GROW in the Christian faith,

GO share our faith in Jesus Christ.



Connect with us!

Website: www.fpcporthuron.org

Facebook: @FirstPresbyterianChurch

Port Huron

YouTube: @FirstPresbyterianChurch

ONLINE GIVING

Did you know you can now pledge online to First Presbyterian Church by using the safe and secure service from Tithe.ly? You can use your credit card or debit card. Your gift can be a one-time contribution, or a recurring monthly contribution.

Check out the "Give" link on our website (fpcporthuron.org)!

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(M-Th: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.)



Bill Briscoe

Custodian/Maintenance Director

(Contact for appointments)