



December 2025 *the VINE*

Dear Grand Avenue Church Family and Friends,

We enter December and the season of Advent. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and is intended to be a period of spiritual preparation leading up to Christmas Day. Today the Advent Season is more commonly referred to as the Christmas Season.

The Christmas Season is by far our most revered holiday of the year and it is impossible to escape the importance placed upon it in our country. The images of Christmas are everywhere. Our homes and streets are filled with colorful lights and Christmas decorations. Every store and business is promoting the season. There are numerous parades, events, and gatherings. We are constantly inundated with a steady stream of Christmas advertisements on our televisions and phones. No one can doubt that the days leading up to December 25th are dominated and focused on preparing for this celebration.

However, the Season that was originally instituted to provide a period of mindful spiritual reflection on the importance and significance of the birth and return of the Messiah has become increasingly centered on consumerism and not Christ. As I step back and analyze the modern Christmas/Advent Season, I am struck by how little focus is placed on Jesus. In fact, outside of our church communities and activities, there is virtually no mention of our Savior. How strange that a holiday that is so universally known and celebrated worldwide has almost no focus on the reason for its existence.

As we enter this Advent/Christmas Season let us reconnect with the reason for the season. Let our Lord's Word protect us from the bright, glittering lights of commercialism so that we won't be blinded to the true significance of Christmas and the need to pursue more meaningful preparation. Let us prayerfully center all of our preparations and celebrations on Jesus Christ and consciously seek to prepare our hearts to meet our Lord.

Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

Galatians 4:4-5, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

John 1:14, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Your Brother in Christ,

Pastor Vince

CELEBRATE

December Birthdays

Lila Lentz	2	Mark Davis	21
Dan Benning	7	Michael Lueptow	21
Amelia Bastianello	9	Amanda Penkivech	21
Joyce Kirkendall	10	Ava Lentz	22
Henry Weltin	14	Mike Vernon	25
Emily Betker	16	Michael Lentz	26
Beth Davis	16	Barb Jones	27
Carol O'Mara	17		

December Anniversaries

Mark & Beth Breuer	16
Scott & Sue Penkivech	23
Dan & Lynn Benning	29
Mike & Geny Vernon	29

VOLUNTEERS

Thank you, Volunteers, for serving in our ministry!

Date	Usher	Liturgist	Cupbearers	Coffee Host	AV
12/7	Larry Maechtle	Lin Lohr	<i>Needed*</i>	<i>Needed*</i>	Scott Penkivech
12/14	Larry Maechtle	Ardelle Dionne	n/a	<i>Needed*</i>	Scott Penkivech
12/21	Larry Maechtle	Mark Grams	n/a	<i>Needed*</i>	Scott Penkivech
12/24	Larry Maechtle	Multiple	n/a	n/a	Scott Penkivech
12/28	Larry Maechtle	Sandy Grams	n/a	<i>Needed*</i>	Scott Penkivech

*Please see sign-up sheet on the church bulletin board.

MUSIC MINISTRY



Christmas Music Needed



If you are interested in performing any special music or songs during our Advent or Christmas Eve worship services, we'd love to hear you make a joyful noise. Please contact the church office or Sue Merrill and Ardelle Dionne to share the song and date that you'd like to perform.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH



Current Needs

Gift Cards, 10.5 QT Non-Stick Stock Pot, Glass Cleaner Spray Bottles, Coconut Oil Moisturizer for Hair & Skin, Set of 12 oz White Coffee Mugs, paper towels, toilet paper, size 4 diapers, training pants/pull-ups size 2T/3T, and Adult Winter Coats (XL, XXL, & XXXL).

See the [Portlight Shelter Amazon Wish List](#) for more information.

Upcoming Meal Week

Our next opportunity to serve meals at the Portlight Shelter with Christ the King Church is **December 29th- January 2nd**. Please consider helping with this mission by providing a side dish, helping serve a meal, or being a meal leader. Funds are available for reimbursement of your meal costs. Look for the sign up link or call the church office to help out. Thanks for considering being a part of this important ministry!



Current Needs

Pudding Snacks, Canned Fruit, Applesauce, Boxed Potatoes, Cranberry Sauce, Soup, Pasta, Fresh Vegetables (especially carrots), Fruit Cups, Toilet Paper, and Fresh Fruits (Apples or Oranges).



Giving Tree



Our giving tree in the narthex is back in use to help spread a little holiday joy to our neighbors in need. You can take a tag off the tree to purchase an item for Family Promise or The Port Food Pantry. If you purchase a gift card using our RaiseRight Scrip (Gift Card) Program by Dec. 7th, the gift cards will be here on Dec. 14th to put under the tree. Plus a percentage of the purchase comes back to GAUMC, so it's a win-win. **Please place all items, with their giving tag, under the tree by December 16th.**

MISSIONS & OUTREACH, cont.

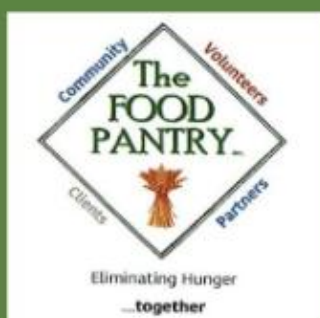


Gift a Child

Gift a child is a program sponsored by The Food Pantry, Inc.
headquartered in Port Washington, WI

The program provides holiday gifts to children in Ozaukee County
through the pantry, or through the Ozaukee Non-Profit Center.

Children served are ages infant through high school. Children
receive a gift they want, a gift they need, a gift to wear, and a gift to
read. A person or group may sponsor a child, a family, or a
category. We also accept donations of any new items.



How You Can Help

- Sponsor a child
- Sponsor a family
- Donate new items
- Donate funds

For more information, contact us at 262-261-5095,
or email at patkozak2021@gmail.com

The Food Pantry, Inc. is a recognized 501c3 charitable organization.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH, cont.

GAUMC Craft Booth at Port's Artisan Market

Thanks to all of you for your fantastic donations to our church's Craft Booth! We are fully stocked for the season with a wonderful selection of items! No more donations are needed at this time.

Shop downtown at the Port Artisan Market! Support our church's booth and all of the other vendors! It will be a fun and interesting stop!



FAITH GROUPS & ACTIVITIES



December Events

Sunday, December 7th from 6:30-8:00 pm - "Gift a Child" Christmas Shopping

We will once again be sponsoring 5 kids through the "Gift a Child" program with the Port Food Pantry. This program supports local families who may be struggling financially by helping to purchase Christmas gifts for their children. Join us as we go shopping to purchase these gifts for kids in need and help spread some Christmas cheer!



Sunday, December 14th from 6:30-8:00 pm - "Lighthouse Life" Night

Lighthouse Life Nights will be offered once a month and will be a mix of conversation and activities around a particular topic for each night. This year, we will be walking through the Bible together and highlighting major stories and themes as we explore God's story of love and redemption for the world. For December, we have made it to the New Testament and will be reading the Gospel accounts of Jesus' birth.

December 21st from 6:00-8:00 pm – Christmas Movie Night

Put on your ugly sweater or your favorite pjs and settle in for a classic Christmas movie night complete with pizza, popcorn, and hot cocoa.



***Wishing you and your families a blessed and joy-filled
Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Savior!***

See you in 2026

- The Lighthouse Board



Lighthouse events are open to all students in grades 5-12 and, unless otherwise noted, take place at Lighthouse HQ (513 W. Grand Ave. in Port Washington).

Have questions about Lighthouse or want to get involved?

Contact Director Christin Flucke at 262-483-9582 or christin.flucke@lighthouseyouth.org

FAITH GROUPS & ACTIVITIES, cont.

Giving Tuesday
SPAGHETTI SUPPER

DECEMBER 2
5 pm to 7:30 pm

at Parkside Community Church
166 W. Dekora St, Saukville



HUGE SILENT AUCTION

MUSIC BY BELLA MUSIK

Gluten Free &
Vegetarian
Options
Available

DINE IN OR CARRY OUT



LIGHTHOUSE

YOUTH MINISTRY

lighthouseyouth.org

\$15
per person

10 and
under free



CHURCH NEWS

Weather Closings

With winter weather approaching, any church closings due to inclement weather will be posted on the following: FOX6 TV News Milwaukee, AM 920, Newstalk AM 1130 WISN, FM 95.7, FM 97.3, FM 100.7, and FM 106.1, www.tmj4.com, and our [Grand Avenue Church Facebook page](#).

2026 Liturgists Needed

We will be putting together our liturgist schedule for 2026 very soon. Volunteering as a liturgist connects our congregation and helps deepen our faith together. Please let the office know if you are interested in being a liturgist in our worship services next year.

Advent Readings & Candle Lighting

We still have openings for volunteers to do our Advent readings & candle lighting on **December 14th, 21st, & 24th**. Please sign up on the bulletin board or let the office know if you can help.



RaiseRight Gift Cards

This year, give the gift everyone loves: Choice!

You can order gift cards for popular stores using our RaiseRight Scrip (Gift Card) Program and the church gets a donation. If you order by Dec. 7th, the gift cards will be here on Dec. 14th to put under the tree. Forms are on the counter in the narthex or go to www.raiseright.com and use our enrollment code of 45F776D958L66.

Because the perfect gift *does* exist.



RaiseRight™

Simply the right way to fundraise



During this holiday season you can “purchase” love lights in memory or in honor of a loved one or someone who has inspired you in your life. The December 21st and Christmas Eve bulletins will list for whom and from whom the love lights were given. Money received from love lights will go toward our conference mission apportionment.

We all have friends and relatives that have inspired us, so let’s have some fun remembering and honoring those dear to us in a meaningful and beautiful way during the holiday season with a Light of Love.

In honor of _____

and/or

In memory of _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Given by: _____

Please return this form with your cash or check payable to Grand Ave UMC by Sunday December 14th. You can place it in the offering box or mail it to the church office at 505 W. Grand Ave., Port Washington, WI 53074.





United Methodist Corner

In this season of Advent, we are faced with the question, “What is the meaning behind our belief in the second coming of Christ.” The Gospel lesson on the first Sunday in Advent every year focuses on Jesus’ return. I’ll admit that this thought is a confusing one for many of us. We might just be tempted to ignore it or downplay its importance in the life of the church. We are reminded of Christ’s return each time we celebrate communion. Together we say in the communion liturgy, **“Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.”** The pastor says in part, “make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world until **Christ comes in final victory and we will feast at his heavenly banquet table.**” We have victory in Jesus when he was raised from the dead. Final victory points to the final fulfillment of God’s plan for the world in the return of Jesus.

The word Advent means “coming”. Advent is not confined to our preparation for Christmas. Advent is our hope for Christ coming into our lives throughout the year and in his final return. One thing that turns some of us off is the fixation by some Christians to want to set a timeline for Christ’s return. They do this in spite of Christ’s words that no one but the Father knows when that will be. Instead of getting all tied up in knots about the exact time of Jesus’s arrival or how he will arrive (e.g. in the clouds with the sound of a trumpet), perhaps we are better served by focusing on why Christ is returning. We learned something in our small group study that I believe opens up our understanding of Christ’s return. Author Matt Skinner writes that the 2nd coming signifies that God is still committed to the world. We are assured that God is committed by God’s willingness to come to us in Jesus and experiencing first-hand the suffering and vulnerability of being a human being. God is committed to the world by raising Jesus from death to life. We also know that Christ’s birth and his resurrection from the dead did not magically end the suffering and brokenness of the world. The world is not where God desires it to be.

The promise of the 2nd coming is our ultimate hope because it will bring fulfillment to our petition, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The second coming is the assurance that God has not abandoned this hurting world. God will continue to work through Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to bring all things to fruition. God is working to bring God’s peaceable kingdom where weapons will be turned into plowshares and the world will not learn war anymore.

We are called to become part of God’s restoration project. Our founder, John Wesley, took a very positive attitude when it comes to both personal and societal transformation by the spread of holiness. Our giving and discipleship is not confined to a season. Our hope is in the Lord who can make all things new. Our hope is also active.

We work together to bring hope, joy, and peace to the world until Christ comes again in final victory.

Blessings this Advent and Christmas Season,

Dave

CALENDAR

December Events

Worship Service	Weekly Sunday at 10:00 am	Sanctuary
AA Meeting	Weekly Wednesday at 8:00 pm	FAC
Private Meeting	Weekly Thursday at 5:30 pm	FAC
ADRC Meal Distribution	Mon – Fri from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm	Kitchen
Lighthouse Supper/Auction	Tuesday, December 2, 5-7:30 pm	Parkside UCC
Advent Study Group	Wednesday, December 3, 10:00 am	Fellowship Hall
Awesome Woman's Dinner	Monday, December 8, 5:30 pm	Plier's Full Circle
Social Principles	Tuesday, December 9, 1:00 pm	Gathering Area
Advent Study Group	Wednesday, December 10, 10:00 am	Fellowship Hall
Friendship Club	Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
Stockbox Distribution	Tuesday, December 16 at 10:00 am	FAC & Parking Lot
Advent Study Group	Wednesday, December 17, 10:00 am	Fellowship Hall
Newsletter Article Deadline	Monday, December 22	Office
Christmas Eve Service	Wednesday, December 24, 7:00 pm	Sanctuary
Christmas Day	Thursday, December 25	Office Closed
Family Promise Meal Week	Monday Dec. 29 – Friday Jan. 2	Portlight Shelter

GRAND AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

505 W Grand Ave Port Washington WI 53074 262-284-9478 www.portumc.com
 Pastor: Vince Pepin pastor@portumc.org
 Pastoral Assistant: Dave Guse senegaldave1@gmail.com
 Administrative Assistant: Stacy Peters office@portumc.org
 Lay Leader: Dan Benning bennida01@att.net
 Admin Council Chair: Mark Grams mgrams@wi.rr.com
 Bishop: Dan Schwerin / District Superintendent: Rev. Dr. InSun Lee

Remember Our Endowment Fund

Remember to support our church through the fundraisers below:

- **Aluminum Can Collection** – Put your aluminum cans in the barrels at the back entrance into church and we'll recycle them for you.
- **Craft Booth at Port's Artisan Market** – Donate crafts, books, puzzles, or gently used quality items for us to sell at our church craft booth in downtown Port.
- **RaiseRight Scrip (Gift Card) Program** – Order gift cards to give as gifts or to use at stores you already shop at. Forms are on the counter in the narthex or go to www.raiseright.com and use our enrollment code of 45F776D958L66.



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church™

RaiseRight Scrip Fundraiser

Orders are due in the church office on the 1st Sunday of each month. Please remember to include your payment. You can also order on-line at www.raiseright.com Your order of gift cards will be ready for pickup at church on the 2nd Sunday of the month.

Questions? Contact the Kay Hamann at 262-284-3168 or khamann530@yahoo.com

*Each retailer makes a donation to the church for every gift card purchased.
For a complete list of over 700 participating retailers, go to www.raiseright.com*

RETAILER	QTY	TOTAL
Amazon \$25		
Amazon \$100		
Arby's \$10		
AutoZone \$25		
Barnes & Noble \$10		
Barnes & Noble \$25		
Bath & Body Works \$10		
Bath & Body Works \$25		
Bed Bath & Beyond \$25		
BP \$50		
BP \$100		
Burger King \$10		
Cousins Subs \$10		
CVS Pharmacy \$25		
CVS Pharmacy \$100		
Dick's Sporting Goods \$25		
Dick's Sporting Goods \$100		
Exxon \$50		
Fleet Farm \$25		
Fleet Farm \$100		
Home Depot \$25		
Home Depot \$100		
Jiffy Lube \$30		
Kohl's \$25		
Kohl's \$100		
Kwik Trip \$25		
Kwik Trip \$50		
Kwik Trip \$100		

RETAILER	QTY	TOTAL
Meijer \$25		
Meijer \$50		
Meijer \$100		
Mobil \$50		
Noodles & Company \$10		
Panera Bread \$10		
Panera Bread \$25		
Papa Murphy's Pizza \$10		
Pick'n Save(WI) \$25		
Pick'n Save(WI) \$50		
Pick'n Save(WI) \$100		
Piggly Wiggly (WI, IL) \$25		
Piggly Wiggly (WI, IL) \$50		
Piggly Wiggly (WI, IL) \$100		
Qdoba Mexican Grill \$25		
Sendik's Food Market \$25		
Sendik's Food Market \$50		
Sendik's Food Market \$100		
Speedway \$25		
Speedway \$50		
Starbucks \$10		
Starbucks \$25		
Subway Restaurants \$10		
Target \$25		
Target \$50		
Walgreens \$25		
Walmart \$25		
Walmart \$50		
Walmart \$100		

Total number of gift cards ordered: _____

Total amount due: _____

Name _____ Date: _____

*Make checks payable to
Grand Ave Church*