

MUSTARD SEED

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

A Publication of Porter United Methodist Church

Does anyone really look forward to Lent? What is it about Lent that excites us? What aspects of the Lenten journey test us? The Scriptural readings for this season are carefully chosen so as to replay salvation history before our very eyes.

Let us begin with Jesus in the desert - the Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent. The desert sun and the pangs of hunger and thirst conjured up the demon for Him. Mark presents Jesus wrestling with the power of Satan, alone and silent in the desert wastes. Mark's version of the temptations of Jesus does not mention three temptations, nor does it say that Jesus fasted. Mark's whole focus is on presenting the temptations of Jesus as part of the great struggle between good and evil, between God and Satan.

Jesus' desert experience raises important questions for us. What are some of the "desert" experiences I have experienced in my life? What desert experience am I living through right now? When and how do I find moments of contemplation in the midst of a busy life? How have I lived in the midst of my own deserts? Have I been courageous and persistent in fighting with the demons? How have I resisted transforming my own deserts into places of abundant life?

In Matthew and Luke there is an ongoing conversation, as the prince of evil attempts to turn Jesus aside from the faith and integrity at the heart of His messianic mission. But if Israel had failed in the desert, Jesus would not. His bond with His Father was too strong for even the demons of the desert to break.

In the first temptation in the desert, Jesus responds to the evil one, not by denying human dependence on sustenance (food), but rather by putting human life and the human journey in perspective. Those who follow Jesus cannot become dependent on the things of this world. When we are so dependent on material things, and not on God, we give in to temptation and sin.

God's in Charge

The second temptation deals with the adoration of the devil rather than God. Jesus once again reminds the evil one that God is in control. This is important for us to hear and believe, especially when our own temptations seem to overpower us, when everything around us might indicate failure, shadows, darkness and evil. It is God who is ultimately in charge of our destiny.

In the third temptation, the devil asks for a revelation or manifestation of God's love in favor of Jesus. Jesus answers the evil one by saying that he doesn't have to prove to anyone that God loves him.

Temptation is everything that makes us small, ugly, and mean. Temptation uses the trickiest moves that the evil one can think up. The more the devil has control of us, the less we want to acknowledge that he is fighting for every millimeter of this earth. Jesus didn't let him get away with that. At the very beginning of his campaign for this world and for each one of us, Jesus openly confronted the enemy. He began His fight using the power of Scripture during a night of doubt, confusion and temptation. We must never forget Jesus' example, so that we won't be seduced by the devil's deception.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Pastor's Ponderings</i>	1
<i>Missions in the Spotlight</i>	2
<i>Children's Ministries</i>	3
<i>Corned Beef & Cabbage</i>	4
<i>Lay Servant Academy Info</i>	5
<i>Lay Servant Registration</i>	6
<i>Calendar of Events - March</i>	7
<i>Mildred Spencer's 100th</i>	8



Sermons in March:

Sunday, March 4th
Jesus? Angry?
John 2:13 - 22

Sunday, March 11th
God So Loved the World
John 3:14 - 21

Sunday, March 18th
Written Within You
Jeremiah 31:31 - 34

Palm Sunday, March 25th
The Best Things Are Borrowed
Mark 11:1 - 11

(Continued on page 4)

MISSION STATEMENT: "Nourishing Souls with Loving Hearts and Caring Hands."



Applications are now being accepted for the 2018 Rebuilding Together - Duneland work day. This event helps individuals and families in need who live in the Duneland School District, make the necessary improvements to their homes in order to maintain a safe, healthy and independent life. Volunteer to help your neighbor and the Duneland community on National Rebuilding Day **Saturday, April 28, 2018!**

Skilled or unskilled workers, all are welcome over the age of 14. Learn new and different skills, no construction experience necessary, meet new people, make new friends, earn volunteer hours, enjoy a team building experience and make a difference in your neighbor's life. All volunteer applications are easy to do and must be placed on their website at www.rtduneland.org. If you have no access to a computer, then call them at (219) 926-3233 and they'll input your information for you. In order to plan for lunches and t-shirts, **the deadline to apply is April 10, 2018.**

Westchester Neighbors Food Pantry

We continue to support the Westchester Neighbors Food Pantry with donations of food items collected each Sunday. **We have been asked to collect packages of dried potato mixes (au gratin, scalloped, mashed, etc.) for the month of March.** Thank you for continuing to help the food pantry reach those in need!

Souper Bowl of Caring Update

The national celebration of giving and serving has ended and I wanted to give you an update as to the final number of soup cans that were donated by our congregation to this year's Souper Bowl of Caring. Our goal was to collect a total of 611 cans to beat last year's total. Unfortunately, we fell short of that...but we did get 524 cans! Thank you so much for your generosity and also to members of Boy Scout Troop 928 for their contributions.

All donations collected by Porter UMC through the Souper Bowl of Caring will be donated to the Westchester Food Pantry.

Butter Braids Fundraiser

Our Butter Braid sale is beginning to wind down, but there's still time to reserve your Butter Braids! Orders will be taken through Sunday, March 4th and **ALL ORDERS & MONEY MUST BE TURNED IN NO LATER THAN MONDAY, MARCH 5TH AT 9 A.M.**

The braids sell for \$14 each, except for the Double Chocolate pastry and the 4-cheese & herb bread which sell for \$15. **Delivery date is set for Friday, March 16th at 9 a.m.**

Orders can be placed with any member of the church, or by contacting coordinator Judy Reales at (219) 926-3171 or (219) 929-7155. Orders can also be placed through the church office by calling (219) 926-1586, Monday – Thursday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Thank you so much for making this fundraiser a big success each year!



Missions In the Spotlight

Quarterly Mission Focus: *Royal Family Kids Camp*

We only have the month of March left to collect for our quarterly mission focus of the **Royal Family Kids Camp**. RFKC offers camp experiences for children ages 2 - 12 who have experienced challenging family situations or who have been placed in foster care. Because of the financial support of many donors, these children are able to attend camp free of charge. Campers receive counseling, guidance and mentoring by trained volunteer staff and participate in worship, Bible study, games, sports and other activities. The RFKC helps provide a fun-filled week of positive memories in a Christian setting by planting the seeds of hope into their lives so they can believe in themselves and carry those feelings with them long after their stay at camp has ended.

Children's Mission Offering: *True North Training Stables*

To date, the children of Porter UMC have collected \$ 313.45 for their special quarterly mission outreach of **True North Training Stables**. They will continue collecting throughout the month of March. True North Stables provides a safe environment where at risk youth and their families come for training in life skills and spiritual awareness in an equine setting. This includes, but is not limited to, children who struggle with depression, autism, foster/adopted, ADD, ADHD, self-harm, bullied, addiction, sexual abuse, incarcerated parents, eating disorders, truancy, and other similar society issues.



Sunday School News

“God sent Jesus to tell us about God”— this was one of our anchor points for February. We experienced the season of Epiphany in January and February by studying different aspects of the ministry of Jesus. When Jesus was with His disciples, He was constantly doing things to teach them who He was. From His baptism by His cousin John, to His relationship with children, to the miracles He performed, He was showing them God’s power, showing them He was the Christ, God’s Son, to prove to them He was the promised Messiah.

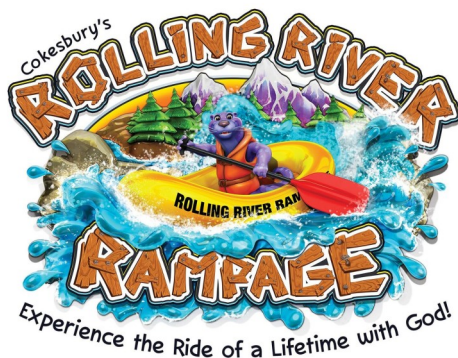
Our video lessons have combined these biblical teachings with a relationship the children are developing with Mercy, a little girl from Kenya in our *Deep Blue* curriculum series. She taught us frequently used words in her native language, Swahili. We’ve also learned about the importance of their potato garden, basket weaving for their supplemental income in times of draught, and indoor games they play when the weather is bad outside. During March the children will “travel” along with the *Deep Blue* kids to a new destination. Spoiler Alert! Alaska.

We are still in need of substitute Sunday school teachers. The lessons are already printed up for each week. We have a snack team that prepares snacks each week. If you would like to provide occasional snacks, please contact Charlotte Fike, (cell) 928-3249. Sunday school takes a break from mid-May to mid-September.



Pray about it. Please contact me, Linda Green at 219-926-4942 (H) or the church office 926-1586 and leave a message.

Thank you in advance!



VBS Organizational Meeting

Vacation Bible School planning has begun! Our theme this year is **Rolling River Rampage**. We will have our first organizational meeting on **Wednesday, March 7th at 6 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. All adults in our church family are welcome to attend this meeting to begin working on this important mission for our children.

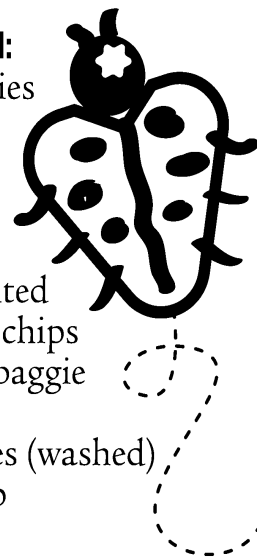
Based on the theme Bible verse “*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.*” (Isaiah 43:2, CEB), **Rolling River Rampage** will help kids know that God is always with them as they ride the rapids of amazing grace.

FRUIT LADYBUGS

Get creative in the kitchen with this sweet springtime snack.

What you need:

- Strawberries (washed)
- Knife
- Plate or wax paper
- ½ cup melted chocolate chips
- Zippered baggie
- Scissors
- Blueberries (washed)
- Adult help



What you do:

1. De-stem the strawberries. Cut in half and then cut a small V atop each half to make the ladybug body. Set them on a plate or wax paper.
2. Place the melted chocolate in a baggie and cut off the tip of a bottom corner.
3. Pipe a dividing line and “spots” on each strawberry. Also use the chocolate to attach a blueberry “head” by the V shape.
4. Pipe chocolate antennas and legs onto ladybugs.
5. Let harden. Enjoy!

Porter United Methodist Church's

27th Annual



Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner

Thursday, March 15th 4 - 7 p.m.

Menu:

Corned Beef & Cabbage

Red Potatoes, Carrots, Onions

Bread

Beverage

Dessert

*Carryout
Available!*

Cost: \$12 Adults/Seniors * \$6 children 10 & under

****Additional serving of meat \$3****

100 E. Beam St. & Wagner Road

(219) 926-1586

Help Make Our Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner a Success!

Once again, we will be looking to our congregation for help in donating food items for our annual St. Patrick's Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner. *Please watch for the board in the Narthex to see what is needed this year and grab a shamrock with the item you'd like to donate.*

♣ **Currently, we are looking for donations of plastic ice cream buckets.** ♣

Please bring your containers in and place them in the kitchen.

As always, we thank you for your help in making this annual fundraiser a success! Every little bit helps - even if you can't donate, you can help spread the word (we always have extra flyers in the church office to pass out) or volunteer in numerous ways.

(Continued from page 1)

From Jesus we learn that God is present and sustaining us in the midst of test, temptation and even sinfulness. We realize that we must have some spiritual space in our lives where we can strip away the false things that cling to us and breathe new life into our dreams and begin again. We come to believe that God can take the parched surface of our hope and make it bloom. These are the lessons of the desert. That is why we need – even in the activity of our daily lives and work, moments of prayer, of stillness, of listening to the voice of God.

We meet God in the midst of our deserts of sinfulness, selfishness, jealousy, efficiency, isolation, cynicism and despair. And in the midst of the desert we hear what God will do if we open our hearts to Him and allow Him to make our own deserts bloom. The ways of the desert were deep within the heart of Jesus, and it must be the same for all who would follow Him.

Pastor Dee

We Need Your Input!

This is a very busy month, especially since Easter is early this year (April 1st!). Included in that busyness are special services that we have held in past years during Holy Week.

We want to get an idea of who is interested in attending a Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and/or Easter Sunrise services. There is a sign-up sheet for those interested. You can also call the church office at (219) 926-1586 or email us at porterumchurch@gmail.com. *We need at least 15 people for each service before that one is held.*

Indiana North District Lay Servant Academy

"We Must Go!"

God calls every one of us to proclaim the presence and power of Him through all that we say and do. How is God calling you to serve? With so many avenues of training, Lay Servant Ministries offers you a valuable education in multiple ministry areas.

A Lay Servant Is:

- An active, supportive professing member of a United Methodist Church.
- Eager to serve the church, community, and the world.
- Well-informed on scripture and the doctrine, heritage, organization, and life of the United Methodist Church.
- Committed to witnessing through church and community leadership, care-giving ministries, and spoken communication.
- Willing to improve his or her skills by training for service.

Join us at **Michigan City First UMC every Sunday from March 4th to March 25th.**

The Michigan City First UMC is located at 121 E. 7th Street Michigan City, IN. Classes begin at 1:00 p.m. CT and end at 4:15 p.m. CT.

Classes offered during this session include:

- **Basic Course** — This course is required for first time attendees. Participants are encouraged to discover and employ personal spiritual gifts as God intended and to consider the importance of exercising servant leadership. **BOOK: "Lay Servant Ministries" isbn #dr626-9780881776263 \$11**
- **Beginning Preaching** — Beginning course for those who want to learn to put sermons together and fill the pulpit when asked. Requires completion of the Basic Course. Space is limited to 8 participants. **BOOK: "Go Preach" isbn #dr384-9780881773842 \$14.**
- **Advanced Preaching** - This course digs deeper into the skills learned in Beginning Preaching. **Requires completion of Beginning Preaching.** Space is limited to 8 participants. **BOOK: "From Pew To Pulpit" isbn #978-0-88177-375-0. \$10.71**
- **Accountable Discipleship** — This course focuses on the concept of the household of God, scripture as divine revelation, Wesleyan understanding of Grace and the importance of class leader. Requires completion of the Basic Course. This course is one of the required courses for Lay Servant Speaker certification. **BOOK: "Accountable Discipleship" isbn # DR339-978-0-88177-339-2 \$15.**
- **God's Mission-Our Journey** - This course gives provides students with a better understanding of a holistic approach to participating in God's Mission to the world. This course is one of the required courses for Lay Servant Speaker certification. **BOOK: "A Mission Journey: A Handbook For Volunteers" isbn #DR 669-978-08817-7669-0 \$17**
- **Leading In Stewardship** - This course helps develop a holistic understanding to stewardship. **BOOK: "Afire With God" isbn #Dr520-978-0-88177-520-4 \$15.**
- **Social Justice of Everyday Life** - This course looks at the social principles of the United Methodist Church. **BOOK: "Social Principles of the United Methodist Church" isbn # 9781501835773 \$3.99**

Please contact Denise Parker with any registration or schedule questions at dparker3434@gmail.com or (574) 361-7243. **NOTE:** Students are required to purchase their own materials prior to class. Materials are available through Cokesbury.com and other online retailers. If you are unable to do so, please contact Denise Parker.

Indiana North District Lay Servant Academy

Registration Form

Please complete this registration form. Mailed forms, along with payment, are due by February 28th. Please make checks payable to the INUMC. Registration fee is \$15. Send forms and payment to:

North District UMC
P.O. Box 878
Plymouth, IN 46563-0878

All class materials must be purchased prior to the start of class. Please contact Denise Parker with any questions at dparker3434@gmail.com or (574) 361-7243.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Church: _____







Pastor Name: _____

Course Title (1st Choice): _____

Course Title (2nd Choice): _____

Please indicate your interest:

- Local Lay Servant (Requires Basic Course)
- Certified Lay Servant (Please note year of last class)
- Certified Lay Speaker (Indicates an interest in filling pulpits)
- Audit (Interested for personal growth)

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						
<p>3 Amanda Rickard</p> <p>3 Nancy Hokanson</p> <p>6 Jeanette Burton</p> <p>14 Christopher Mills</p> <p>16 Doris Metzner</p> <p>16 Pam Babcock</p> <p>16 Phyllis Barrow</p> <p>17 Calvin Green</p> <p>26 Jeri Hughes</p> <p>26 Dr. Richard Loomis</p> <p>27 Roxanne Micinski</p> <p>28 Eric Lucas</p>	<p>4 Sunday School 9:00 a.m.</p> <p>Worship 10:15 a.m.</p>	5	6	7  6 p.m. VBS Meeting 8 p.m. AA Meeting	8 7 p.m. Bible Study	9 7 p.m. Models Club
<p>11 Sunday School 9:00 a.m.</p> <p>Worship 10:15 a.m.</p>	12	13	14  4 - 7 p.m. Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner 8 p.m. AA Meeting	15 7 p.m. Bible Study	16 3 p.m. Models Club 	17
<p>18 Sunday School 9:00 a.m.</p> <p>Worship 10:15 a.m.</p>	19 7 p.m. Ad Council	20	21 8 p.m. AA Meeting	22 7 p.m. Bible Study	23	24
<p>25 Sunday School 9:00 a.m.</p> <p>Worship 10:15 a.m.</p>	26	27	28 8 p.m. AA Meeting	29  MAUNDY THURSDAY 7 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service	30  GOOD FRIDAY 7 p.m. Good Friday Service	31

March
BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Amanda Rickard
- 3 Nancy Hokanson
- 6 Jeanette Burton
- 14 Christopher Mills
- 16 Doris Metzner
- 16 Pam Babcock
- 16 Phyllis Barrow
- 17 Calvin Green
- 26 Jeri Hughes
- 26 Dr. Richard Loomis
- 27 Roxanne Micinski
- 28 Eric Lucas

March
ANNIVERSARIES

- 20 Don & Estelle Peterson
- 23 Dennis & Dawn Campbell

"AND ON THE NIGHT HE WAS
betrayed
HE BROKE BREAD AND LIFTED IT UP AND
gave thanks"
1 Corinthians 11:23-24

IF JESUS CAN GIVE THANKS
I N T H A T
I CAN GIVE THANKS IN
everything



Needing to Rent the Fellowship Hall?

With a new year underway, it's a good idea to remind everyone that is interested in renting the fellowship hall/kitchen out for an event (shower, birthday, etc.) that ***you must fill out forms in the church office to reserve your date on the calendar.*** It is imperative that we have a completed form, ***along with the deposit,*** on file in the office.

Prices are \$50 for members, (\$25 of which is returned after inspection); and for non-members, the fee is \$250 (\$50 is refunded after inspection). As always, you have the choice to donate the amount to the church.

Mildred Spencer is Turning 100!

On February 24th, Mildred Spencer will turn 100! To celebrate this milestone birthday of hers, we will be having a carry-in luncheon after the morning worship service on Sunday, March 4th. A sign-up sheet will be available this Sunday, February 25th if you plan on attending and what dish you will be bringing to share. You can also let Kim know by calling (219) 926-1586 or by emailing porterumchurch@gmail.com. We hope you will be able to join us in expressing your love to Mildred and for the many years of faithful service she gave to Porter UMC.



Porter United Methodist Church

Dee L. Miller, Pastor

Summer Worship: 9:30 a.m.
(beginning 6/3)

Regular Worship: 10:15 a.m.
(beginning 9/9)

Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

(219) 926-1586

VISION STATEMENT

As the community of Christ, which is one in Jesus Christ, we will nurture and care for one another, spread God's word and love throughout the community thereby fulfilling our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ.



Porter United Methodist Church
100 E. Beam Street
Porter, IN 46304