



Our church is located in a small town in western Pennsylvania. We are a close-knit, loving congregation that is mighty in spirit. Our prayer is to find the right pastor to lead us according to God's will.

**Portage Christian & Missionary Alliance Church
911 Johnson Avenue, Portage, PA 15946**

History

In 1926, five men mortgaged their homes to construct the Portage Christian & Missionary Alliance Church. Today, we still have three children (in their 80's and 90's) of the original builders, that regularly attend the services.

Some of the members decided to leave the church and there was a church split in December, 1972. The other members started a church of their own, which is not an Alliance Church.

In 1969, land was donated approximately 1 mile from the church and a Youth Center was built on the property in which we had dinners and special events.

We have since sold the building and land. The positive outcome is, this facility was sold to a member of the church and is still able to be used by the church, if needed.

Our last pastor remodeled some of the church basement to include The Family Room, (a place for small dinners and gatherings for the church people), an updated classroom for children's classes and updated the restroom facilities.

The Portage Alliance Church has been in a decline in attendance for about the last 10 years; however, attendance is steady and recently we have slowly started to increase in number, even without a permanent Pastor.

We currently have a seasoned Pastor that has come out of retirement for a short while, to supply the pulpit each Sunday.

Demographics

Portage Borough and Township has a population of 6,675 people. Ethnic % for Portage are as followed: 98.2% Anglo, 0.10% African American, 0.50% Hispanic, 0.10% Asian, and 1.0% more than 2 races. The average age is approximately 48.2 and the average income is about \$55,625 yearly. The marital status percentages are: 49.7% Married, 30.69% Single, 8.2% Divorced, 11.37% Widowed, and 1.15% Separated.

Average of the total members in attendance to our church in the past 4 years are as follows: 2020 - 33, 2021 - 26, 2022 - 34, 2023 - 38

In our church we have a variety of people: young, old, middle aged, retired, widows, and couples. We all come together to serve and worship God.

The averages for our congregation would be ethnicity 100% Anglo, average age is about 60, and our marital status percentages are: 55% Married, 33% Single, 5% Divorced, 7% Widowed. Regardless of our differences we welcome all people to come to worship the Lord.

The attendance 2 years ago was about 33 people. The average travel distance from worshippers' homes to the church is as follows: 15 traveled 1 mile, 3 traveled 3 miles, 10 traveled 5 miles, 3 traveled 10 miles and 2 traveled 15 miles.

There are plenty of other churches in our community. Here are the ones within a 5 miles radius from our church: Portage Community Church, Holy Family Church, St. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, Bethany United Methodist Church, Trinity United Methodist Church, First Lutheran Church, St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church, Church of God, Wesleyan Holiness Church, Community Bible Church, St. Michaels, and Martindale CMA.

The churches in our community are family oriented. Some of them do out reaches such as Community Closet to help the less fortunate have an opportunity to obtain new clothing.

Our church is always trying to spread the great news of Jesus Christ! We try to reach out to families and children. Bringing youth into the church is important. Secondly, we would like to know who needs help in our community to see if we can lend a helping hand and invite them to church.

Some necessary steps to reach these groups of people are developing programs, simply inviting them to church, and community outreaches.

Ministry

We believe Jesus Christ is our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. We believe the Bible. Our church's mission is to help lead people to personally know Christ Jesus using God's word to help them find their way. We have scripture on our church's wall to help encourage the spreading of God's word.

Sunday Worship and Church Service usually has about 40 people in attendance, and we are trying to build the believers. Children's Church may have up to 5 children, we are always trying to help introduce the Lord to the children.

Wednesday Prayer Meetings are in place to help cover each other in prayers and help equip God's servants with strength and wisdom to get through everyday

struggles. Sunday School is there to help the fellow believers learn more and encourages them to practice God's word.

Thankfully as a church we are blessed financially. Tithing is extremely important to our church family. Giving back 10% counts and matters. We can take care of the church's needs whether it's being used for new microphones for worship or supplies for the children's ministry, or even treating the widows to a Sunday dinner after church.

When we asked an outsider about our church this was their response. "A small, quiet church that has fixed their building and the land up very nicely over the past several years and there are more cars parked out front on Sundays these days. No public events" - fellow neighbor

What our church is dealing with right now:

STRENGTHS- willing to try new things, community outreach, evangelical ministry, growing attendance, blessed financially, strong church family

WEAKNESSES- no pastor, some older church goers don't like change, not enough outreaches

OPPORTUNITIES- reaching more people, building other ministry as the membership grows

THREATS- gossip and rumors come about, but we try to address them quickly

With new leadership we would like to see:

ACHIEVE- more members, bringing in more youth and teenagers, maintaining and upgrading the church's property

PRESERVE- maintain the balance of tradition and contemporary, using God's word in the house of God (preaching scripture from the Bible), the members we already have, family values as it pertains to the Bible

AVOID- total change of the services

One of our major roadblocks in growing as a church is the lack of leadership, this is why we are building this profile to reach a Pastor meant for our church.

Our congregation is a close-knit family that welcomes newcomers into the church quite readily. Visitors tend to return as they quickly feel comfortable in our midst.

We praise God every Sunday for the church family we have, and the Holy Spirit is among us each time we meet. We constantly ask God to send us the person He has chosen for us, and we patiently wait for His answer to our prayers. God has blessed our church family and our finances beyond measure.

The worship at our church is awesome and amazing, at least from an insider perspective. We are welcoming and friendly. You can feel the Holy Spirit move amongst us while worshiping, it's a spiritual experience. Our worship is interactive, we would love for you to participate.

Typically, our messages and preaching this past year have been biblical and traditional.

We truly just want to show our love for God the Father, reaching people in our community and having them WANT to come to meet God and having them WANT to accept Jesus as their Savior. Our church can trust in and rely on God, hopefully we can spread that into our community as well.

Currently our church's active ministries are Sunday Morning Service lead by temporary pulpit supply, Pastor Joe Kelly, Children's Church lead by Anita Osman and other volunteer teachers, Prayer Meeting lead by the church congregation, Music Ministry lead by Kim Seaman, Bev Pollock, and Kay Smindak, and Bible Study lead by Joe Kelly.

Head elder Joe Slifko and elder Ed Nicholson take on a decent number of responsibilities at the church. From praying with the congregation during Sunday morning announcements to mowing the lawn. The elders help take care of the church and its people. All the elders have had great relationships with the past pastors and the current fill in pastors they encounter.

Looking ahead to the future five years from now, our church's vision is to continually be spreading the word of God. We look forward to having a regular pastor who speaks on Sundays and leads the church well. If we could increase the number of attendance and get new/old members involved in our ministries and programs, the church body would feel like we are on the right path to serving the Lord.

Outreach

Some of the outreaches our church has participated in were: The local firefighters, police, and emergency workers were invited to dinner at our church. Helped deliver boxes of food during covid with Farmers to Families. Held Christian Movie Nights at our church. During the community Summerfest we distributed drinks and snacks. Sent out greeting cards to welcome back and re-invite some of the congregation that were no longer coming. After the church's basement was finished being remodeled as the Family Room, we invited all the construction workers who helped for an appreciation dinner.



The top three reasons visitors come to Portage Alliance Church are the friendliness of the congregation, God's word is preached, and the church is alive and welcomes the Holy Spirit.

Some of the common reasons why regular attendees stop coming would be: Covid took a lot of people out of the habit of attending church especially church in person, hectic work schedules, no pastor, and sometimes people do not enjoy change.

Property/Facilities

Date of Construction: 1926, Seating capacity for worship: 150, Number of parking spaces: 25.

The church and property of the church are in great condition. The newly remodeled basement, bathrooms, children's classrooms, and a family room used for small dinners have all been updated. An adult Sunday School room exists, where we usually hold board meetings. Also, available is The Profit Chamber for special guests and/or missionaries for overnight stays.

The parsonage is located directly beside the church. It is a two-story house with 4 bedrooms, 1.5 baths, and a 1 car garage. It needs some remodeling, but it is structurally sound.



Attitude Toward Change

The church's leaders embrace change well, the congregation eventually accepts changes but at a slower rate. In the past year we have added two new board members, and just one new board member 2 years ago.

Pastoral Expectations

We want our pastor to be a leader of the church. Some of the top priorities would be preaching God's word, prayer and bible study, shepherding, lay-leadership development, and evangelism. We understand there are plenty of tasks that a pastor must handle, we are truly seeking a man of God, who serves the Lord and is comfortable being himself.

Years of ministerial experience don't necessarily matter to us, but spiritual maturity does matter to our congregation. Some personality characteristics we are hoping for our future pastor to have would be; compassionate and understanding, personable and outgoing, and confident. Currently we have a supportive staff to aid the pastor, such as elders, trustees, board members, along with people of the congregation who are willing to help.

Finances

The board makes the financial decisions for the church. Not having the proper leadership and the lack of people to help would probably limit the future of our ministry. Thankfully we have been blessed because our General Fund's expenses never exceeded the income. The former Pastor was semi-retired from outside employment and the church and Pastor worked out the following package:

Compensation package for a new Pastor would depend on service of part time or full-time ministry and would be discussed with the board according to the candidate's current situation.

Assessment of Pastoral Leadership Needs for Portage Alliance Church:

The top three natural talents that we would most desire for our next Pastor would be someone that:

- 1) Communicates the Word of God (inspiration, instruction, exhortation and correctness)
- 2) Provides Leadership Vision (overseeing projects and ministry programs)
- 3) Directs Evangelistic Outreach

The Future

Dear Heavenly Father, we would like to pray to all who read this, may You bless them, protect them, heal them, and guide them. Lord we would like to surrender our church into Your hands. We are so thankful to serve such a loving God, we come to together to ask that You place the right pastor in Your house. Please help this man feel lead to serve You and to serve the church. Please help him know which church to pick regardless of his choice. Yes, we would love a new pastor for Portage Alliance Church, but we also know You have many works elsewhere. Thank you, Lord, for being there for us and directing our paths. Please be with us every step of the way. We put our trust in You, and we know You are preparing a man of God for our church, which we are incredibly thankful for. Please help all these Pastors find forever homes, in Jesus Mighty Name we pray, Amen!!!

