



Happy New Year, Onekama Friends –

After an early start in November of winter-type weather we are now settling into the official Winter season. .

With the end of 2025, I am filled with gratitude for the interest, dedication, and generosity of our volunteers, our members, our sponsors and donors, and the entire Portage Lake Association community. Thank you! Collectively we worked to achieve our Mission of “providing opportunities that enhance the well-being of the community as a great place to live, play and stay.” The Year in Review is included in this newsletter and provides an annual summary of significant events over the past twelve months as well as pie charts providing financial information for the past year.

Reflecting on this past year, countless hours were spent developing our first strategic plan paving the way forward for initiatives in 2026 and beyond. I am appreciative for all that was accomplished in 2025, and I am also excited about the future and how our actions can positively impact our community.

Many thanks to the PLA Board members and the Chairs of our various events. You made this an enjoyable year, and your efforts made our events seamless.

I wish you all the best in the New Year and hope this year provides you with countless blessings and memories to last a lifetime!

Cyndy

**Have any great ideas or articles for the Newsletter?  
Suggestions or comments? Ideas for a Person we should know?  
Contact the editor, Jean Capper via email at [jmcmom@aol.com](mailto:jmcmom@aol.com)**

**GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES TO THE  
PORTAGE LAKE ASSOCIATION (PLA) NEWSLETTER**

Articles must be in Microsoft Word format. Name the file something that is readily understandable e.g., petunias 0320.

Photos must be jpg format. Name them the same as the file they are associated with (petunias 0320\_1.jpg, petunias 0320\_2.jpg. Action photos, close ups are preferable to still photos of groups.

The next newsletter deadline will be March 10, 2026 for the April 2026 issue.

## First Congregational United Church of Christ



Onekama, MI—Exciting things are upcoming at the First Congregational UCC of Onekama in the new year! The church has successfully written and received grants to fund a series of Forums on “Aging Well in Onekama.” The grants were received from the National Office in Cleveland, the Michigan Conference, and the United Northern Association of the United Church of Christ. This effort is in coordination with the Portage Lake Association’s “Near & Farr Friends” program which began to explore this area in talks they sponsored in 2024; and the grant writing was successful due to a letter of support from the PLA. Topics that will be covered are, but not limited to: wills, living wills, budgeting, investments, avoiding scams, reverse mortgages, planned giving, risk of addiction, medical decision making, Hospice care, Home Health options, Caregivers’ issues, exercise programs, and spiritual wellness,

The church will present once-a-month forums on various topics concerning the needs of seniors in Onekama. The forums will be held at the church on the fourth Friday of every month from January through May, with a break for the summer months, and continuing in September and October. The hoped for end result will be a brainstorming session, using the information received in the forums, to decide on a major project based in Onekama to address these issues, for which further granting opportunities

can then be explored. The forums will be held from 11am-1pm in the newly renovated church hall and will include a catered lunch by “Carefree Catering” (see Manistee News Advocate front page article on 12/13/25). The first forum is set for January 24th on the topic of exercise programs for seniors.

Come and enjoy a free lunch (yes—those really do exist!) and a wonderful time with the community working together for the betterment of everyone. FMI: Rev. Alison Andrea Young, 802-829-3211.

*P.O. Box 307 • Onekama, MI 49675 • Church Phone: 231-889-4018 • Email: [appledumplingchurch@yahoo.com](mailto:appledumplingchurch@yahoo.com)  
 FB: First Congregational Church of Onekama • Website: <https://onekamaucc.org/>*

## Onekama Trail Project Update

The Trail Team is excited to share that we’ve reached a consensus on a concept for the next phase of the Onekama Trail project! After reviewing proposals, the Township Board selected Fleis & Vandenbrink to begin the engineering and design phase.

We’re grateful to the Michigan Health Endowment Fund for providing the grant that makes this work possible.

On January 6, the team heard a presentation from the engineering company.

Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm as we take this next step together toward the Onekama Trail. We look forward to working with you as the design takes shape! There will be a Public Open House, no date yet, to provide an important opportunity to ensure the trail design reflects your needs and priorities.

Please go to <https://www.onekamatwp.org/parks-recreation/pages/trails-project-0> to check on further updates.



## SOMEONE YOU SHOULD KNOW

by Mary Jo McElroy

Kaitlin Kubiskey is certainly “someone you should know” if you are a resident or visitor to the Onekama area. She is a “local,” born in Manistee, but grew up and still lives in Onekama. She attended Onekama Consolidated Schools and graduated in the Class of 2014. [In fact, archives show that Kaitlin received a Scholastic Award from the Jr Clio Club that year.] She attended Baker College (Cadillac) and West Shore Community College (Scottville). She is currently working on her second associate degree at West Shore in their Paramedicine program.

A determined and enthusiastic young woman, Kaitlin began employment with the Onekama Township Fire Department as a Cadet in 2011 while still in high school. Since then, she has risen through the ranks to become the Assistant Chief. She currently works as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) with Mobile Medical Response (MMR) in Manistee.

Kaitlin is a born teacher, with multiple instructing certifications and licenses for both fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). On a personal level, she is involved with the softball program at Onekama where she, her parents, and sister are part of the coaching staff. Kaitlin says, “But when I do get downtime, in the winter I enjoy ice fishing or watching the Red Wings and in the summer, I can most likely be found on the water.”

This author’s path crossed with Kaitlin in 2023 when the Portage Lake Association offered a program about how to manage medical emergencies outside of a health care facility. Instruction included an online course from the American Red Cross as well as a classroom session with Kaitlin. She facilitated hands-on practice for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). Kaitlin also offered an opportunity to become certified in Basic Life Support on an individual basis.

In 2024, Kaitlin and this author met to discuss how to raise some money to purchase additional equipment and supplies so that more classes could be offered to the community. Then in 2025 another player – the Onekama Guild and its wonderful Thrift Store on Main Street in Onekama – pitched in with a \$500 donation toward that purpose.

Kaitlin provided some important facts about the need:

- The Onekama Fire Department has one American Heart Association (AHA) instructor.
- Types of equipment needed are adult and infant CPR manikins, AED trainers, and airway devices.
- With CPR or First Aid classes, AHA offers the option of lecture online with in-person hands-on portion. There is still

the option of a traditional course where everything is done in person, lecture and hands-on.

- Their equipment is in rough shape, and they do not have enough to effectively do large classes without borrowing training equipment or breaking the sessions into smaller groups.

The State of Michigan requires every EMS licensed personnel and firefighter to have Basic Life Support certification. There are also an increasing number of employers requiring CPR training. Over the last few years, Kaitlin has seen a dramatic rise in requests for certifications.

According to the AHA, in just one year 436,000 Americans die from cardiac arrest. Over 350,000 of those happen outside of hospitals, with only 40% of those people receiving immediate help before EMS arrives. It is proven that immediate CPR can double or even triple someone’s chance of survival from an out of hospital cardiac arrest.

They need \$5,000 so this donation helped with 10% of the cost. Over the holidays, a few more donations were received to help reach the goal. If our readers are inclined, you can send a donation to Onekama Township Fire Department and write CPR equipment on the memo line. The address is P.O. Box 458, Onekama, MI 49675.

You never know when you might be called upon to help another person at the most critical point of their life. Kaitlin says, “I often say that something is better than nothing. So, a bystander helping by doing hands-only CPR is better than a bystander not knowing what to do.”

Thanks so much.



*Patrice Beauvais, Onekama Guild member, presents a \$500 check to Kaitlin Kubiskey, Assistant Fire Chief, and Rob Johnson, Fire Chief.*



## VILLAGE OF ONEKAMA DRAFT MASTER PLAN: A Road Map For The Future

Public hearing scheduled for January 13, 2026

In June of 2024, the Village of Onkama began the process to prepare a new Master Plan. The Master Plan establishes new vision statements then identifies goals, objectives and recommended implementation strategies to achieve the vision that will guide future growth and development within the Village. This document will assist Village leaders in making substantive, thoughtful decisions for the community consistent with the vision created by community residents.

After more than a year of work and significant public input, the consultant hired by the Village has prepared a draft the Village of Onkama Master Plan. The Plan includes important information such as:

### Summary of public engagement sessions and on-line survey

Vision statements identified through public participation  
Goals, objectives and implementation strategies related to  
a several land use categories to achieve the visions

Identification of several development trends  
Age and population statistics for the Village  
Identification of existing and future land uses

### Some action items included in the draft Master Plan include:

Work with the Michigan Department of Transportation to  
slow Main Street's traffic;

Develop a streetscape plan; and

Develop attainable/workforce housing options to support a  
diverse population by modifying zoning requirements;

Explore the development of a public marina and fishing  
dock;

Encourage sidewalks and sidewalk connections between  
existing neighborhoods;

Identify opportunities to partner with the Township to  
expand sewer infrastructure into the Township;

Attract specialty retail uses that offer a mixture of goods  
and services to provide more dining, shopping, placemak-  
ing, and cultural opportunities.

Create a Downtown Development Authority

**THE PUBLIC HEARING** will be held on **Tuesday, January 13, 2026** at 6:00 p.m. in the Farr Center, 5283 Main Street, Onkama, Michigan. The 2025 Master Plan is available for review on the Village on Onkama website (<https://www.onekama.info/village>) or for public inspection at the Village

Office, 5283 Main Street, Onkama, Michigan (Phone#: (231) 889-3171). Please provide comments or suggested edits to Ruth Hudson, Village Clerk [clerk@villageofonekama.org](mailto:clerk@villageofonekama.org). Written comments can also be submitted to the Village of Onkama Planning Commission via mail or hand delivered to Village Office.

The Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on the draft Master Plan on January 13, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Farr Center, 5283 Main Street, Onkama, MI. The public is invited to review the Master Plan by visiting the Village of Onkama webpage at [www.onekama.info/village](http://www.onekama.info/village) and provide comment during the January 13<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

## Village of Onkama News

The Village was all decked out for the holidays. The Christmas tree by the Farr Center looked wonderful and the lights on the poles added to the festive feeling. Thank you, Portage Lake Association, for making this possible.

The Portage Lake Garden Club added some cheery gnomes in front of the library. They have been dug out a few times and got snow in the face from the big plows, but are still there to bring a smile to your face. They even made the Manistee News Advocate. See photo on page 5

The Village of Onkama Planning Commission has had a good year, focusing mainly on the creation of the Master Plan. We have worked with the consultants and the Executive Committee to look at the survey information, then to form key areas to concentrate on. We then created goals and objectives that would help us to direct the village over the next few years. The final plan has been delivered to the Village Council and will be up for public review and finalization on January 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00p.m. at the Farr Center. The commission has also been involved in the review of a zoning variance and has investigated zoning changes for other requests by village residents. It has been a busy year, and we look forward to next year and the review of other zoning ordinances and the need to make updates to facilitate the Master Plan.

**Parks:** Trustee Rod Hudson and Matt Lamore of Black Cap Farms have selected twelve native trees to replace those that died due to high water a couple of years back. They will be planted by Black Cap Farms come spring.

The restrooms are closed for the season, and a porta potty is now there till Spring.

**Sewer:** USDA project has new lines run as far as the lagoon entry. Due to the weather and a government shutdown, it will resume in the spring. In the meantime, assembly will continue with the pumps and valves. The three phase power upgrade for the pump station is making progress.

**Cemetery:** Village Cemetery Two on Erdman Road has an entrance makeover. Casey Chinnock, of Springhouse Masonry, has constructed six stone pillars, four at the road entrance and two at the base of the sign. The stones came from the old Erdman Road Farm foundation. Trees have been trimmed in both cemeteries, along with stump grinding.

**Farr Center:** The Farr Center has a new roof from A-Class Construction and Restoration. It was done to replace the damaged roof from the hailstorm that took place in April 2024. The Farr Center can be rented for special events by calling the Clerk Ruth Hudson at 231-889-3171.

If you get a chance say hi to the Village's new maintenance man Dave Geeting. He has been busy lately, doing a great job keeping the streets and lots around town plowed and cleared.

Village Zoning Board of Appeals has an opening. For more information contact the Village President, Wayne Miller at 231-889-3171.



## Scarecrow Contest

The scarecrows came once again to line Main Street. The contest raised \$400 and was donated to the St. Joseph Food Panty. Many thanks to the wonderful community members who attended the Fall Festival and voted for their favorite scarecrows. *Photos to the right courtesy of the Manistee News Advocate*



### ONEKAMA VILLAGE OFFICES

#### Farr Office

5283 Main Street • PO Box 477

Onekama, MI 49675

Phone#: (231) 889-3171 / Fax # (231) 889-3423

#### Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday  
9am - 2pm



## Portage Lake Association: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

There were several initiatives and events that took place in 2025. Below is a recap of our major events and initiatives. Many thanks to all of our committee and event chairs and volunteers who made these events possible. And, thanks to the community for your participation and support!

**HELLO SUMMER COCKTAIL PARTY** We kicked off the season with the Hello Summer Cocktail Party on June 6th at Portage Point Inn. It was an evening filled with conversation, music, dancing, and bidding as community members connected with friends and neighbors and bid on items with proceeds supporting Portage Lake Association initiatives. Al Taylor was honored for his tireless and selfless service to the Onekama community as a long-serving Portage Lake Association officer and board member. Contributing to the evening's success was fabulous fare by Jamil and Laura Alam, music by Chicago-based DJ Val, silent auction items donated by local businesses, and the participation of those attending dressing for the 70's and 80's theme.

**PETUNIA PARADE** This year the Petunia Parade Committee continued with their planting of seventeen large pots in Onekama filled with begonias, grasses, garden sage, lantana, and vinca. The planting and maintenance of petunias along a one-mile stretch of M-22 / Main Street was halted due to the resurfacing of the road and installation of ADA-compliant sidewalk corners by MDOT. The Committee took this opportunity to survey Portage Lake Association members and the public about their thoughts of continuing with petunias in the ground versus in hanging baskets. Seventy-one percent of respondents conveyed their preference for hanging baskets. In turn, the Committee plans to install eight moveable posts holding sixteen baskets of petunias in 2026 between Mill and Portage Streets.

**MONDAY NIGHT CONCERTS IN THE PARK** Eight Monday night concerts brought music and magic to the Onekama Park event stage. A variety of genres was on display throughout the summer ranging from Cajun/Zydeco hits from the Benzie Playboys opening the series to all eras of Elvis music from the 50's and 70's performed by the National and International award-winning Elvis Tribute Artist, Jake Slater. Mid-season Michael Trixx performed a magic show before the cover band, Fifth Gear's performance of high-energy versions of rock and pop hits from the 60's to today.

**ONEKAMA DAYS** Onekama Days 2025 was a major success for the Portage Lake Association. Once again, our Pig Roast sold out, the Craft Beer Tasting performed well, and the Saturday night Fireworks were spectacular. We created most of the Onekama Days publicity and worked

closely with the many Onekama organizations involved in Onekama Days. We handed over the Car Show in 2025 to the Portage Lake Garden Club to continue this community's favorite during Onekama Days. The garden club was able to attract ninety-four entrants and to begin a fund for repair of the Memorial Fountain in the Onekama Village Park.

**FALL FESTIVAL** The 2025 Fall Festival was a huge success. Not only did we have fantastic weather, but we had an amazing turnout by the community. Total participants were estimated to be around three hundred ranging from children to adults. This year's arts and crafts portion drew in many new faces and talents including local student entrepreneurs. Besides the fun that was had by all from playing games, riding horse drawn wagons, and petting farm animals, and painting pumpkins, the Portage Lake Association was able to donate \$400.00 to the food pantry from the famous scarecrow contest.

**NEAR AND FARR FRIENDS** During this, our tenth year of programs and game days with Near and Farr Friends, there were six game days and 14 speaker programs. There was a wide range of topics presented from experts on dog training, springtime birding, and best trees to plant this spring, to affordable housing efforts in Frankfort, dark sky light pollution that impacts all creatures, and two Ukraine speakers on services to children and soldiers. We look forward to new topics and speakers in 2026, including our collaboration with First Congregational Church on the 4th Fridays with lunch and speakers on issues around Aging in Onekama. Join us at 11am Fridays at the Onekama Township Hall except for the 4th Friday when we meet in the church 's lower level.

**CHRISTMAS ARTISAN MARKET** The Artisan Market was held on November 22nd, the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Forty-three artisan vendors participated providing a great assortment of art, from bread, maple syrup to textiles, glass, jewelry, authors, woodwork and MORE. The school, not knowing if they would be going to the championship that day had an impact. The Cookie Contest in the Cafeteria did not happen this year. Since Onekama has a strong artist community, we felt curating a juried show was best. It has grown the past 3 years and has been well received.

**CELEBRATION OF LIGHTS** This year's Celebration of Lights was held on Sunday, November 23, at the Farr Center in Onekama. The event kicked off to a festive start with musical performances by the Onekama First Congregational Church of Christ Bell Choir, led by Carol Worch, and by the Onekama Church of the Brethren Choir, led by Kathy Joseph. Their performances were a lovely addition to the event! During the social hour, refreshments were enjoyed along with the music by all those attending. At 6:00 p.m. attendees gathered near the Blue Spruce where Beth McCarthy read the names of those being honored and of loved ones who have passed that were being remembered. Immediately following, the Onekama



holiday tree was lit to cheers by the crowd. The Celebration of Lights is a fund-raising project sponsored by the Portage Lake Association.

### PLA 2026 BOARD MEMBERS

Cyndy Wangbichler, President

Roz Jaffe, Past President

Evie McNeil, Treasurer

Jane Foster

Susan Halloran

Sally Koon

Kathy Loynes

Mary Jo McElroy

Mark Miller

Cindy Brown Pons

Amber Sedelmaier

Al Taylor

Diane Wemlinger

Many thanks to outgoing Board members Jean Capper and Carey Stark. Thank you for serving on the Board and the valuable contributions you made.

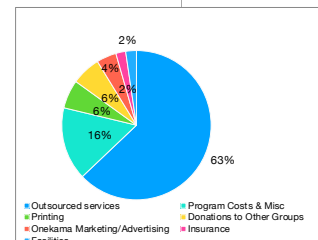
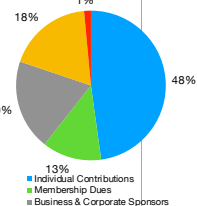
#### PORTAGE LAKE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT

| Money In                      |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Individual Contributions      | \$34,183        |
| Membership Dues               | \$9,175         |
| Business & Corporate Sponsors | \$13,970        |
| Fundraisers & Projects        | \$13,121        |
| Interest                      | \$1,051         |
| <b>Total income</b>           | <b>\$71,500</b> |

| Money Out                     |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Outsourced services           | \$41,772        |
| Program Costs & Misc          | \$10,518        |
| Printing                      | \$4,105         |
| Donations to Other Groups     | \$4,201         |
| Onekama Marketing/Advertising | \$2,851         |
| Insurance                     | \$1,411         |
| Facilities                    | \$1,542         |
| <b>Total expenses</b>         | <b>\$66,400</b> |

**Notes:**  
Data as of November 30, 2025.  
Outsourced services: 1099s for contracts, concerts, accounting, tech, etc.  
Program Costs: costs notion 1099s

#### 2025 Income & Expense



To learn more about Onekama and the Portage Lake Association, visit our website [www.onekama.info](http://www.onekama.info) or our Facebook pages 1,-Onekama,Michigan and Onekama Community Connection.  
Email us at [information@onekama.info](mailto:information@onekama.info).

## Onekama Branch Library

5283 Main Street  
Onekama, Michigan 49675  
(231) 889-4041 • (231) 889-5420

### Library Hours

10:30 AM - 5:00 PM. Monday  
12:30 PM - 7:00 PM Wednesday  
10:30 AM - 5:00 PM Thursday  
10:30 AM - 5:00 PM Friday

**\*Please call for Curbside Hours**  
**Branch Manager: Heather**



*Santa, Nikki and their dog, Lucy*

## Pictures with Santa

The Dogs and one Bunny took over Patina on December 6 & 7 for their 7th annual Pet Photos with Santa Event. Over 700 photos were taken and edited by the talented Lori Wilson (Lori Wilson Photography). Santa worked patiently for 4 hours encouraging dogs of all sizes and demeanors to sit or stand comfortably for their photo shoot...and smile for the camera. Jean Capper, Cat Concierge, braved the cold to check folks in. Mary Tebbenhoff, Homeward Bound, was on hand to mop the floors and hand out treats. I oversaw brushing the hair from Santa LOL. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we raised \$1,500 for Homeward Bound Animal Shelter in Manistee. Next year we will be back and are considering auctioning off several specific time slots where the entire family can take part in the photo shoot.

## Onekama Parks and Recreation

We LOVE hearing from you and your opinion counts. A sincere thank you to the over 300 community members who have taken our survey to date, and if you have not submitted a response, please submit a response today to make the most impact on our planning. The survey will remain open on the Onekama Township Parks and Recreation website all year. If you respond by January 6th, 2026, your response will be used to build our strategic 5-year plan report and help us to build our proposed budget for 2026 for the Township Board to consider.

<https://www.onekamatwp.org/parks-recreation/news/seeking-input-5-year-recreation-plan>.

Deadline to complete survey is January 30, 2026.



Check out the new Facebook Page for  
Portage Lake Watershed Forever

<https://www.facebook.com/PortageLakeWatershed>

## Onekama Consolidated Schools Community Fitness & Walking Track

Walking Track and Fitness Center Hours Year Round

Monday - Friday: 5 am - 8 am | 3 pm - 8 pm

Saturday and Sunday: 5 am - 8 pm

Note: Walking Track is closed during Athletic Events. Applications for key cards to the walking track and fitness center are available in the Superintendent's Office (Hours: Monday – Friday, 8am-3pm).

## Tours des Trees

Onekama Township Parks & Recreation welcomed Tour des Trees to Onekama this past August. Glen Park was the perfect spot to briefly host 45+ bicyclists and crew on a hot summer day as the park offered shade, cold mineral spring water to dip their toes in, and respite for a way-stop as they traveled 435 miles over 6 days. A special thank you to Josh Shields, Ph.D. with Manistee Conservation District for providing guided walks on the variety of trees Glen Park offers and our on-site volunteers, Andrew Waldecker, and Dan & Heather Schaeppi and family for helping make the event a success. Another special thank you to our food donations from AVO Farm Market for delicious fresh picked peaches, Miller's Northwoods Market for trail mix, and our Parks & Rec's own Michelle Ervin's delicious cookies.







## Near and Farr Friends 2026

This will begin our eleventh year of programs and game days with Near & Farr Friends. Attendance continues to build with new and repeat residents.

We also will have an additional offering each month. Our collaboration with First Congregational Church will begin in January on the 4th Friday with lunch and speakers on issues of Aging in Onkama. Everyone is invited at 11am in the church 's lower level at the corner of Spring and Zosel Streets. A catered lunch and speaker are provided with a grant that Pastor Alison Young has obtained. Seven forums will be held this year – five this winter/early spring and two others in the fall. These will culminate with the public determining the most needed

service for us to age well in the Onkama area.

The Onkama Township Hall will be the meeting place for the Near and Farr Friends. Starting at 11am pm Fridays there will be speakers and/or game days.

**January 16th** will feature Josh Locke from Arcadia Bluffs, the history of the storied golf course and restaurant.

**January 23th** will be the first Aging Well Forum at the church at 11am

**Feb 6** Game Day with Dawn

**Feb 13** stay tuned for more details

**Feb 20** Invasive species expert

**Feb 27** Lunch and Aging Well Forum

**March 6** Game Day with Dawn

**March 13** Dave Maylen's Magic Show

**March 20** Mark Fedder Ethnic Communities in Early Days of Manistee

**March 27** Lunch and Aging Well Forum

**April 3** Karen Goodman, Manistee County Commissioner

**April 10** stay tuned for more details

**April 17** stay tuned for more details

**April 24** Lunch and Aging Well Forum

**May 1** John Wemlinger

**May 8** stay tuned for more details

**May 15** stay tuned for more details

**May 22** Lunch and Aging Well Forum

Send your email address to [nearandfarrfriends@gmail.com](mailto:nearandfarrfriends@gmail.com) to be added to notifications each week of our speakers and games.

## St. Joseph Community Food Pantry

*St. Joseph Parish Fellowship Hall,  
(Entrance located behind Church)*

**8380 Fifth St, P.O. Box #150 • Onkama, MI 49675**

**Contact: Leslie Osborn,**

**231.864.2509 Email: [foodpantry\\_2014@yahoo.com](mailto:foodpantry_2014@yahoo.com)**

There are always people in need of food, drink, clothes and kindness. On average, we serve about 100 people every month. We spend about \$1,500 a month for food and drink. Donations from parishioners, other churches, civic organizations, individuals and others fund our ministry.

Parishioners are only a portion of the 20-25 regular volunteers, many of whom have been helping for more than 10 years, and some have volunteered month after month for over 25 years. The purpose of the food pantry is to respond to families and individuals who are residents of Manistee County, are low income and in need of food assistance

The St. Joseph Community Food Pantry, Onkama, is open the 4th Friday of each month, from 10:00 - 11:15 AM, and will be open regardless of the weather conditions.



Published on Onekama, MI (<http://www.onekamatwp.org>)

## BOARD MEMBERS:

**Supervisor,** David Meister;  
**Clerk,** Jennifer Smeltzer;  
**Treasurer,** Edward Bradford;  
**Trustees,** Matt Kieffer  
 Cyndy Wangbichler

**ZONING ADMINISTRATOR:** Manistee County Planning Department, M-F 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

**BURNING PERMITS:** Burning permits issued by website: [www.michigan.gov/burn permit](http://www.michigan.gov/burnpermit). Township residents: you are (Twp. 23 N. and Range 16 W) and your section number.

**BURN BANS:** Burn bans can be found at [dnr.state.mi.us](http://dnr.state.mi.us).

**TOWNSHIP OFFICE HOURS:** Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

Closed on the following recognized holidays: Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Christmas Eve through New Year's Day.

**TOWNSHIP OFFICE PHONE:** (231) 889-3308; FAX: 889-5587.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** (231) 889-7014

## Winter 2025 Property Tax Bills

POSTED ON: NOVEMBER 26, 2025 - 8:56AM

Winter tax bills were mailed November 25th and are payable upon receipt. Winter due date is February 14 and taxes are turned over delinquent to the County as of March 1.

If you do not receive a tax bill by mid-December, please contact the Treasurer's office or access your tax information and/or pay online at: Pay Taxes Online

There is a 2.80% service fee and a \$.50 transaction fee when paying via credit card, whether in-person or online.

Alternatively, taxes can also be paid automatically through a direct automatic payment option. To sign up for this service, please complete the Auto Pay Enrollment Form.

Payments can also be left in the Township dropbox, which is fast and convenient.

Please note that sewer bills are paid to the Village of Onekama.

## WHAT DOES THE COMMUNITY THINK ABOUT PETUNIAS?

In 2025, the Petunia Parade along Main Street took a "vacation" to allow the resurfacing of M-22 to go smoothly. The new road, along with ADA sidewalk corners and several crosswalks, helps to spruce up our Village and make it safer and user-friendly. During that time, the Petunia Committee took the opportunity to query residents and visiting public on their thoughts about the future of petunias in Onekama.

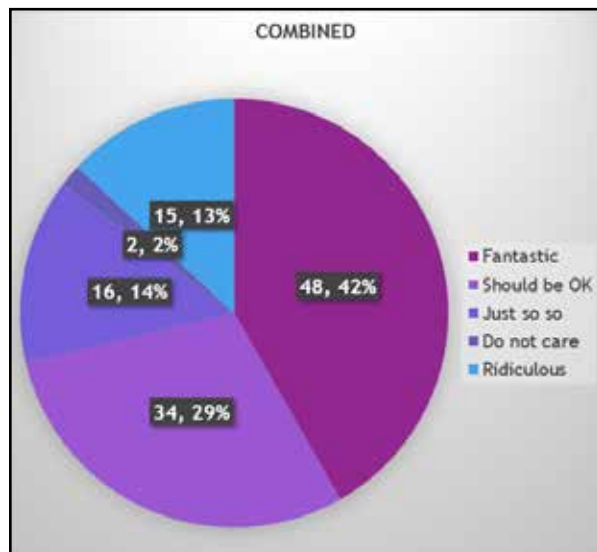
Online and paper surveys were administered over forty days during the summer. One hundred seventeen (117) people responded. Analysis of data highlighted the following opinions:

- 97% respondents say that petunias have a "huge impact or are noticeable" to an impression of Onekama
- Those who volunteer/volunteered to plant or weed petunias were well represented (about half of the respondents)

Graphically, the response to the question "Upon first thought, what do you think about the idea of petunias in hanging baskets along Main Street in Onekama instead of planting them directly into soil at ground level?" looks like this.

Response to other questions points to some good support for "buying" a planter and that around \$150 might be a reasonable cost for a planter. Only one respondent offered to help water the planters (yes, it is a big challenge to overcome).

Now you might ask "so what is the plan for 2026?" The Committee has proposed a transition plan for 2026, and it has been approved by the Portage Lake Association Board and endorsed by the Onekama Village Council. The plan focuses on attributes of familiarity, flexibility, labor saving, adaptability, and buying "local" i.e., in Michigan. Stay tuned for April's PLA newsletter when the plan is revealed!





## CW Erickson Market 5122 Main Street

In 1911, an ornamental cement block commercial building was built east of the stream that cut through the property for the Klug Meat Market.. Members of the C.W. Erickson family operated a market in this building from ca. 1917 to the early 1970's and maintained the area along the street as a garden to enhance the appearance of the Village. C.W. Erickson would often take his horse drawn wagon to farms to process livestock.

In 1937, J. Echoff, of Manistee helped construct the fieldstone bridge. Arborvitae provided a background for this beautiful spot and shielded the view of the slaughterhouse and smoke house that were operated on the back lot.

The building was remodeled in 1950 to add living quarters to the back and modify the staircase. After the sale in the 1970's the outbuildings were transformed into gift shops for a while. The store over the years had been home to an ice cream shop, pizza parlor, video rentals, apartments, business offices and a flower shop. In 2024, the building was transformed into Portage Lake Suites, a boutique hotel.



If you have historical information or stories about Onekama and want to share with the Onekama History Association, please contact Kathy Schimke Cyr at [cyrkathy043@gmail.com](mailto:cyrkathy043@gmail.com) or Lauralee Mathieu Ryan at [lmathieu@iserv.net](mailto:lmathieu@iserv.net)



## The Onekama Lions Club had a busy 2025!

We had our food trailer at Ron Ringel Auctions throughout the year.

We held a rummage/craft sale at the Fair Pavilion.

Our Kid Sight Trailer can be seen at many sites providing eyesight screening.

We parked cars during the Manistee County Fair.

We hosted Onekama Days which included a steak fry, cornhole tournaments, two breakfasts and the parade.

We co-hosted the second annual Halloween night parade and trunk or treat and the Onekama Lions Club handed out free doughnuts, cider, coffee, hot chocolate and lots of candy! It was a fun event and hoping it will be bigger and better in 2026!

We donated funds to the Giving Tree at Onekama School and provided holiday meals to the families in need.

We hosted our first October Fest at the Lions Pavilion and a great time was had by all with German music and lots and lots of German food and drinks!

We went caroling, provided cookies and donated gifts for the Manistee County Medical Care Facility residents at Christmas. We also delivered poinsettias for each resident to enjoy for the holiday season.

We gave out two \$1,000 high school scholarships to graduating Onekama School seniors that is renewable every year for four years.

We donate every year to the Leader Dogs for the Blind, Bear Lake Camp, Eversight, All State Band, Kidsight, Paws for a Cause, Lions Club International Foundation and Lions of Michigan Foundation.

This list is definitely not all-inclusive of all the things that the Onekama Lions Club does as there are lots of other donations given and projects worked on. The Lions Club works hard all year so we can give back to our community whenever there is a need.

Our cornhole is back for 2026 and is held every Friday night January through March. Come join us for cod baskets, chicken tender baskets, burgers, brats, hot dogs and much more. Drinks are also available for purchase. Doors open at 5:00 and cornhole begins at 6:30! It is a wonderful way to get out and socialize. This is a great fundraiser for the Onekama Lions and has been very well attended and best of all, everyone has a great time! Cornhole begins January 2, 2026!! Mark your calendars!

We plan to have our extremely popular Quarter Paddle Auction in the spring that has a great attendance and is the biggest fundraiser for the Onekama Lions Club. The Lions hold this

event every other year and this is the year! The date is Saturday, April 25, 2026. If you would like to donate any items, please get a hold of Kathleen Bowers at (231) 690-5790.



If you are interested in reserving the pavilion for a graduation party or wedding, etc., please contact David Bowers at (231) 690-6918.

It takes many volunteers hours to do what the Onekama Lions Club provides to our community. If you love giving back to your community and are interested in becoming an Onekama Lions Club member, please reach out to any Onekama Lions Club member or call (231) 690-5790. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 6:00 p.m. in the summer months and on the 3rd Friday at 4:30 p.m. during the winter months at the Onekama Lions Club located at the Manistee County Fairgrounds. We would love to have you!! We serve!

## Recycling in Onekama:

The containers are directly adjacent to the Fairgrounds off of John Street.

Please observe all rules related to recycling and if the bins are full, DO NOT leave your recycling. Take it back and return another day.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please note: The PCA trailer is no longer available.

If you have any questions about what is and isn't recyclable, please visit:

<https://www.manisteecountymi.gov/356/Recycling>



# RECYCLE RIGHT! KEEP MANISTEE COUNTY GREEN.

## Manistee County PA69 Recycling Program Guidelines

Newspapers,  
Magazines,  
Brochures &  
Inserts



File Folders, Office Paper  
& Gift Wrapping Paper



#1, 2, 4, 5, 7 Plastic Bottles & Containers  
(NO Foam/Styrofoam NO Plastic Bags)



Aluminum, Steel Cans & Foil

# YES

- Clean garden pots & trays
- Clean pizza boxes
- Flatten cardboard boxes
- Empty and rinse containers
- Leave caps on plastic bottles
- OK to leave staples, clips, labels, stamps, spiral bindings and metal fasteners on paper products



Paperboard Boxes  
(cereal, pasta, & tissue)



Flattened  
Corrugated Cardboard &  
Paper Bags

Greeting Cards,  
Regular &  
Junk Mail



Phonebooks



Glass Bottles & Jars  
(All Colors)

# NO

- **Plastic Bags**
- Foam containers or products (styrofoam)
- Scrap Metal (metal hangers, pipes, blinds, etc.)
- Light bulbs, window panes, mirrors, ceramics & pyrex dishes
- Yard waste and food waste
- Electronic waste (batteries, cell phones, computers, etc.)
- Paint, pesticides, oil & cleaners
- Waxed cardboard
- Needles or syringes
- Hazardous waste or medications
- Garden hose, lawn furniture
- Construction materials (siding, lumber, etc.)
- Toys

### What is the PA69 Recycling Program?

Public Act 69 allows Michigan Counties and local units of government to enter into an agreement to fund a residential recycling program. The recycling sites listed are for use by residents of participating Townships only:

Arcadia Township, Brown Township, Cleon Township, Village of Copemish, Maple Grove Township, Village of Kaleva, Marilla Township, Onekama Township, Village of Onekama, Springdale Township



### Recycling Drop-Off Locations

Arcadia Township Hall  
3422 Lake Street

Kaleva  
14420 Walta Street

Brown Township Hall  
8233 Coates Highway

Onekama Township Hall  
5435 Main Street

Copemish  
On Brown Street off  
of W. Cleon Street

Springdale Township Hall  
14492 Glovers Lake Road

Out of consideration for the families living near the sites, please use the recycling drop-off sites between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm.

### Support our schools!

Residents and Businesses, recycle CARDBOARD in the PCA fundraising semi-trailers located at Betsie Valley School, Kaleva and Onekama recycling drop-off sites.

## Football, Volleyball, Cross Country Set Program Records in Memorable Onekama Fall Sports Season

*Compiled by Trinity Hurford (Class of 2028) and Cadence Beatty (Class of 2028)*

*Written by Riley Cogburn (Class of 2026), Ava Blossingham (Class of 2028), Jasmine Lapp (Class of 2026), and Faith Fessenden (Class of 2027)*

What an outstanding season for the Onekama Portagers athletic program! Between football, volleyball, and cross country, the Portagers set various new records, making lifetime memories for students, staff, and the community alike. For this edition of the Portage Lake Association newsletter, we have compiled student athlete coverage from four student journalists in the Onekama yearbook program. Enjoy!

### **Football** (by Riley Cogburn)

The Portagers rounded off the season with 11 wins and 1 loss. They gained the title of Regional champions for the second year in a row, reaching the Eight-Man Division 2 semifinals. Their only loss was against Farleigh North Dickinson in a contentious semi-final game in Marquette, 44-28. Throughout the season, the Portagers broke various program records. They achieved their first record when they completed a perfect 9-0 regular season. The last time they went undefeated for a regular season was in 1976 with an 8-0 record, nearly 50 years ago. The Portagers also set a new record for most wins in a season with 11 wins, and their best start to a season in program history with an 11-0 record.

The Portagers had several key games throughout the season. One of their first key games was against Marion. After losing to Marion early last season and narrowly defeating them in Onekama football's first home playoff game of the 2020s, the boys came in with their A-game and a determination to win. The Portagers walked out of the game with a dominant 38-16 win. Their next notable game was against Baldwin. They beat Baldwin 66-6, securing their #2 ranking in the state and finishing the regular season off 9-0. The Portagers also put up two high-octane playoff performances at home this postseason, defeating Hillman 42-14, and Gaylord St. Mary 46-6.

During the 2025 football season, the Portagers stayed strong as a team, and seven key players in the team were nominated for All-Region honors. Luke Bradford, Brandon Brindle, Chase Gauthier, Tyler Hart, Ryan Hrachovina, Andrew Potter, and Bennett Zeller were all titled All-Region players. Brandon Brindle, senior, surpassed 100 tackles as a linebacker and was a key player in the Portager's tight defense. Luke Bradford, senior, hauled in 47 catches for 827 yards and 16 touchdowns this season after converting from quarterback

to tight end. Ryan Hrachovina, junior, completed over 100 tackles as a defensive lineman and led the team with his sacks. Both Andrew Potter and Chase Gauthier were senior offensive linemen that rushed for over 2,500 yards and 39 touchdowns. Tyler Hart, senior, was a wide receiver/tight end who brought in 18 catches for 350 receiving yards and eight touchdowns. Finally, Bennett Zeller, freshman, ran for 900 yards with 15 touchdowns.

Altogether, the 2025 Portagers were an incredibly tight team who worked together to bring Onekama one of its greatest football seasons in program history!

### **Volleyball** (by Ava Blossingham)

In 2025, the Onekama varsity volleyball team made a significant impact on the court. With a blend of seasoned veterans and promising newcomers, the team took on their toughest opponents, bringing a renewed sense of energy and determination to each match.

Led by Head Coach Linda Elo, the Lady Portagers had various standout players in 2025. The team's seniors this season were Aleah Blackmore, Karima Castillo, Carley Guerne, Hailey Hart, and Aubry LeSarge. The juniors, Ava Mauntler, Delaney McCarthy, and Elizabeth McKeough, brought leadership and experience that helped guide the team through both the highs and lows of the competitive season. The three sophomores who joined the team were Kaelyn Guerne, Abigail Sell, and me, Ava Blossingham. The team's success depended on the contributions from up-and-coming players, who are eager to prove themselves in high-pressure situations.

Now onto the fun stuff! During the regular season this year we had a few new achievements come onto the court. First, senior Hailey Hart reached 1,000 kills, with a 43 kill and 30 dig count during one game. Junior Delaney McCarthy also reached 1,000 kills and led with 41 kills, 37 digs, and 12 aces in a period. Two more of our juniors achieved new milestones with Ava Mauntler surpassing 2,000 digs, and Elizabeth McKeough topping off with 2,000 assists, breaking the previous assist record!

With these amazing achievements, we obviously can't forget about the wins. During this season, the Lady Portagers claimed the Northwest Conference Title for the second year in a row, along with the District Champions title for the sixth year in a row. They swept Glen Lake, Frankfort, Mason County Central, Big Rapids, Manistee, and Suttons Bay.

Following all these wins, the team accrued some serious achievements. Hailey Hart, Ava Mauntler earned All State second-team honors, while Hailey Hart, Delaney McCarthy, and Elizabeth McKeough earned All State honorable mention honors. Each athlete also received All Conference, All State, and All Region honors. Additionally, Carley Guerne achieved an honorable mention for the All Conference title.



During the season they had fun memorable moments which were winning the home invitational undefeated, achieving a 11-match streak, sweeping rival Benzie Central, and a deep postseason run that led them to the Regional Final after an extravagant win over Hale in November.

With the season being over, the Onekama Varsity Volleyball team had an extremely successful 2025-2026 season, finishing with an overall record of 34 wins, 9 losses, and 3 ties, securing first place in their league (8-1) and ranking highly at the state level.

### **Cross Country** (by *Jasmine Lapp*)

Our cross country team had an exceptional season. Our girls worked hard and it paid off with new PR's and records broken. Zakia Wagoner, Callie Sinke, and Addy Zeller put their hearts into it and it shows.

Zakia Wagoner is a freshman, but don't underestimate her. She finished the MHSAA Regional Meet in 11th place with a time of 20:06.60. At the MHSAA State Finals she placed 34th with a time of 20:30.80. Her personal record is 20:06. She has done great this year and I can't wait to see what she does in the years to come.

Addy Zeller is a junior who has worked hard to get where she is and it shows. At the MHSAA Regional Meet, she finished in 4th with a time of 18:20.30. At the MHSAA State Finals she came in 45th place with a time of 20:52.40. She has an impressive personal record of 19:30. I'm eager to see what she does with her final year!

Finally, Callie Sinke is a Sophomore who has impressed ev-

eryone throughout the season. She came in 2nd place at the MHSAA Regional Meet with a time of 18:35.00. She finished in 8th place at MHSAA State Finals with a time of 19:14.10. She has a Personal record of 18:16. She won All State honors along with setting the school record with a time of 18:16.

As a team, Onekama Cross Country claimed 4th at the MHSAA Regional Meet and competed at state finals. I think this is just the start for this team and can't wait to see what they continue to do. Good luck for next year!

### **Swim** (by *Faith Fessenden*)

The 2025 Manistee/Onekama girl's swim season began in August, with the first meet at East Grand Rapids, September 3rd. The team consisted of me, Onekama's sole co-op swim athlete, and five Manistee athletes. Throughout the season, the team competed at 11 competitions; despite having a small team, we scored big compared to their competitors.

On September 5th, we faced off against Gaylord, taking second with 47 points to Gaylord's 114. During the meet, our team set a new personal best in the 200 freestyle relay with a time of 2:04.21. The relay team that took 1st place with this new best was composed of myself and Manistee swimmers Evelyn Koller, Aubree Speicher, and Macaela Bruce.

The final meet, Coastal Conference, took place November 7th and 8th. Overall, we placed 6th with 135 points. Overall, the team had a strong season despite having low numbers for swimmers, even marking significant times during the final conference meet.

## **2025 Celebration of Lights**

This year's Celebration of Lights was held on Sunday, November 23, at the Farr Center in Onekama.

The event kicked off to a festive start with musical performances by the Onekama First Congregational Church of Christ Bell Choir, led by Carol Worch, and by the Onekama Church of the Brethren Choir, led by Kathy Joseph. Their performances were a lovely addition to the event. During the social hour, refreshments were enjoyed along with the music by all those attending.

At 6:00 p.m. we all moved outside to gather near the Blue Spruce for the reading of the names of this year's honorees. Beth McCarthy read the names of those being honored and of loved ones who have passed that were being remembered. Immediately following, the Onekama holiday tree was lit to cheers by the crowd.

The Celebration of Lights is a fund-raising project sponsored by the Portage Lake Association. Donation envelopes were mailed to Portage Lake Association members, and were also available at the Onekama Post Office and Onekama Library.



**DONATION FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Best contact phone \_\_\_\_\_

How should we use your donation? Check one:

- ☐ General fund (best use / most needed project)
 ☐ Petunia Parade
 ☐ Celebration of Lights
 ☐ Onekama Days Fireworks
- ☐ Concerts in the Park
 ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to **Portage Lake Association**. Send, along with this completed form, to: PLA, PO Box 493, Onekama, MI 49675



*For More Events and information – check out [www.onekama.info](http://www.onekama.info)*



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P.O. Box 493  
Onekama, MI 49675