



Blue Christmas

“The Christmas Market has been canceled!” It was my daughter on the phone. Clara lives in Munich and, for weeks, she had been sending us photos of all the preparations for the Christmas Market. Unfortunately, Germany has been experiencing a surge in Covid cases this last week and rather than risk the health of citizens, they made the decision to cancel the annual celebration. Clara was very disappointed, “It feels like Christmas is canceled!”

I know how she feels; I remember last year. I remember standing in a mostly empty sanctuary, staring out into the darkness, trying to imagine the on-line congregation. Judy Kabodian, Jonathan Reed, myself and a quartet of singers tried to fill the space with the familiar carols. But it didn't feel like Christmas. We were all alone, in the dark.

Reading Luke's Gospel, it seems like Mary and Joseph were in a similar position - all alone, in the dark. I think about Mary, in the throes of labor with only Joseph for support. It wasn't supposed to be that way. Mary should have been at home, with her mother, in the company of female relatives. The birth of Mary's first child did not go according to her plan.

I check the Ingham County Health Department website every day to see how things are going in our fight against the Covid virus. In the last week, there has been a significant surge in cases. Sparrow and McLaren are filling up with Covid patients - most of them unvaccinated. The CDC said there would likely be another wave of infections but I had hoped things would turn out for the best. It is not going according to my plan. At this point, we are still planning to have an in-person Christmas Eve service, but I know things could change. It breaks my heart.

But then I remember the words of the prophet Isaiah: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.” (Isaiah 9:2) I remember that people wait for centuries for the light God has promised. The light arrived in an unexpected form - and not according to plan. The light arrived in a time of deep darkness and shone all the more brightly because of it. Jesus Christ came without warning and without fanfare to be a source of hope, peace, joy and love.

This Advent and Christmas season may not unfold according to plan. We may feel as if we are alone in the darkness. But we will still rejoice...*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Be well. Be safe. Keep the faith. The Light is coming!

- Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe, Senior Pastor





December Birthdays

*80 & over

12/01—Gene Cornelius

12/02—Beverly Oetzel

12/03—Harold Weaver

12/06—Virginia Williams

12/07—James Nord

12/12—Doris Weil

12/12—Jean Dailey

12/13—Faye Dragosh

12/21—James Close

12/22—Audrey Wilson

12/26—Shirley Fisher

12/30—Gary Coopes

12/30—Mary West


12/30—Irene Seahawk

12/31—Denny Rosenbrook

December Anniversaries

12/30—Roger & Marilyn Grove (68)

If we have missed you, please accept our apology. Contact the office to make sure we have your correct information on file.



Gift Cards for Refugee Services

Yesterdays' news was the evacuation from Afghanistan. Today's reality is that the evacuees/refugees have started to arrive here in Lansing. These Afghans (estimated 300) are in addition to the 400 other refugees from other parts of the world arriving here in Lansing. Peoples Church traditionally does a gift card drive for Refugee Services to purchase footwear for the arrivals and this is needed more than ever this year. A well marked box will be in the office for Meijer and Target gift cards (any amount) until **December 12th**. Thanks in advance for past support for underwear and gift cards. Questions? Contact Ruth Worthington at worthin2@msu.edu.

Town and Gown

Town and Gown will continue until **December 14th!** There are two speakers left in this series—join us on Tuesdays from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Participants may either attend in the Robertson Room or join by Zoom. We invite you to join us as we welcome Town & Gown to our church community! You can register to [attend via this link](#). For more information about our final two speakers, please take a look at this [flyer](#).
12/07— *Dr. Melanie Helton is a professor of voice (soprano) and director of the MSU Opera Theatre at the Michigan State University College of Music.*
12/14— *Dr. Erica Frantz specializes in the study and teaching of authoritarian politics, democratization, conflict, and development.*

Confirmation Class

The Confirmation class at The Peoples Church is a program of faith exploration for 8th and 9th graders. The course is designed to teach young people more about the four denominations affiliated with The Peoples Church, as well as provide opportunities for in-depth Bible study, theological exploration, and service to the church and wider community. Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell will lead the program with assistance from Rev. Dr. Monroe. If you are interested in knowing more about Confirmation Class of 2022, please contact Rev. Herrell, dherrell@thepeopleschurch.com.

The Peoples Forum Sundays in the Robertson Room; 9:30-10:15 a.m.

12/05—Chris Kaminski, Musician, Come Celebrate With Us

12/12—Christmas Stories



The Peoples Forum will recess until January after the **December 12th presentation**.

Please look for more information in the new year!

Message from the Holiday Food Basket Program Coordinators

Every holiday season, the Community Engagement Committee of Peoples Church provide families in the Lansing area with Holiday Food Baskets. This year we look forward to serving our community like we always have—with a few small changes and some help from you! As an alternative to food baskets, we will offer a “food credit” at a small grocery store. This arrangement provides the family the ability to determine what food best fits their needs during the holidays and only restricts alcohol, tobacco and cleaning products. We want to thank you for your generous support—because of you we were able to provide 30 families with a food credit for Thanksgiving. With your continued support we can adopt the same 30 families for Christmas, and provide them with another memorable holiday. We greatly appreciate your help in supporting our community, and pray we are one day able to deliver food to these families in person!



Edgewood Village Christmas Gifts - Last Call for Elves!

Christmas is coming and you are invited to help. If you would like to purchase a gift for a child at Edgewood Village, here in our local community, please contact Emily Anderson (church member) via e-mail at: anderson2910@icloud.com or via telephone at 517-648-0632. She will provide you with all the information you will need: gender and age of the child, item the child wishes and details for returning the gift. If you would simply like to financially support this activity, that is an option too! For many of the children at Edgewood Village the gift provided from Peoples Church will be the only gift they receive this Christmas. **Gifts must be delivered to Emily Anderson by December 12th!**

Advent Celebration

The Women of Peoples Church cordially invite you to our 2021 Advent Celebration on **December 5th at 11:45 a.m.** in the Snider Social Hall.

Our program will be presented by
Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell:

God is With Us: The Incarnation and Why it Matters

Tickets: \$8.00 a person

Reserved Tables of six: \$40.00

Contact Cheryl Leece to reserve your table:

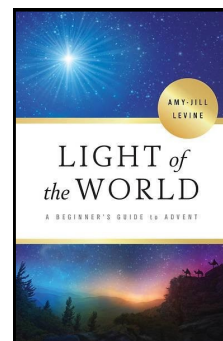
leececm@gmail.com or 517-410-1313



Join us in Advent for a weekly time of study and reflection!

Join us for our Advent Study, *Light of The World*, by Amy Jill-Levine. During this 4-week study we will explore the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. We look forward to lively conversations and fellowship!

The class will be taught twice each week in the Robertson Room. Dr. Monroe will be teaching this class in-person on Sundays after worship (11:45 a.m.) and Dr. Herrell will offer it on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. (in person and on Zoom).



To join the Wednesday Zoom, click [here](#). Or open Zoom, and manually enter the Meeting ID: 818 7115 7941. There is no passcode for this event.



CHILDREN'S EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLES CHURCH



Our Christmas Pageant cast has recorded their scenes and we are excited to debut “Mr. Pfister’s Christmas Time Travelers” on **December 19th**, during the 10:30 a.m. service. Our kids did an amazing job practicing for weeks. We hope you enjoy the show!

Sunday School has just one more week left in December due to the pageant and Christmas break. We will have class the whole service on **December 12th** to make ornaments, learn about Mary’s story, do another Kids Reaching Out project, and have a little Christmas Party. It has been so wonderful to have the classrooms open for children to learn their Bible lessons and enjoy each other’s company! I am hoping more and more children can attend after winter break as they get vaccinated and are feeling safer.

One last plea for teachers for this Winter/Spring term. Come join the fun—no experience necessary and all lessons and materials are prepped for you! Contact me to volunteer—thank you!

Kathi Mitchell, Children’s Christian Education Director, kmitchell@thepeopleschurch.com

There will be no Sunday School on:
December 5th—Music Sunday
December 19th—Pageant Sunday
December 26th—Christmas Break
January 2nd—Christmas Break



Hello PCYG!

I am so proud of you and all your hard work leading up to Youth Sunday. Thank you all for your participation!

December is always a short month for PCYG, and we will be meeting on the 5th and 12th! The 12th will be our Christmas celebration and ugly Christmas sweaters are strongly recommended!! We will be playing games and enjoying good food together, combined for MS and HS from 5:30-8:30 p.m. in the Youth Den.

PCYG will resume on January 9th! Travel safely, enjoy your families, and I’m looking forward to seeing you in the new year!

-Elisha Smith, Youth Director, esmith@thepeopleschurch.com





Journeying Through Advent

As I write this I am waiting. I am not good at waiting. Ironically, what brought me to this waiting room may have been the universe's attempt at telling me to slow down. The emergency brake light of my car kept coming on *while I was driving*. Nothing like a light shining brightly on the dash of the car to get my attention. So here I sit, waiting for new brakes, thankful that is all I need to get moving again.

Advent is one of my most favorite liturgical seasons, like Lent, if we take it seriously it forces us to slow down, anticipate, and pay attention. While every other area of life speeds up this time of year, we are challenged to enter into weeks of waiting...something big is coming. As Christians who know the rest of the story it can be challenging to put ourselves in the place of persons longing for a Savior. We have access to everything we need with the click of a mouse and an Amazon delivery, after all. But our world does need this Savior, our world needs hope and joy, love and peace. Rather than getting fussy about the secular excitement surrounding Christmas, let's ask ourselves how we can focus on these advent themes. How might peace surround you and those you love this season? Can you experience joy in even the smallest moments of togetherness? For what do you hope this Christmas? And love, perhaps the most important of all, how will you allow yourself to be loved and cared for by the Holy Spirit? How might your love for Jesus impact the lives of others?

My prayer for us is simple - May we become so swept up in the mystery of Christ's birth that we are filled with anticipation, transformed in the waiting, and truly able to celebrate the greatest gift of all.

Be Blessed Everyone!

- Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell



People's Church Campus Ministry Meets Regularly:

Tuesdays @ 8 p.m. for Dinner & Bible Study

Sundays @ 11:45 a.m. Lunch & Lounge

Upcoming Special Events:

Sunday, December 5th: Lunch and Lounge will attend the WPC Advent Celebration in the Snider Social Hall

Tuesday, December 7th: Campus Ministry Christmas Party @ 8 p.m.

Sunday December 12th: Lunch and Lounge @ Barrio.

Exam Week Pancakes and studying @ 6 p.m.

Starting January 12th Campus Ministry will be meeting Wednesday nights at 6:30 p.m. for Dinner & Bible Study.

Christmas Poinsettia Memorial Gifts

Each year at Christmas we decorate our sanctuary with beautiful poinsettias. If you would like to help with this wonderful tradition, please fill out the form below, or click [here](#) for an electronic version. **Deadline to order is December 17th, 2021.** Please return paper forms to the church office.

_____ **Yes! I would like to honor a loved one with a poinsettia this holiday season.**
(a suggested donation of \$20 is appreciated! Please make checks payable to The Peoples Church and indicate "Poinsettias" in the memo line.)

Please accept my gift:

_____ **In Memory of**

_____ **In Honor of**

_____ **In Celebration of**

_____ **To the Glory of God**

Given by: _____

Christmas Eve Service

The Peoples Church will hold a Christmas Eve Service on **December 24th at 7 p.m.** The service will also be livestreamed on our YouTube page.

The Longest Night

AN ADVENT SERVICE OF
HEALING AND HOPE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19TH
4PM

Let's Play Games!



Family Game Day following worship
Jan 3rd! Bring your favorite games!

**As always we want to do what is safe,
this event may be canceled due to Covid concerns*



Social-Emotional Intelligence in Preschool

Dana Johnson— Director, Peoples Church Preschool

The Preschool's motto is: **Relationship - Responsiveness - Respect.**

Each child enrolled in the preschool is assigned a Primary Caregiver, regardless of the age group. The child-and-primary caregiver relationship, as well as all of the child's relationships, play a major part in that child's social-emotional development.

From infants to toddlers to preschool-age children, each teaching team weaves social-emotional learning experiences into the daily plans. Self regulation is one of the first skills children need to learn for optimum social-emotional health. This skill is not something children are born with, but something they learn through support and practice.

Each classroom uses intentional teaching to ensure that there are ongoing opportunities for children to identify their own feelings and work toward understanding the feelings of others. Once a child can identify emotions, the child can practice self-regulation.

The mastering of social-emotional skills is helpful to children all the way through adulthood. One study showed that 70% of students that dropped out of high school did so, not because they were unable to do the work, but because they lacked the skills to navigate social-emotional challenges.



Annual Report

Dear Chairs of Ministry: It is once again time to assemble the annual report for The Peoples Church. Ministry reports should include activities and achievements of the ministries, and any other events/information that you would like to share with our church family!

Reports are due January 10th and should be sent to Elizabeth at eprice@thepeopleschurch.com.

SAVE THE DATE!

TPC TALENT SHOW

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2022

SNIDER SOCIAL HALL



Earth-Friendly Tips from the Peoples Church Earth Stewardship Committee

- We often leave mobile phone chargers and adapters plugged into the wall after they're finished charging our devices. However, they continue to drain energy from the wall socket until they are unplugged. If only 1% of the world's mobile phone users routinely unplugged their chargers, it would save enough energy each year to power tens of thousands of homes.
- In developing countries 1 billion people need glasses but can't afford them. The next time you replace your specs, donate your old pair to an organization that collects and distributes them to areas where they can be reused. Many optometrists take part in collection programs.
- Many reusable water bottles are made of plastic, which can leach chemicals into your water. A good alternative is to use a metal water bottle. Metal is much more durable, and is much more recyclable—metal can be recycled an infinite number of times, whereas plastic is often only recycled once.

The next *Portal* deadline for the January issue is **December 15th**.
Submit content to eprice@thepeopleschurch.com

DECEMBER 2021 PORTAL

ThePeoplesChurch.com

517.332.5073

200 W. Grand River Ave.
East Lansing, MI 48823

