

On My Mind: False Gods

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A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. (Jeremiah 31:15)

As I write this, the country is reeling from yet another horrific school shooting. Nineteen children and two teachers were gunned down at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. We have become so accustomed to mass shootings that the details of this one blur with those of others: Sandy Hook, Columbine, Red Lake, Virginia Tech, Buffalo.

Reading about the lives cut short, I am filled with many feelings. Rage, sorrow, horror, judgment, despair, helplessness. How is it that this country cannot seem to keep children safe? How can we call ourselves a free society when we are not free to assemble in safety? How can a country love its guns more than it loves its children? How did we get to such a place?

“Do not permit any of your children to be offered as a sacrifice to the false god Molech, for you must not bring shame on the name of your God. I am the Lord.” Leviticus 18:21

In Hebrew scripture, Israel is warned not to worship idols or false gods. This was an important commandment because they were living amongst the Canaanites who worshiped Ba'al (referred to as Molech in scripture), a god whose worship included the sacrifice of children. It seems like an unspeakable practice to us, yet it was not uncommon in the ancient world. Over time, though, the kings of Israel forgot Yahweh's commandment. In order to curry the favor of the powerful Assyrians, both King Ahaz and King Manasseh are reported to have worshiped Molech (Ba'al) at the hilled site of Topheth, outside the walls of Jerusalem. But King Josiah, the reformer, put an end to this heinous practice, as reported in 2 Kings 23:10. *“And he (Josiah) defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech.”*

Do you see the connection? I will say it plainly: we are allowing our children to be sacrificed to a false god. The 2nd amendment to the constitution has become Ba'al, demanding the blood of the innocent. Many politicians on both sides of the aisle are behaving like Ahaz and Manasseh, appeasing the powers and principalities rather than protecting the people. When will there be a Josiah, someone who refuses to bow down to this monstrous beast?

Don't misunderstand me. I was raised in South Dakota where hunting is part of life. I grew up around people who owned guns and knew how to use them, but they did not worship them. That's the important distinction. I am a follower of Jesus Christ, who commanded us to love, to forgive, to serve and to worship only God. I worship the God whose kingdom is a place of peace, where “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4b) Our society has strayed far from the path of peace and prosperity, but we don't have to stay here. God can and *will* guide us forward.

It is time for us to end the worship of false gods.

-Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe



DEVON HERRELL

Associate Pastor

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I witnessed the most beautiful sunset sky the other evening as I was driving. I probably shouldn't take pictures while I drive, and this does not even capture the brilliance of the colors, but it gave me pause to reflect on the beauty around me. I attended two meetings that day, filled with passionate people who had important ideas. There is clearly an eagerness in all of us to return to some form of what "used to be" in regards to church activities. I too, am eager. I wonder though, if in the midst of this desire for normalcy, we can also take the time to pause and listen. During those meetings, that is what I was telling myself to do... just listen (which isn't always easy for a talker like me). When discussing the future of our ministries, making space to listen to one another and for the guidance of the Holy Spirit is crucial. These are hope-filled conversations and there is room for everyone. Driving tends to be a time when I intentionally turn off the podcasts and the music and just listen. Where do you listen best? Does listening come easy for you? I hope these next couple of months offer us all a little more space to listen, enjoy creation, and connect deeply with one another and God. Be blessed, everyone.

- Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell



PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Elisha Smith

Youth Director

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Hello PCYG Students and Families!

Great work with the Cake Auction! It was such a fun way to come together and raise money for our Mission Trip.

PCYG has some exciting things happening this summer! Make sure you're registered to participate in **VBS** as either a counselor or CIT! We will also be having a June **PCYG event on June 12th** - watch the Facebook page for details!

We are having our monthly **PCYG event on July 10th, followed by a mission trip meeting!** We will be **headed to Milwaukee on July 17th, and returning on the 22nd.** Please contact me if you are not yet registered and would like to participate in this year's mission trip.

It has been a year of resilience and flexibility, thank you for your continued passion and excitement for PCYG. It is truly such a blessing to continue to work with each of you!



Dana Johnson

Preschool Director

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PEOPLES CHURCH PRESCHOOL

The Benefits of Nature Play for Children in the First Five Years and Beyond

Nature play is when children are provided with opportunities to engage in unstructured play in outdoor settings. Natural elements such as logs, rocks, and water, are featured; as opposed to conventional play equipment like manufactured teeter totters and swings.

One of the reasons natural materials are so beneficial is because they allow open-ended outcomes for children's play. Play becomes less repetitive and children are able to build on their knowledge of themselves and their environment when they use a variety of materials each day. Children get endless opportunities to practice critical thinking skills like planning, construction, pretend play, and problem solving when there aren't limitations placed on materials.

Besides building their minds, exposure to nature also allows children to build empathy for creatures great and small, to appreciate the beauty of the world around them, and to make meaningful and relevant connections to conservation and sustainability efforts that can be learned at a very young age.

Children that play outdoors are able to take safe risks that build their self-confidence. Outdoor play provides great opportunities for large body movements, exercise, and most importantly contributes to reduced stress and enhances mood.



Our Sunday School kids are looking forward to a fun summer!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We are looking forward to Vacation Bible School, once again at Woldumar Nature Center, June 13th-17th. It's sure to be an adventure filled week as we explore stories about the Bible and everything Woldumar has to offer! There may be a last minute opening - contact Kathi Mitchell as soon as possible if you have a child that would like to attend. Thank you to everyone who has donated to help make this a great week for our kids!

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School continues this summer, hopefully still offering multiple classes! Our students really enjoy being together for Bible stories, crafts, and games. It is a joy to hear their enthusiasm and outlook on our lessons. We are always looking for our classes to grow. If you know of a young child that would like to attend, let Kathi know when they'll be at church and she will be sure to give them a special welcome!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



Kathi Mitchell

Children's Education Director

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Win Stebbins



Ben Drobney



Elizabeth Raduazo



Bobbi Kilty



Lexa Bell

James Bell



Liz Burpee

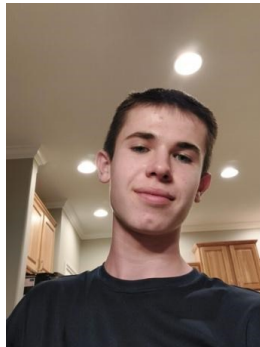


Stephanie Klein

WELCOME CONFIRMANDS!



Brendon Wells



Zach Wells



Piper Williams



Xander Guthaus



Quincy Guthaus



Abby Lindley

UPCOMING EVENTS

Let's take a ROAD TRIP

When: June 22nd, 10 a.m.

What:



Where: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum, Grand Rapids

Cost: \$15 for adults, \$13 for seniors, \$9 for children

Please RSVP by June 5th
by emailing dherrell@thepeopleschurch.com

EMERGE:

A COMMUNITY FOR TWENTY &
THIRTY SOMETHINGS

MONDAYS AT
7PM

A time for conversation and
fun in a safe and inclusive
community.

Details in the weekly bulletin/on FB

7 p.m. on June 8, 15, 22, 29

Stories your mama never
told you about

Bible Study series with Pastor
Devon held over Zoom

Summer Birthdays

(Over 80)

- Tony Bauer
- David Blair
- Martha Bristor
- Connie Close
- Mary Culham
- Jim Dalley
- Alan DeGraw
- Sandy Draggoo
- Marilyn Harding
- Larry Hill
- Jeanette Minkel
- Charles Moore
- Valerie Nilson
- Terrell Oetzel
- Helen Ramsey
- Rod Reed
- Dee Toth
- Rosemary Walker
- William Walworth
- Nancy Wilson

Summer

Anniversaries

- Bill & Joan Dailey (60 years)
- Gary & Cindy Coopes (50 years)
- Jim & Cindy Walker (50 years)
- Ed & Vicki Shannon (30 years)
- Alan & Margee Canady (25 years)
- Matt & Allison Farra (25 years)
- Brian & Julie Laxton (25 years)
- Marc & Stacy Mellor (25 years)
- Michael & Betty Moore (25 years)

FINE ARTS COMMITTEE

The Fine Arts Committee invites you to visit their latest exhibit, "**Your Art's Desire**". The exhibit features the work of **Susan Smith**, a Michigan artist with an enthusiasm for color, watercolor and experimental media. The multi-media exhibit features 46 pieces from Susan's collection and includes watercolors, acrylics, reverse acrylic painting non lass, mixed-media collage, alcohol inks on Yupo and ceramic tiles, mosaic glass, and a phun phone. It is on display throughout the halls bordering the church Sanctuary and in the Thomsen case across from the Library. Additional pieces can be found in the kiosk adjacent to the Church Office.

Susan's work is sparked by a creative process that embraces a sense of fun, robust color, and beauty found in nature. She discovered her artistic talents later in life, when challenged by her husband, Doug, to decoratively paint one of his hand-built tables. She responded, "I can't do that, I can't even do stick figures!" His response: "So don't do stick figures." Susan found that applying vibrant colors to his table was exciting, even exhilarating. Inspired to learn more, she set out to build her artistic skills and subsequently spent 20 years taking art lessons and attending workshops, including a stint in Italy. She became hooked on the creative process and particularly enjoys trying new, innovative media. "I work in oils, acrylics, alcohol inks, art resins, watercolor and collage." In addition to painting, she enjoys working with mosaic glass, especially creating functional garden art.



The exhibit was installed by members of the **Fine Arts Committee** — Suzanne Mills, Jan Reed, Susan Nowicki, Sue Patterson, Mary Liechty, and Nancy Wilson, with the assistance of Friend of the Committee, Kelton Reed. The exhibit, which is open to the public free of charge, will be on display through August 18. Hours for viewing are Monday through Friday (10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) and Sunday (9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.). You may pick up a catalog for the exhibit in the NW entrance of the church.

THE READING PEOPLE

The Reading People will meet on June 16th in the Robertson Room from 1:30 to 3 p.m. to discuss *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. Tracy Dudley is our discussion leader. We invite you to join us!

TPC VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SOUTHSIDE COMMUNITY KITCHEN

The Peoples Church is committed to providing volunteers for the Southside Community Kitchen on the third Tuesday of each month, and has been for years. Volunteer servers from our congregation are still needed on August 16th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Galilee Baptist Church on Reo Road. If you would like to help out, contact Jan Perron at jrperron@comcast.net. For more information about the Southside Community Kitchen and the wonderful work they do, visit southsidecommunitykitchen.org. Your time is greatly appreciated!



EDGEWOOD VILLAGE PARTNERSHIP



Thanks to all of you who volunteered to join us at Edgewood Village last month! Currently, we need a few more volunteers to work in the garden on June 22 and July 20. Please call Cheryl Leece at 517-410-1313 if you are available and willing.

In May, we hosted the Scholar's Banquet where we celebrated the Scholar's Program graduating Seniors! Congratulations to Ishamael Jabar, who will be attending Michigan State University to study Marketing, and Boazie Cadieux, who will study Computer Design and development at Ferris State University. Both of these young men have been part of the Scholar's Program since sixth grade!

Working together to build our partnership is our Design Team, which includes Chairperson Rev. Barbara Scott; Edgewood Village Board President, Tom Schaberg (from the Presbyterian Church of Okemos); and a dedicated group of Peoples people including Nancy Danhof, Emily Anderson, Abby Barr, Cheryl Leece, John Stroup, Paul Howard, Kim Gools, Val Nilson, Bob Steinkamp, and Mary Anne Larzelere. Any of these folks will gladly tell you about the work we are doing, and how you might be involved.

EARTH STEWARDSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Michigan's Bottle Recycling Law 40-year Anniversary

This year, the Michigan Recycling Coalition (MRC) is celebrating its 40th year of milestones. MRC is committed to fostering sustainability for businesses, the government, nonprofits, and individuals by advancing resource reuse and recovery.

In MRC's 40-year history, networks and partnerships have been built to collect and share recycling data, convened stakeholders to evaluate and advocate recycling policy, conducted research, promoted recycling and reuse solutions, and tackled problems in the recycling supply chain. MRC facilitates learning opportunities, shares information, tools, resources, and guidance to help local governments and businesses expand their resource recovery and meet sustainability goals. Managing our natural resources benefits the environment, the economy, and our communities.

Although many challenges remain, Michigan has come a long way since 1976, when the era of recycling started. Here are the highlights:

- 1976 – **Bottle Bill** was approved by voters on November 2.
- 1978 – Bottle deposit law was implemented December 3.
- 1982 – Michigan Recycling Coalition was formed.
- 1988 – Natural Resources Commission adopted the 1988 Solid Waste Policy and waste hierarchy.
- 1988 – Voters approved a Quality of Life bond, \$150 million for public and private sector grants and loans to reduce solid waste disposal.

UNDIE SUNDAY



Announcing: the return of Undie Sundays! Again this summer, Community Engagement will be sponsoring the collection of NEW underwear (preferably underpants and socks) for school age children grades K-12. Donations may be left in the Red Kids Stuff basket located at the Welcome Center. Collection dates begin June 19th and end August 14th, at which time the donations will be delivered to the Love Clothing Closet at Judson Memorial Baptist Church. Again, thank you all for a long history of enthusiastic response to this need.

SUNDAY MORNING UPDATE

We will be worshipping at 9:30 a.m. from July 3rd to September 4th. This will provide some relief from parking congestion and prepare us (we hope!) to return to a schedule of two services (8:30/10:30) in the fall.

The next *Portal* deadline for the August issue is July 15th.
Submit content to zahob@thepeopleschurch.com

JUNE/JULY 2022 PORTAL

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