

ON MY MIND

One of the last columns Erma Bombeck wrote before she died at the age of 69 was entitled “If I had my life to live over...” A friend had asked her that question and Bombeck had first said no, she would not change a thing. But later, she had another answer. She wrote:

If I had my life to live over again I would have dusted less and listened more...I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded...I would have eaten less cottage cheese and more ice cream.

Bombeck’s words remind me of a dear friend in Ohio who was asked on her 90th birthday if she had any sage advice to share. She said, “Life is short. Use the good china.”

Dust less. Listen more. Use the good china.

I’m thinking about these things because I lost a close friend in July. Hans was a set designer, a sailor, a carpenter, and a chef. Most of all, he was the kind of person who brought joy to everything he did. He was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2014, and told he might live a couple of years. Hans surprised everyone by living for nine years.

When Hans entered hospice, his wife called me and asked if I could visit. How could I possibly go? I was very busy, and there were many pressing engagements, things I was supposed to do, programs I was supposed to plan. But I heard a voice in my head say, “Go.” So I dropped everything and drove to Cleveland. What a blessing it was! We talked about cooking, and his last trip to Maine. We talked about his family, his wife and his 16-year-old son. We talked about his faith, his memorial service, and what the next life might be like. I asked if he had any words of advice he would offer to people. Hans said, “Life is wonderful - if you pay attention.” He died three days later at the age of 62.

Dust less. Listen more. Use the good china. Pay attention.

The lesson I learned this summer is that life really is short. If I am lucky enough to live a long life, I will suffer the loss of many dear friends and family members. The very idea breaks my heart. But rather than ignore such morbid thoughts, maybe I need to pay attention. Maybe I need to set my phone down and be fully present to the people I am with. Maybe I should show how much I care by inviting people over and using the good china. Maybe I should take the time to listen deeply – not just to what others are saying, but to what Jesus is saying through them. Maybe I need to drop everything to see a friend one last time because loving others and being loved by them is as close as I’m going to get to God in this life.

Dust less. Listen more. Use the good china. Pay attention. And do not waste a chance to love.

Blessings!
Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe

FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Although I'm no longer in school, I feel some first-day-of-school jitters as fall approaches — This coming semester will be my first leading Peoples Church Campus Ministry.

As I've watched September inch closer in my calendar, my brain has been swirling with excitement and ideas for how we can creatively and authentically engage students. We're returning to some tried and true programming and leaving room for new ideas to grow in this ministry. As in years past, we'll host our weekly lunch each Sunday after church. We're also going to use Thursday nights to host a rotation of programming aimed at providing students with opportunities to connect, relax and grow their faith.

In preparation for the start of the semester, church staff and volunteers have been hard at work making sure everything is ready to go when students arrive back on campus. Our biggest project has been cleaning and updating the campus lounge area. It is amazing what a few coats of paint and some elbow grease can accomplish! If you're looking for a way to help out Campus Ministry, there's still time to purchase some of the items on our campus ministry wish list!

Please keep students in your prayers as the fall approaches. As always, thank you for your investment in this journey. I am grateful and full of hope as we head toward a new semester.

Yours in Christ,
-Haley Hansen

THE PEOPLES CHURCH 2023 WOMEN'S RETREAT

You will not want to miss this year's women's retreat at the **St. Francis Retreat Center in DeWitt Friday, September 22 and Saturday, September 23!** Join us for conversation, fellowship, and worship. This year's presenter is Shannon Craigo-Snell, who will lead a conversation about 'Serving God With Our Whole Selves.' The cost is \$120 single occupancy or \$105 double occupancy, which covers the program, four meals, and all accommodations. If you would like to register, or have questions about the retreat, please contact Beth Lundy by emailing blundy@thepeopleschurch.com. Scholarships are available upon request.



Shannon Craigo-Snell is a systematic Christian theologian. Since 2011, she has served as professor of theology at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, where she teaches Masters and Doctor of Ministry students as they engage in multiple forms of ministry. Before arriving in Louisville, she was associate professor of Religious Studies at Yale University, where she taught undergraduates, masters students, and Ph.D. students. In all of her work, Shannon Craigo-Snell brings the wisdom of theology into conversation with contemporary issues so that each might teach and learn from the other. Embracing collaborative learning, she has co-authored one book with a pastor, co-authored another book with an activist, and co-authored articles with a liturgical theologian. Her areas of interest focus on feminist and Reformed theologies, theology and theater, anti-racism, and ecclesiology. Beneath these subjects is the larger need to rethink what it means to be human together today. In 2014, Shannon Craigo-Snell was

ordained as a minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Since then she has been invited to teach workshops and lead worship in churches across the country.

THE PEOPLES CHURCH SANCTUARY CHOIR

Come sing in Sanctuary Choir this fall!

We are gearing up for another fantastic year in the music ministry. We would like to invite all singers to join us on Thursday nights at 7 p.m. for Sanctuary Choir rehearsal.

Here's what we do: (1) We laugh (a lot), (2) we work hard on the music, but we have fun doing it, (3) we are a tremendous support group for each other, (4) we contribute meaningfully to each week's service.

We need all singers, but especially men! If you are a tenor or a bass please consider joining. If you are a soprano or an alto, or even if you are unsure, we can find a place for you.

You don't have to be at every rehearsal and every Sunday morning. Our choir members lead busy lives; more singers makes for more freedom.

Please come and give it a try this fall! Our first rehearsal is on September 7.

-Jonathan Reed,
Sanctuary Choir Director

EARTH STEWARDSHIP

Recent Canadian Wildfire Smoke Increases Air Quality Awareness

In June, heavy smoke infiltrated the State of Michigan from several Canadian wildfires. Air quality alerts were issued by both the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy as well as the US Environmental Protection Agency. Wildfire smoke consists of fine particulate matter, which is measured by air monitors around the state. The data is posted to www.deqmiar.org and www.epa.gov/airnow. US EPA Wildfires and Smoke map <https://fire.airnow.gov>.

The particulate data is displayed using the Air Quality Index or AQI. The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a color-coded way for residents to see what the levels of some types of air pollution are in their area. The higher the AQI, the worse the air quality is and the more cause for concern. Live color-coded air quality conditions that indicate if air quality is healthy (green) or unhealthy (yellow, orange, red and purple), along with steps to protect your health, can be found at the AirNow website and mobile app. Residents can also sign up for alerts through the EnviroFlash system EnviroFlash - Sign-Up. This free subscriber system allows you to choose the area you would like to get alerts for, and it will send alerts directly to email or send a text message.

-From Earth Stewardship Committee

AQI Basics for Ozone and Particle Pollution			
Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Green	Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Maroon	Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Hello All!

Here is the latest from Children's Christian Ed at The Peoples Church!

Sunday School: Summer Sunday School has been going very well. In June and July, students engaged in lessons on different names for God and well-known stories from the Bible. A fun craft, game, or both accompanied each lesson! For example, students made prayer cubes and catch Jonah-in-the-Whale cup toys. They played BINGO, Go Fish, and Matching, all with cards tailored to the lesson. Upcoming lessons in August and September will include Daniel and the Lion, The Year of the Jubilee, The Passover, Festival of Weeks and more!

Sunday School Teachers needed!: Sunday School is the culmination of work by many people, but especially by our volunteer Sunday School teachers who dedicate their time and energy one to two times a month to teach a lesson and lead activities. We always need more teachers! And don't worry, you don't need to have any teaching experience. I provide all the lessons (including a script!) and activities, so it's a pretty easy, low-stress gig! Please reach out to me at ahayes-murray@thepeopleschurch.com if you can help out with Sunday School, even if it's just once a month!

VBS 2023: VBS 2023 was a success! It took place at the church from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. The kiddos put on a fabulous 10-minute play featuring two choreographed songs at the end of the week. A huge thank you to Angela Biedenbender for directing that performance! A giant shout out to our other volunteers as well. VBS is made possible because of them as well as our generous sponsors! During the week, the kids did many crafts, science experiments, games, and mission projects. We even went on a trip to Potter Park Zoo and had an afternoon of water play. If your child attended VBS or even if they didn't and you have any feedback or ideas to share for VBS 2024, please reach out to me! I'd love to hear from you. See some photos from the week below and on the next page!

Looking ahead: I've been brainstorming ideas for children's programs and activities to do in the upcoming months and am going to be sitting down with Rev. Shawnthea to set some dates soon. I'm hoping we will be able to do Trunk or Treat again, a Spring Ball, Stay-and-Play Sundays, Valentines and Easter outreach projects, and more!

I am really enjoying my role as Children's Ed Director! Thank you to everyone who supports our programming! We appreciate you!

Blessings,
-Alexa





PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

The Peoples Church Youth Group has had a full summer, so far! In the last couple of months, PCYG had several fun events including an overnight Lock-In and a 'black tie' going away party for PCYG volunteers Jordan Holmes and Chris Castle. PCYG has also participated in a few service projects, which included a Sunday brunch meal for the church and a visit to Allen Neighborhood Center. See some glimpses of PCYG's recent activities in the photos below!

PCYG is going to Michigan's Adventure on August 5! If you are a teen, or know a teen interested in going on this trip, please send me an email to esmith@thepeopleschurch.com to reserve a spot. I still need a driver for this trip! If you are interested and available to drive, please send me an email. Our driver will have a free ticket to the park and an option for a free ticket for a non-youth group child, if needed.

Keep an eye on the church bulletin, weekly Peoples Church E-Blast, and our next Portal Newsletter for more PCYG updates, events, and announcements!

-Elisha Smith



NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS

American Baptist Churches-USA Elects New President

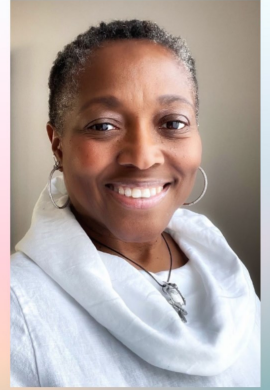


Rev. Nikita McCallister was elected the new ABC-USA president on June 25 at the denomination's Biennial Mission Summit in San Juan, Puerto Rico! Her two-year term will begin January 2024.



United Church of Christ Elects New General Minister & President

During the UCC General Synod, June 30 - July 4, held in Indianapolis, Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson was elected as the denomination's first woman and first black woman General Minister and President.



"Today, United Church of Christ, we created a first together. It won't be the last first." -Rev. Thompson

Shalom Retreat

a wellness retreat

October 6-8, 2023

at Restoration Ministries of Greater Cleveland, Inc.

140 Richmond Road, Euclid, Ohio 44143

Rev. Dr. Christine Smith, senior pastor

American Baptist
Women's
MINISTRIES

Our Shalom Retreat is an unforgettable journey of transformation that will leave you feeling refreshed and inspired.



Guest Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Martina Moore



Sunday Worship Preacher &
Workshop Leader
Rev. Dr. Gina Jacobs-Strain



Workshop Leader
Ania Norori



Workshop Leader
Erin Davis

Register at www.abwomensministries.org/events or call 610-768-2288 for more information.



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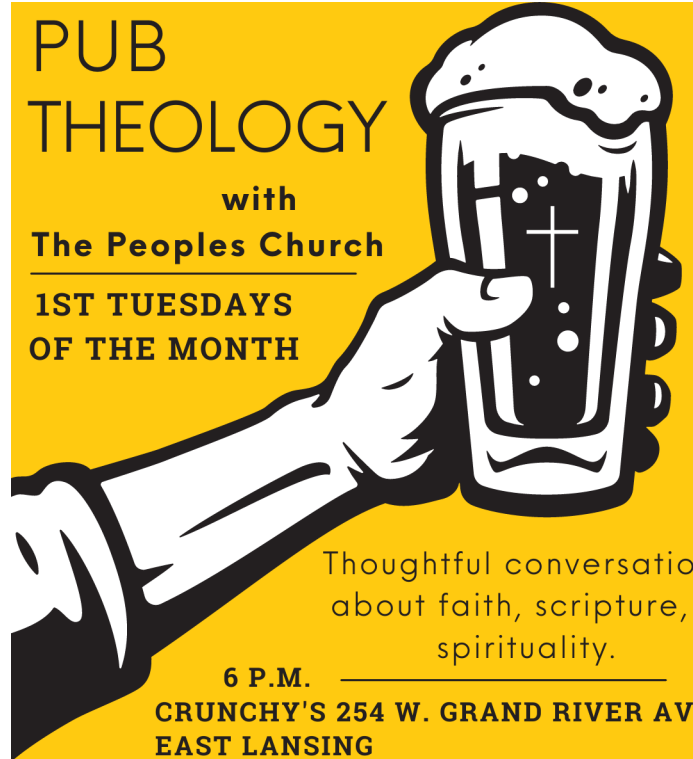
VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY

Voices of the Community" commences again September 10 at 9:30 a.m. with an incredible speaker, Johnny Agar from Rockford, Michigan. Johnny was born with Cerebral Palsy, but has achieved many goals in his 28 years with the help of his family and "Team Agar." Johnny was featured on CBS twice within the last few months, and he and his father have been invited to compete in the Hawaiian Ironman 2024. Johnny has also written a book entitled 'The Impossible Mile: The Power of Living One Step at a Time.'

Please invite your friends and family to join us in The Robertson Room September 10 to hear about Johnny Agar's incredible story.

PUB THEOLOGY

with
The Peoples Church
1ST TUESDAYS
OF THE MONTH



Thoughtful conversations
about faith, scripture, &
spirituality.

6 P.M.
CRUNCHY'S 254 W. GRAND RIVER AVE.
EAST LANSING

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION



The Peoples Church Presbyterian missionary is Tracy King-Ortega. Her title is 'Mission Coworker serving in Central America; El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica.'

Through partnering, she discerns with each country particular projects that assist their needs. Her second role is to support mission coworkers within each country and to be a resource for U.S.

Presbyterians already in mission.

Having been in her position for sixteen years, Tracy is blessed with being in relationship with churches, seminaries, and development organizations throughout Central America. Tracy states, "Their work is testimony to the depths of despair and signs of hope in a region closely intertwined with our own. Walking with them in their faith journey shows the way God is ever-present in this world, providing us with opportunities to build God's kingdom together."



It's not too early to think about joining BELL CHOIR!

The Peoples Church has two bell choirs that meet beginning in the fall! For adults we have the Clarion Ringers, which meets Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. If you can read music and like to laugh, please join us! For youth grades 6-12 we have the Coppertone Ringers; rehearsal time to be determined.

SUMMER WORSHIP

at
The Peoples Church

One service at 9:30 AM
In the Sanctuary

Memorial Day Weekend through
Labor Day Weekend



All are welcome

August Break!!!



During the month of August, we are taking a break from our Wednesday evening community dinners! Join us again Wednesday, September 13 when they resume!

Dr. Monroe will still be hosting her dance aerobics Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.