



Portal

January 2024

Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe,
Senior Pastor
Rev. Haley Hansen,
Associate Pastor

ON MY MIND

The Shape of Things to Come

Every New Year's Eve, I take a moment and reflect back on the closing year. I mark the high points and the low points, marveling at all that has happened in twelve months' time. Then I think about the coming year, about the things I know will happen and wonder about the surprises that might be in store for me. It is exciting to consider the possibilities.

As I think about the coming year for The Peoples Church, I see the same mix of predictable events and exciting possibilities. Let me share a few of the things I see.

On Sunday, January 21, we will have a congregational meeting to discuss and vote on the proposed capital campaign. No matter how the vote turns out, it will mark a new chapter in the life of the church. I hope you will all come to the meeting and be part of this historic decision! If you have any questions or want to know more about the proposed campaign, read the article inside.

In February, our wonderful Communications Specialist, Adam Droscha, will be taking a new position as the pastor of the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Charlotte, MI. We are sorry to see Adam leave, but excited for this next chapter in his life. In January, we will be searching for the next great Communications Specialist, and we hope to have someone in place before Adam departs. Join us in wishing Adam God's blessings in this new call!

This last December, Dr. Jonathan Reed let us know he will be retiring as our Music Director at the end of the program year. Jonathan has been at The Peoples Church for 31 years, and we will miss him. On Sunday, May 12, we will celebrate Dr. Jonathan Reed's retirement with a special worship service and a big party after church. (More details will be coming in February.) The good news is that Jonathan recommended a talented in-coming doctoral candidate to be his replacement. We interviewed him, and he's wonderful! Michael Huey-Jones will begin his tenure at The Peoples Church in May.

There is one more change I want to mention - I am moving to an eleven-month schedule. I made a proposal to the Personnel Committee, that they reduce my salary by 13%, which would allow us to improve the compensation for other key staff people without dramatically increasing the overall Personnel budget. My goal is to keep our exceptional staff in place so we can maintain the momentum we've built up over the last couple of years. It just means I will be taking a month off in the summer, leaving Rev. Haley Hansen to run things in my absence.

As we contemplate the coming year, I hope you will join me in praying for God's guidance and wisdom. The Spirit is at work in this church and there is so much we can do if we follow the path God has set out for us!

May your 2024 be blessed and bright!



Yours in faith,
-Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe

FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

I tend to put a lot of stock into the new year. I am a resolutions person. I like to plan ahead, set goals. These goals, of course, change over time, but usually they go something like: eat better, read more, travel more, watch less TV, exercise more, eat less sugar and on and on and on. I am, if anything, ambitious and perhaps a little naive about my own will power.

In addition to planning ahead, I also like to use the start of a new year to reflect on the past one. As 2023 comes to an end, I'm feeling incredibly grateful for the previous 365 days. I can't say that's always the case for me. As I reflect back, I'm reminded of the wisdom of Ecclesiastes; "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

There is a sense of fullness to each year: great joy and sorrow and excitement and let downs. Ecclesiastes gets at the larger truth that living a life of faith can be complicated and that everything in life — the good and the bad, the easy and the difficult, the joyful and the painful — has its time.

We know this. We know that life isn't always wonderful or easy, but we also know that it's not all bad either. Ecclesiastes reminds us of the fullness of life. The important thing to remember, especially at the start of another year, is that God is with us no matter what life brings. That's what Christmas is all about. That's why we celebrate the incarnation every single year around this time; We need to be reminded that Jesus showed up in our mess.

The Good News at the start of another year is that God is with us. And God is with us not just when we are disciplined and keep track of our resolutions. God is not simply with us when we succeed or when we experience joy. But God is with us in our sorrow, in our failures and losses.

Our task at the start of another year isn't to come up with a 10-point plan on how to become perfect people. Nor is it our job to just throw our hands in the air and say "I give up." Rather our job as people of faith is simply to pay attention, to keep our ears open for the voice of God in the year ahead, come what may.

"There is a season for everything. A time for every matter under the heavens." So it will be in 2024. Whether you are barely scraping by at the start of this year or you have your resolutions proudly taped on your refrigerators, I pray you know and celebrate the love, presence and call of God all around you.

Yours in Christ,
-Rev. Haley Hansen



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Hello and Happy New Year!

SUNDAY SCHOOL: In December, Sunday School students made Christmas cards for Burcham residents as well as the families that the church supported for the holidays. They also learned about Jesus' birth, and Mary and Joseph's joy in welcoming God's son on Earth. January's classes included lessons about the Magi, Jesus' Baptism, and calling the Disciples. Students have continued to practice the Lord's Prayer each Sunday as well.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PARTY: On December 17, we held our annual Sunday School Christmas party in the Snider Social Hall. We did an ornament craft, chatted, danced, sang together, opened snow-themed gifts, and ate yummy snacks!

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT SUCCESS!: This year's Christmas pageant "The Case of the Reluctant Inn-keeper" was a huge success! Fifteen Sunday school students and three PCYG members participated under the leadership of the fabulous Mrs. Elizabeth Reed. The pageant took place in front of the congregation during the 10:30 a.m. service, and our young actors and actresses did a phenomenal job. We also held our after-pageant cookie party. Many pageant families and congregation members contributed and enjoyed delicious treats. A special guest (Santa) was also in attendance! The pageant was the work of so many people, like Mrs. Reed and the performers, but also the pageant parents who volunteer their time for different tasks. Thank you very much to them for all their help and support!



LOOKING AHEAD: We are very excited about the programs we have planned for the year! Please mark your calendars for the following:

Valentine's Outreach Cards & Care Packages: Starting in January, Sunday School students will be making Valentine cards to include in care packages that get delivered to elderly or homebound members of our church. We will need volunteers to make baked goods and to deliver the care packages the week of February 12. If you are interested in helping with this, please contact me via email at ahayes-murray@hpsk12.net, or by phone, (616) 755-8874.

Kids Business Fair: On Sunday, March 17 following the 10:30 a.m. service, our church's youngest entrepreneurs will be selling their handmade creations. We anticipate baked goods, crafts, and more for sale! Registration will be required for kids wishing to sell at the event.

LOOKING BACK: As we close out this year, I can't help but reflect on everything that we have done in Children's CE: a family game night organized by Kathi, several holiday outreach projects for Burcham residents, the Christmas pageant, VBS at the church, and so much more. Our kids had so many opportunities to build community with each other and come closer to God. I can't wait to see what 2024 has in store for us!

VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY

On Sunday, January 7 at 9:30 a.m. in the Robertson Room, Professor Kirk Dormer, MSU Theatre Faculty member, will present about the recent art display in the church halls and kiosk. With mannequins in period attire, miniature displays, and set props, this exhibit tells a fascinating story.

Peace and Blessings,
-Alexa Hayes-Murray, Children's Ed. Director

PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Hello PCYG Students and Families!

I hope that you've had a restful Christmas break and are feeling rejuvenated as we enter into the new year! Even as the cold settles in, my hope for each of you is that you continue to find warmth and joy in our PCYG and TPC community, and in the friendships and relationships you've built.

This month we are doing a series called "New Year Exploration" where we will have guest speakers coming in to speak to us about different topics or to share new skills with us! I have lined up a series of people from our church and the community who are excited to come and share their special talents and knowledge with us!



If you know any middle or high school students interested in joining a great youth group, please reach out to me via email at esmith@thepeopleschurch.com to learn more about getting them connected!

-Elisha Smith, Youth Director

EDGEWOOD VILLAGE CHRISTMAS GIFT PROJECT

I would like to extend a deep and heartfelt thank you to all who participated in the Edgewood Village Gift project this year. Your participation allowed The Peoples Church to provide 134 kids with a gift. These kids represented 57 families who live at Edgewood Village. It gives me such joy to coordinate this Christmas outreach activity each year. I loved hearing the stories from members who purchased gifts and shared pictures of what they purchased. Thank you again to all the shoppers, financial supporters, and delivery team. We make a great team!!

-Emily Anderson

WELCOME MINISTRY

Interested in learning about The Peoples Church? All are welcome to join a guided tour with plenty of great information on Sunday, January 7 immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. To participate in the tour, meet at the front of the sanctuary. Tours usually take 45-60 minutes. For more information, contact via email our Welcome Ministry co-chairs, Bob Steinkamp at bsteinkamp@hotmail.com, or Julie Pierce at juliep2315@gmail.com.

If you'd like to learn about becoming a member of The Peoples Church, join Rev. Dr. Monroe and several ministry representatives in the Centennial Room for a New Members' Class immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, February 11. Classes usually last 60-90 minutes. Our new members' classes are merely informational, and do not obligate you to become a member. To register for the new members' class, contact the church Membership Coordinator, Beth Lundy, by calling (517) 908-4453, or via email at blundy@thepeopleschurch.com. Childcare is provided during the class only upon request.

PEOPLES CHURCH PRESCHOOL

The Preschool had a busy and successful year. In October a renewal of our National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation was achieved through 2028. To prepare for the validation visit and inspection, the staff prepares program and classroom portfolios for nearly a year in preparation, every five years. The Preschool was originally nationally accredited in 1998.

Other accolades received in 2023 include winning the Best of the Best award in the Preschool category for preschools in the East Lansing area and winning Best of the Best in the Child Care category for the greater Lansing area for a second year in a row. The Preschool also received Nature Explore Recertification in September from the Natural Start Alliance for our 8th year. We were the third preschool in the state to achieve this certification, and are still one of a small group to achieve this distinction in Michigan.

Preschool had an increasing presence in Community Involvement and Advocacy. Some of these events involve hosting nursing students from Michigan State University and hosting and touring two groups of early childhood educators from Taiwan. The World Wildlife Federation and Nottingham Nature Nook remain our favorite organizations to support. We were able to again raise \$500 through our annual Penny Drive to support local orphaned and injured animals at the Nook. In addition, the Preschool supports a yearly personal needs drive called Movers for Moms, organized by Two Men and a Truck.



The three Preschool Administrators attended a meeting regarding upcoming legislation for potential funding for child care centers and plans to remain involved as more opportunities present themselves. The Preschool worked with the Council for a Strong America and the media to host a group of speakers including Director Dana Johnson, Sheriff Wrigglesworth and other community activists in January. The purpose of the meeting was to advocate for high quality early childhood programs, fair compensation for child care professionals, and to highlight the need for federal funding for child care. The director now serves on the Capital Area Child Care Coalition to keep updated on early childhood developments and to participate in the creation of an apprenticeship program.

Preschool Advisory Committee: Special Thanks to this year's advisory committee volunteers for sharing their wisdom and for spear-heading so many wonderful teacher appreciation events: Lauren Azevedo, Katie Cramer, Jordyn Greeson, Phyllis Grummon (Elder), Lauren Glass, Jenny Harvey, Tucker Keatley, Michaela Norman, Rita Subhedar, and Jeff Waldmann.

The Staff Full time Lead Teachers: Thomas Bond, Laura Corr, Jessica Dack, Jessica Derby, Beth Detzler, Taurie Konkel, Michaela Krohn, Molly Lemke, Julie Pitsonis, Alison Wieland, Mikayla Williams, and Katie Reinecke.

Full Time Lead Assistants: Alaa Bairm, Salma Bairm, and Wenlin Lao.

Administrators: Director, Dana Johnson (29 years), Assistant Director, Michelle Clingenpeel (20 years), and Office Administrator, Lindsey Bramlet (10 years)

-Dana Johnson, Preschool Director

EARTH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Our church, under the leadership of the Earth Stewardship Committee, joined with other faith communities in the area to support the installation of rooftop solar panels on Lansing's first affordable all-electric solar home.

The solar project was completed and celebrated in June by members of the Capital Area Chapter of Michigan Interfaith Power and Light, which raised over \$20,000 to fund the cost of the 7 kw rooftop solar system. The potential purchaser of the home had to meet certain income eligibility requirements, and the house sold in November. The Peoples Church is one of about 15 houses of worship who are active with the CAC.



The project was coordinated by the Ingham County Land Bank, led by Executive Director Roxanne Case. Ms. Case appeared at one of our worship services and at a Sunday morning presentation to share more information about the solar home.

Members of our congregation also participated in several advocacy events at the state capitol in support of policies to address climate concerns in Michigan. Probably the most important new law that was passed empowers the state's Public Service Commission to consider additional "social justice concerns and impacts on energy sourcing and consumption" when reviewing rates and operational changes proposed by utilities.

Earth Stewardship has discussed plans for 2024 that are likely to include our continued engagement in community climate events and projects and maintaining our partnership with MI IPL's local chapter. We welcome others to join our leadership efforts to bring attention to the different ways we can care for God's creation within our congregation and community. You can contact Susan Kilmer via email at sdkilmer@aol.com, or Marc Lyon at mblyon1@gmail.com for more information.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Exciting days are ahead for The People's Church Capital Campaign. All of the presentations are finished. It was exciting to see all the renderings that showed the proposed future of our church building. The Committee has worked very hard to prepare the church for our next step.

On Sunday, January 21, 2024, a special meeting of the congregation of The Peoples Church will be held after the 10:30 a.m. service. This special meeting will be for the purpose of voting on the proposed Capital Campaign.

Those who will be out of town, or are physically unable to attend this congregational meeting on January 21 can pick up a 'Request for Absentee Ballot' at the church Welcome Desk, or have one mailed upon request. Those who are subscribed to the church's weekly email newsletters also have the option to scroll down in those emails to the Capital Campaign announcement and print out their own ballot request at their convenience. Once ballot requests are collected, ballots will be mailed immediately. Signed and returned ballots must be postmarked by January 11 to be counted.

To learn more about the proposed Capital Campaign and view renderings of its projects, please visit www.thepeopleschurch.com/capital-campaign-1.





EVERY
WEDNESDAY

5:30 P.M.
SNIDER
SOCIAL HALL

COMMUNITY MEAL: 5:30 P.M.
DANCE AEROBICS: 6 P.M.
BIBLE STUDY: 6:30 P.M.

PUB THEOLOGY

with
The Peoples Church

**1ST TUESDAYS
OF THE MONTH**
JAN. 2 | 6:30 PM



Thoughtful conversations
about faith, scripture, &
spirituality.

**CRUNCHY'S 254 W. GRAND RIVER AVE.
EAST LANSING**

The Knitting People

The Knitting People will meet January 25 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Robertson Room. Please join us to knit baby blankets, prayer shawls, hats, mittens, and slippers to share with our community. We have needles, yarn, and patterns, and we welcome your willing hands! Questions? Email Mary Anne Larzelere at malarz@aol.com.

The Reading People

The Reading People will meet in the Robertson Room on January 18 at 1 p.m. for lunch, and at 1:30 will discuss 'Kabul Beauty School' by Deborah Rodriguez, a memoir of a gutsy American woman who goes to Afghanistan to help women there. Liz Reed will lead the discussion. Please join us! For more information about finding a copy of the book, email Mary Anne Larzelere at malarz@aol.com

FOLLOW TPC ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



@TPCEASTLANSING



THE PEOPLES CHURCH
OF EAST LANSING



CHICs (Connected Hearts In Christ)

CHICs is back on Thursday, January 11! CHICs will meet in the Robertson Room on the 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., through May. CHICs is a women's group that meets for devotionals, discussion, and fellowship. To learn more about CHICs, please email Traci Dudley at tracidudley@gmail.com, or Susan Godfrey at s.godfrey@sbcglobal.net.



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