



Portal

March 2024

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

ON MY MIND

The Power of the Table

Last month, I had the pleasure of hosting two New Members' dinner parties. It's part of our process for joining the church: first, you attend a class that explains the nuts and bolts of The Peoples Church, our history, our beliefs, and our governance; then you come have dinner at my house. The class is interesting and informative - but the dinner is just fun!

Neil and I love hosting these dinner parties. There is something special about sitting down to a meal with other people, especially people you've just met. Sharing a meal creates a relaxed atmosphere where people can talk, laugh and get to know one another. That's why New Members' dinners are an important part of joining the church. Once we've sat together at a table, it feels like we are connected.

In the ancient world, table fellowship was carefully arranged according to social position and status. Guests were seated in order of importance, starting at the right hand and left hand of the host. People without connections or power sat in the lesser seats, at the lower end of the table. Sharing a meal was a sign of hospitality, but you still maintained the hierarchy. The Pharisees went further, maintaining a purity of the table, meaning they would not eat with anyone who was unclean. This included tax collectors, lepers and anyone else who was deemed to be a sinner. Why? Because sharing food with a sinner could taint you by association. People were careful about who they invited to sit at their table.

It sounds a bit like Junior High, doesn't it? I remember anxiously standing in the lunch line, waiting to get my tray of food, scanning the lunchroom to see where my friends were sitting. Would there be room for me? What if my friends weren't there? Would someone else invite me to sit with them? The worst thing that could happen is if you asked if you could sit with a group of people, only to hear them say, "No, that seat is taken." Oh the drama.

Jesus knew the power of the table. He knew that inviting people to dine with him was a sign of acceptance, which is why he ate with the very people the Pharisees excluded. In Matthew's Gospel, we read the story of Jesus sitting down to dinner with "tax collectors and sinners" (Matthew 9:11-12). Luke's Gospel tells of the time Jesus called a tax collector to be a disciple and the man, Levi, not only rises up to follow Jesus, he throws a big feast for him. (Luke 5:27-28). Jesus also knew that gathering around a table was a great way to get to know one another. He does a lot of teaching around meals. He even reveals himself in a shared meal on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24:13-35)

The Peoples Church also knows the power of the table. Every Wednesday night, we throw a dinner party for anyone who wants to join us. People who are hungry and unhoused come to dinner. People who are successful and accomplished come to dinner. People who can barely read sit next people who have written books. Young and old, rich and poor, we sit at the same table and share a meal. We learn each other's names and hear each other's stories - and once we've sat together at a table, we feel connected. And every once in a while, I can see Jesus in our midst.

Come and join us for dinner one Wednesday night. We've saved a place for you.



Peace,

-Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe

FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

In the past few years, I'm proud to say that I've become a much better cook. While I have invested in sturdier sheet pans and sharper knives, I chalk up the vast majority of my improvement to lots of small changes. I've learned that little things make all the difference.

One of my best teachers in my improved cooking journey has been "Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking" by Persian-American chef Samin Nosrat. In the first part of the book, Nosrat exhorts the importance of salt in cooking. She recommends that home cooks taste chicken or vegetable broth before and after adding salt and notice the difference. I did this myself, and it was eye opening! A little bit of salt makes broth instantly brighter and more flavorful. There's power in a pinch of salt.

These days, when something goes awry in my tiny galley kitchen, I pay a lot more attention to the little things. Time and time, again I've found that would-be disasters are often saved by just a twist of lemon, a splash of cream or a pinch of salt. There's power in adding in a little more of a good thing.

While our culture tends to favor the big and flashy, in our own lives we know that it often takes just a little bit of something good to make things better. I know I've found this to be the case in my life. People have offered me little bits of grace in laundromats, hospital rooms and on every road trip I've ever been on. Over and over again, these small acts of kindness from strangers have made all the difference.

Furthermore, we all know the empowerment that comes from passing along these little graces to the rest of the world. And it doesn't take much. Sometimes it's as simple as offering to make a casserole for a new parent. Or it's writing a letter to a legislator. Or supporting a small local business. Or calling a friend who is having a hard time. Or teaching Sunday school. Or rolling pastry dough.

A dash of salt. A pinch of kindness. That's all God needs from us to further the Kingdom. Don't underestimate it. I know the world's problems often feel insurmountable and that it's difficult to read the newspaper most days, but we cannot let ourselves become cynical or apathetic. Bishop Desmond Tutu once said that "it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

Do not let indifference keep you from playing your part in God's miracles. Do not let the world tell you that you have nothing to offer. Because God can always work with the little bits that we give. As we approach the Easter season, may we find it within ourselves to offer the world a little bit more good, small as it might seem. At the end of the day, God can do great things with just a pinch.



EARTH STEWARDSHIP

Of the estimated 110 million metric tons of paper and cardboard waste tossed out across the United States in 2019, approximately 59% was landfilled and 38% was recycled. The rest was burned. This category of waste constitutes about a quarter of municipal solid waste and includes everything from newspapers and magazines to books and napkins, from junk mail and photographs to pizza boxes and milk cartons, according to a new analysis by researchers at the US Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL). The lost economic value is \$4 billion, based on three-year national average prices for recovered postconsumer paper and cardboard. That's almost the same amount communities spend to landfill paper and cardboard waste.

Excerpted from *Biocycle* January 30, 2024 Issue entitled: "Cardboard Loss in Landfills

Please join us for our services
during Holy Week



Palm Sunday

March 24, 2024

Chapel Service at 8:30

**Sanctuary Service at
10:30**

Maundy Thursday

March 28, 2024

**Traditional Service
with communion
7:00pm, Sanctuary**

Good Friday

March 29, 2024

**Service of Tenebrae
7:00pm, Sanctuary**

Easter Sunday

March 31, 2024

**Services 8:30 am and
10:30 am in the
Sanctuary**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

FAMILY GAME NIGHT (instead of the Kids Business Fair): After reviewing some survey feedback, it seems that March is not a great time to hold an event like the Kids Business Fair due to families being very busy with spring sports and events. So, we will hold a **FAMILY GAME NIGHT on March 16 from 6-7:30 pm in the Snider Social Hall**. Please RSVP by Sunday, March 10 to Alexa at ahayes-murray@thepeopleschurch.com or 616-755-8874. We will have snacks and some games, but please bring a game to share as well!

SUNDAY SCHOOL: In February, students focused on lessons about Jesus calling the disciples, Jesus calming the storm, and more. They did crafts, handouts, games, and movement activities as part of the lessons. They also made approximately 30 Valentine's day cards to accompany our Valentines day care packages. We are always looking for more Sunday School teachers. If you are interested, please contact Alexa.

CAROL CHOIR: Students are working on their song for their performance on March 10. Mrs. Reed is so proud of all their effort, attention, and participation. Mrs. Reed would love to have new carol choir members join in the fun! If your kindergarten-fifth grade student is interested, feel free to show up at 9:30 a.m. to the Carol Choir room on the third floor and see what it's all about!

VALENTINE'S DAY THANK YOU: I would like to give a huge thank you to all our families and congregation members who contributed cookies and/or their time to deliver our Valentine's Day care packages. Our home-bound congregants were very grateful, and I am so thankful to be part of the caring community we have here at The Peoples Church.

LOOKING AHEAD:

- **Kid Prom:** We will hold a Kid Prom on Saturday, April 20 from 6:00-7:30 pm. Kids and their grown up(s) are invited to dress fancy and attend this evening of dancing, treats, and fun. Registration will be required.
- **VBS 2024:** VBS will be at the church again this year and will take place June 24-28 from 9 am-3 pm each day. More details will be coming soon!

DONATIONS: I am currently working on organizing and restocking the Sunday School arts/crafts supply room and our pageant costume closet. Additionally, I'd like to update some of the toys available in our pre-school/ kindergarten classrooms. That being said, if you have any arts/crafts supplies, storage bins (any sizes), or games/toy sets that you are looking to give to a good cause, our Sunday School program might like to take them off your hands!

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

PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Hello PCYG Students and Families!

A *huge* thank you to Bob Steincamp and his wonderful guest presenters who came to teach and share their personal experiences with Autism with PCYG students in the month of February. We love learning and hearing different perspectives and experiences, and couldn't be more appreciative for the vulnerability and openness you shared with us! We are always looking to expand our knowledge and worldview, and love having guests come into our space to help us grow!

As we move towards Easter, we will be digging back into and wrapping up our "Monster's of the Bible" series, and exploring creative ways to express what we've read in the Bible as we have challenging conversations about some of the characters and creatures we discover. I'm really looking forward to exploring these chapters, and learning about some of the less known characters in the Bible!

Each month we have a D&D club, food outings, music (bells & choir), and different lessons that we explore! If you know any students in 6th-12th grade who might be interested in joining PCYG, please reach out to me at esmith@thepeopleschurch.com so I can get them connected!

Joyfully,
-Elisha Smith, Youth Director

PEOPLES CHURCH PRESCHOOL

Routines and Experiences are the foundations of our days in Preschool. Everything that happens falls into one of these two categories.

Keeping the same general routine every day helps make the child's world feel stable and predictable. Doing certain things in the same order at about the same time every day helps strengthen brain connections and builds a child's confidence because they know what to expect. Since most children under 5 years old can't yet read, the preschool classrooms have their daily schedules posted in picture form for the children.

Routines build self-confidence, curiosity, social skills, self-control, communication skills and more. Routines create manageable expectations that allow children to build emotional resilience, such as saying goodbye to family members each morning at drop-off.

What is different about each day are the Experiences that are planned for the children. The teachers provide meaningful and relevant experiences for each age group, both indoors and out, every day. Each morning, preschool age children gather for their morning meeting. Here they will be greeted in song, hear a story, talk about character builders, and then learn what their opportunities for Experiences are.

-Dana Johnson, Preschool Director

WELCOME MINISTRY

Interested in learning about The Peoples Church? All are welcome to join a guided tour with plenty of great information on Sunday, March 3, 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 church's Centennial Room for a New Members' Class immediately following the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, May 5. Classes usually last 60-90 minutes. Our new members' classes are only informational and do not obligate you to become a member. To register for the Spring 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.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Are you looking for a way to serve the homeless and underhoused? On the second Sunday of each month, Cardboard Prophets — a Lansing-based group that provides help to the homeless — hosts 'Fellowship in the Park' at Reutter Park in downtown Lansing, across from the Capitol. At this event, gently used sleeping bags, blankets, clothing, personal items, and other various goods are provided at no charge to people in need. The Community Engagement Committee will collect the items and take them to the event to be distributed. All you need to do is look through your closets and bring your donations to the Church.

TPC has provided storage space for this ministry so we can collect and organize donations. Community Engagement will be collecting a specific item each month. We are not asking for new items, but items that are donated must be laundered and in good repair. If you have gently used and clean items, please place them in the large blue plastic storage bin located near the Church offices on the east of the sanctuary. In March we are collecting duffel bags, backpacks, and suitcases.

New Art Installation

A Timeless Pallet: Moments Of Transient Emotion

March's artist, Nancy Kremsreiter, grew up in Chicago, inspired by the city's rich tapestry of architectural wonders and museum fine art. Her formal art study began at the University of Illinois and was completed at Michigan State University, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Printmaking.

For more than 25 years, Nancy has successfully blended her artistic sensibilities with a professional business career in public information in Lansing, adding photography training and assignment work to her experience. Perfecting art skills has been a lifelong process and commitment Nancy. She continues to learn and practice art across different media. Despite holding a degree in Printmaking, the artist's versatility knows no bounds. She explores and embraces various artistic mediums, including oil, watercolor, acrylic, alcohol ink, pastels, photography, scratchboard, and even clay and cement sculpture.



for

Nancy's eclectic approach reflects an ongoing dedication to expanding artistic horizons. In her work, she seeks to convey a state of mind, or express a mood or emotion, beyond simply capturing the inherent beauty of her subjects. In recent years, as a member of Mid Michigan Art Guild, LAAC and Shiawassee Art Center, she has participated in juried and non juried shows and received numerous awards.

TPC Children's Christian Ed Family Game Night

Looking for something fun to do on a Saturday night with your family? Join us at the Peoples Church for our family game night March 16th from 6-7:30 p.m.

Snacks and some games will be provided, we just ask that you bring a game to share with others!

For more information or to RSVP please contact Alexa Hayes-Murray, our Children's Ed Director, at ahayes-murray@thepeopleschurch.com or

At 616-755-8874.

We hope to see you there!

TPC Children's Christian Ed Presents:

Family Game Night

March 16, 2024
6 - 7:30 pm

Join us in the Snider Social Hall for an evening of fun, snacks, and community!

***Bring a game to share!**
***Snacks provided!**

RSVP BY MARCH 10 TO:
Alexa Hayes-Murray
ahayes-murray@thepeopleschurch.com
616-755-8874

The poster features illustrations of board games: a board with colored dots and a pin, a board with a spinner and dice, and a checkers board.

EVERY WEDNESDAY



5:30 P.M. SNIDER SOCIAL HALL

COMMUNITY MEAL: 5:30 P.M.

DANCE AEROBICS: 6 P.M.

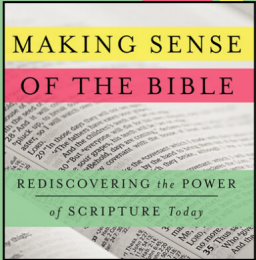
BIBLE STUDY: 6:30 P.M.

CHICs (Connected Hearts In Christ)

CHICs is back! CHICs is a women's group that meets in the Robertson Room on the 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30-8:30 p.m., through May 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.

THE KNITTING PEOPLE

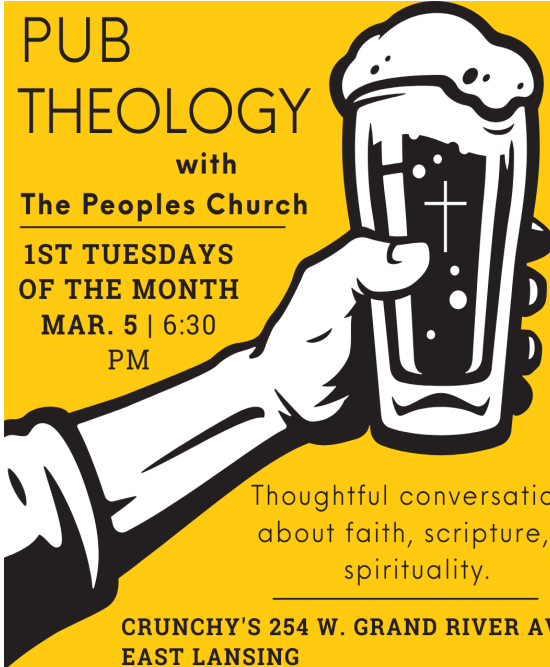
The Knitting People will meet on Thursday, March 28 in the Robertson Room from 1-3 P.M. to bless completed items, to work on current projects, to share patterns, knitting and crocheting hints, and to enjoy a time of fellowship. New knitters and crocheters are invited to join us as we create baptismal blankets, prayer shawls, hats, mittens and slippers. For more information, email Mary Anne at malarz@aol.com.



Join Rev. Dr. Monroe for a six-week course on Adam Hamilton's book, 'Making Sense of the Bible.' The class will meet on Sunday mornings, 9:20 - 10:20 a.m. during Lent. Hamilton's book can be purchased on Amazon and at Schuler Books.

PUB THEOLOGY
with
The Peoples Church

1ST TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH
MAR. 5 | 6:30 PM



Thoughtful conversations about faith, scripture, & spirituality.

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

TPC TALK N' TOUR

Mark your calendars! The next TPC Talk 'n Tour (TNT) will take place Sunday, April 7 after the 10:30 a.m. service in the Sanctuary. The tour will take about 45 minutes. Come and learn more about this beautiful church. All are welcome.

THE READING PEOPLE

The Reading People will meet on Thursday, March 21 at 1:30 P.M. in the Robertson Room. You're also invited to come at 1 P.M. for a pre-meeting fellowship with sack lunches. March is Women's History month so we ask members to read of a woman that they find interesting and share her story to the group. To learn more, contact Mary Anne Larzelere at malarz@aol.com



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VBS 2024: Camp Firelight

Incoming kindergarteners through incoming 6th graders for the 2024-25 school year are welcome to attend our annual VBS camp from Monday, June 24-Friday, June 28, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Like last year, camp will take place at The Peoples Church.

We are planning for games, field trips, crafts, mission projects, and more! Approximately half of the day is VBS-related and the other half is summer camp fun.

"Whenever I'm afraid, I put my trust in you."

-Psalm 56:3

- **WHO:** Incoming kindergarteners through incoming 6th graders (2024-25 school year)
- **WHAT:** VBS/Summer Camp Fun
- **WHERE:** The People's Church in East Lansing
- **WHEN:** June 24-28, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- **COST:** \$65 (March 1-April 30); \$75 (May 1-May 31)
- **CONTACT:** Alexa Hayes-Murray at ahayes-murray@thepeopleschurch.com or 616-755-8874