

Annual Report 2023



January 28, 2024

Congregational Meeting

Table of Contents

<u>Annual Report of the Senior Pastor</u>	3
<u>The Peoples Church Statistical Report</u>	4
<u>The Peoples Church Proposed Budget for 2024 General Fund</u>	5
<u>Annual Report of the Elders</u>	6
<u>Annual Report of the Associate Pastor</u>	10
<u>Annual Report of the Campus Ministry</u>	11
<u>Annual Report of the Christian Education Ministry</u>	12
<u>Annual Report of the Peoples Church Youth Group (PCYG)</u>	14
<u>Annual Report for Children’s Ministries</u>	15
<u>Annual Report of the Building and Grounds Ministry</u>	17
<u>Annual Report of the Community Engagement Ministry</u>	19
<u>Annual Report of the Finance Ministry</u>	23
<u>Annual Report of the Personnel Committee</u>	25
<u>Annual Report of the Preschool</u>	25
<u>Annual Report of the Welcome Ministry</u>	26
<u>Annual Report of the Worship Ministry</u>	29

Annual Report of the Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe, Senior Pastor

...We boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our struggles, knowing that struggling produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us. (Romans 5:3b-5a)

When I sit down to write my annual report, I begin by reviewing my past annual reports, which makes for some exciting reading. I began my ministry at The Peoples Church in the fall of 2019, and my first annual report reads like a breezy letter from summer camp. “Having a great time! Can’t wait to see what happens next!” Little did we know what lurked around the corner. My next annual report read more like a dystopian novel, a tale of viruses and isolation and uncertainty with just a smidgen of hope. The next two reports featured major staff changes and a return to more normal programming, yet all of it still shadowed by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Now here we are, nearly four years after the pandemic began, and it feels like we are finally beginning to gain momentum – in worship, in fellowship, and in ministry.

In worship, our attendance has returned to pre-pandemic numbers with a robust online community. Even during the summer, a traditionally low-attendance time, we maintained our numbers. While attendance numbers are not the most important thing in the world, it is a signal that the Gospel message we offer is reaching more and more people, as measured by all the new members who joined our community. We had a record number of funerals this year, but also a record number of baptisms, which is a sign of a congregation that is growing younger.

We’ve had more fellowship opportunities this year. There was a euchre tournament, a successful chili cook-off, scout pancake Sunday, Easter celebrations, the annual jewelry and book sale, a delightful cake auction, another women’s retreat, and new member dinners at the pastor’s house. We also continued to minister to the wider community: we served weekly community dinners, delivered food baskets to Edgewood Village, participated in the Crop Walk, gathered all sorts of clothing for children in need, hosted Trunk-or-Treat, and worked at the Love Clothing Center.

One of the most important moments was when, after the tragic campus shooting, we opened our doors to the MSU community and hosted the Interfaith Service of Healing. That sent a powerful message of hope to the whole community.

Once again, there were staff changes. Rev. Haley Hansen began her ministry and has already become an important part of our community. Kathi Mitchell, our beloved Christian Education director left in March, and we have been blessed by the work of our new CE director, Alexa Hayes-Murray. And we hired a marvelous Communications Specialist, Adam Droscha, to replace Zoe Aho, but now Adam is leaving so we are searching for another great team member. And there are other big changes on the horizon...so next year’s annual report will feature more of the same.

I could go on, but what I really want to convey in this report is what I see in this church: this faith community is resilient. Yes, we have been through a time of tribulations and struggles. Yes, we have struggled to maintain our church’s financial health after Covid-19. Yes, we have

lost cherished church members. Yes, things are not like they once were, even considering the pandemic. But we have endured, trusting in God’s guidance and love, and never losing sight of who we are called to be. We have more than survived – we have thrived: our faith has persisted, and the future is full of hope and possibility! Reading this annual report, I trust you will see the same signs of resilience.

I hope 2024 is going to be a great year at The Peoples Church...and hope does not disappoint!

The Peoples Church Statistical Report

Beth Lundy, Membership Coordinator

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

Total Membership as of January 1, 2020		854
Letter of Transfer (In)	10	
Baptism/Profession of Faith	2	
Reaffirmation of Faith	15	
Confession of Faith/ Confirmation	0	
TOTAL		27
Members removed by request	0	
Letter of Transfer (Out)	11	
Deceased	16	
TOTAL		-27
Total Membership as of December 31, 2023		854
Services Performed at Peoples Church		
Baptisms	11	
Marriages of The Peoples Church	1	
Funerals/Memorials at The Peoples Church	18	
Service to the Wider Community		
Funerals/Memorials	5	

We remember with deep appreciation and love, the servants of God and members of The Peoples Church who died in 2023:

Ken Beachler, June 6	Alice Crist, June 16	Mary Lou Johnson, October 30
Charles Blackman, August 1	Bill Dailey, October 10	Ed Marin, January 28
Arylie Campbell, May 12	Julie DeGraw, August 28	Barbara Potter, March 7
Irene Cantlon, July 31	Luella Erbes, September 11	Rosemary Walker, December 19
Gene Cornelius, July 31	Barbara Honhart, November 23	Kathy Wilbur, November 26

The Peoples Church 2024 Operating Budget Proposal

	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	Proposed 2024 Budget Total	Notes
Revenues and Support:				
Contributions:				
General Fund Pledges	\$ 612,000	\$ 621,913	\$ 615,000	
Other Giving	108,000	115,726	115,000	
Total Unrestricted Giving	720,000	737,639	730,000	
Endowment Distributions	102,840	102,840	104,500	A
Preschool Tuition Income	1,356,563	1,354,350	1,385,000	
Grant Income			43,500	B
Other Income	34,600	57,567	53,500	
Total Income	\$ 2,214,003	\$ 2,252,396	\$ 2,316,500	
Expenses:				
Personnel (non-Preschool)	\$ 729,534	\$ 716,377	\$ 767,250	
Christian Education/Peoples Wed.	22,000	14,981	20,500	
Campus Ministry	15,000	7,694	15,000	
Community Engagement	87,100	82,602	87,000	C
Music & Worship	10,500	6,785	16,000	
Communications	4,000	1,576	3,000	
Welcome Ministry	1,736	1,576	2,000	
Administrative/Stewardship	64,000	56,688	63,000	
Building & Grounds	295,450	270,561	300,250	
Preschool Expense	1,190,798	1,202,412	1,190,500	
Expenses Before Restricted Fund Transfers	\$ 2,420,118	\$ 2,361,252	\$ 2,464,500	
Revenues less Expenses	\$ (206,115)	\$ (108,856)	\$ (148,000)	D

NOTES:

Note A - Spending policy distribution percentage of 4.00% is set by Council.

Note B - The Church was eligible for and has applied for an Employee Retention Grant (ERC), which will approximate \$43,500. At this time it is unknown when payment will be received.

Note C - This line item is budgeted at 10% of budgeted Unrestricted Giving, plus \$14,000 support for Wednesday Night Live dinners.

Note D - The General Fund balance was \$509,276 at December 31, 2023, including remaining prior year unspent PPP funds approximating \$280,000 at 12/31/23, which will help cover any deficit while the Church continues it's post-covid recovery.

Annual Report of the Elders

Diane Shafer, Chairperson of the Council of Elders

The Council of Elders began 2023 with a full slate of Elders including Diane Shafer, Chair; John Lindley, Vice Chair; Mary West, Secretary; Dave Brower, Treasurer; Rich Patterson, Clerk; and Elders Emily Anderson, Sandy Draggoo, Sarah Dymond, Ben Eysselinck, Erik Mackey, Kari Naghtin, Susan Nowicki, Kim Schramm, Dottie Spousta, Bob Steinkamp, Bob Watson, and Brad Williams. The group met for food and fellowship prior to our meetings and conducted business at 10 in-person meetings with a Zoom option from January through June and August through November. All meetings began with a devotion by a member of the group, included a discussion about church finances and Capital Campaign preparation and closed with a prayer.

January

Elders recommended the 2023 Budget for Member approval. Elders approved to spend up to \$15,800 and \$400 in reimbursable expenses to Elevate Studios to do preliminary design work for a potential Capital Campaign. A letter of intent for the Capital Campaign was also approved and sent to out church attorney, George Brookover, for his review. Additionally, Elders also approved the following 2023 Personnel Committee members: Brad Williams, Chair; Alan Canady; Phyllis Grummon; Sandy Draggoo; Jeff Mason; and Rick Shafer. The Peoples Church held its First Annual Euchre Tournament with 32 participants. Team members with the highest points received trophies and team members with the lowest points received the euchred bucket money. Marge Kik was the overall winner! A faith-based budget was passed by the congregation on January 29, 2023, with no questions or discussion.

February

Elders approved the appointment of Endowment Fund Committee members John Lindley and Jon Lundy (through 2023), Dave Brower and Jack Branta (through 2024) and Ken Beall and Greg Ware (through 2025). They also responded to a request to establish an Archives Committee due to the dissolution of the Women of Peoples Church, and supported the need for a Safety Committee to provide a policy and training to equip the church to respond to natural disasters, medical emergencies, and acts of violence.

On February 23, the church signed a contract with architect Elevate Studios to provide designs for all three phases (1-Social Hall, 2-Sanctuary, and 3-Organ) of a potential Capital Campaign and began looking into possible grant funding for said campaign. Furthermore, John Lindley and Jon Lundy led efforts to identify an outreach project to accompany phase I of the campaign. Elders felt it was important to not only update our building for the next 100 years, but to make a difference in the community at the same time. Pastor Monroe held a new members dinner in her home for 13 potential new members and the Taizé Service, typically the last Sunday evening of the month, continued to grow in popularity.

March

The month of March included some staff changes. Children's Director Kathi Mitchell resigned, and Alexa Hayes-Murry started on March 27. Alexa is on leave for a year from her High School teaching position. The church held a celebration for Kathi on April 16 and recognized her for her years of service. Communications Specialist Zoe Aho also resigned, and Adam Droscha started

on March 13. Adam is in seminary and brought an abundance of church experience to the position. We also lost audio-visual specialist Chris Kaminski and facility staff member Travis Nagler. Chris replaced himself with Tyler and Jeremy. The church also welcomed Ginny and Kayla to facilities.

Dave Ledebuhr, Building & Grounds Development Committee Chair met with Convexity Development to request the use of the fenced lot north of the church for Sunday morning church parking until that property is developed. Elders voted to execute a Parking License Agreement for this property to be used beginning Easter Sunday, April 9. Dave also reported the Valley Court Farmers Market Pavilion project was not moving forward. Elevate Studios provided eight questionnaires for the congregation to complete to share their visions and hopes should the congregation move forward with a Capital Campaign. Nancy Danhof, Chair, organized tabletop sessions for the completion of these surveys on March 7 and 12. Nancy also interviewed key church leaders and staff to hear their answers to the survey questions, compiled all of this information and sent it to Elevate Studios. Approximately 65 people participated in this process. Elevate used this information to aid in their design work. March also welcomed eight new members to The Peoples Church.

April

Elders entered into a discussion with John McGraw of River Caddis Real Estate Development and developer of the Evergreen properties north of the church at their April meeting. John reviewed the recent and on-going developments surrounding the church and brainstormed ideas for potential additional parking. The Elders expressed an interest in continued discussion for potential development and related parking solutions and referred this matter back to the Building & Grounds Development Committee for further discussions. After much anticipation, the church welcomed new Associate Pastor Haley Hansen to the church family. Pastor Hansen met with the Campus Ministry group on April 23, and her arrival was celebrated by the congregation on April 30. Music Sunday took place on April 30, as well. The Peoples Church held a Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service on April 6, and celebrated Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday, April 9, with a total of 482 attendees. The Peoples Church Youth Group held their Annual Cake Auction on April 16. The Nominating Committee with Chair, Cheryl Leece, began their work of finding new Elders, Denominational Representatives and Nominating Committee members for 2024. With respect to the Capital Campaign, Elders voted to include an outreach project along with Phase I of a potential Capital Campaign. The project partners with Lansing Intentional Communities (LINC)s and Habitat for Humanity to expand housing for residents on the Autism Spectrum. Additionally, there are opportunities for the congregation to assist the LINC)s Board with the overall governance and community awareness of their organization as well as participate in a "Rock the Block" event to beautify their community. Elevate Studios provided a visioning exercise with the Capital Campaign Steering Committee to help them develop preliminary drawings for church improvements.

May

On May 5, the Capital Campaign Steering Committee met with Elevate Studios to go through the latest rendition of drawings for a potential Capital Campaign. The committee gave them feedback and then reviewed another set of drawings on May 30. Elevate's cost estimator also began the work of assigning estimates to go along with the drawings in preparation for taking

the information to the congregation. The Safety Committee, with the assistance of Lt. Adam Park of the East Lansing Police Department provided Active Violence Training for church members and staff. The East Lansing Fire Department provided First Aid/Disaster training May 23-25. The Archives Committee met as a group of nine for the first time on May 15, toured the areas where the materials are kept, set some priorities, and distributed tasks. The Peoples Church added five more new members and Kyle Dymond agreed to Chair the 2024 Stewardship Campaign. The Worship Ministry and the Pastors voted to move to one service at 9:30 a.m. from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

June & July

Elevate Studios continued their work on preliminary designs and estimates for a potential Capital Campaign in June and July. Kathi Mitchell, former Children's Director, agreed to come back and run Vacation Bible School at The Peoples Church June 19-23. Both the Safety Committee and Nominating Committee gave updates. Safety was working on an Evaluation Plan, creating an Emergency Response Team, CPR Training and a safety pamphlet to put in the pews. The Archives Committee was working on a plan to move forward after discovering the 2010 list of the contents of the Archives Room. Nominating accepted three of five candidates needed for Elders, two candidates for Nominating Committee and one candidate for the open Methodist denominational representative position for 2024. A summer cleaning project took place July 5-12 to free up storage areas and go through the church rolls.

August

August is always an exciting time in the life of the church as we anticipate the return to two worship services and school-year programming on hiatus for the summer. Initial planning for the 2024 budget began and particulars for an October Stewardship Campaign themed "Rejoice" came to fruition. Elders reviewed and approved the Peoples Church Emergency Procedures document with a few minor changes for the Safety Committee. The Capital Campaign Steering Committee met with Elevate Studios to view the 3-D preliminary designs for the Social Hall and Sanctuary. Feedback was given to Elevate for their presentation to Elders at the September meeting. The Archives Committee went to work verifying the contents of the Archives Room. Once verified, they plan to bring the room and its documentation up to date.

September

Porch of Heaven, a new style of bible study, was introduced to the congregation in September. It is a Lectio Divina study that takes place Monday evenings. At the Elders meeting, Pastor Monroe gave a synopsis of the steps, activities, and work completed by the Capital Campaign Steering Committee to date. Then the Elders had the opportunity to view the renderings provided by Elevate Studios along with a Resolution to Recommend the Church Improvements and Outreach Project to the Congregation. This motion passed with unanimous approval. Forms for the 2024 Budget were distributed to staff and ministry chairs with a due date of November 3. Elders approved the 2024 state of candidates for Elders (Bob Steinkamp, Gary Dawson, Jim McClurken, Bob Watson, and Traci Dudley), Nominating Committee (Kyle Dymond, Linda Smith, Martha Hibbs, and Rob Privette), and Methodist Denomination Representative (Austin Scott).

October

October was Stewardship Month. Kyle Dymond, Stewardship Chair, took on preaching duties on October 15 utilizing Philippians 4:4 and members shared why they give during worship. A letter also went out to the congregation asking for giving units to submit their 2024 pledges. Elders signed letters of support for the Islamic Society of Greater Lansing, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, and Congregation Kehillat Israel at their meeting. On October 29, eight new members, along with five young children, joined The Peoples Church.

November

The Congregation was given seven opportunities to attend a presentation to see and hear the details of a proposed Capital Campaign in November and early December. The Peoples Church website was also updated with a wealth of information about the Campaign. The Annual Fall Congregational meeting was held on November 5 and the 2024 slate of candidates for Elders, Nominating Committee, and Methodist Denomination Representative were elected by the congregation. The church also welcomed Kristin Kobes Du Mez as the Henry & Annabel Larzelere Memorial Lecturer November 12, and thoroughly enjoyed Music Sunday on November 19. Many attended the Interfaith Peace and Solidarity Service at Eastminster Church on November 16 presented by the Interfaith Clergy Group. Elders heard presentations from the Preschool, the Archives Committee, and the Building & Grounds Development Committee at their November meeting. Dana Johnson, Preschool Director, gave an update on the Peoples Church Preschool. Dave Ledebuhr, Building & Grounds Development Committee Chair, asked Elders if there was interest in acquiring Showroom Shine for possible future parking. Elders authorized the Committee to continue conversation with Mark Sprinkle, Showroom Shine owner, and propose next steps. Christine Bilfinger, Archives Committee Co-Chair, asked the Elders to approve an application for a University of Michigan School of Information intern to help put a professional lens on the work of the Archives Committee. There is no cost to the church for this project and Elders approved moving forward. Elders heard an update on Stewardship and the Capital Campaign.

December

In lieu of a December Elders Meeting, the group met at Pastor Monroe's home for a Christmas Party on December 1. On December 10, the church welcomed five more new members with four young children. Everyone loved, 'The Reluctant Innkeeper' Christmas Program on December 10 and were inspired by worship during Advent. There was no 8:30 a.m. worship service for the month of December. One Elder, Kari Naghtin, stepped down from her role. Elders will appoint a replacement in 2024. Elders participated in Coffee Fellowship the Sunday after their meetings and provided Elders for Communion on those Sundays.

Annual Report of the Associate Pastor

Rev. Haley Hansen, Associate Pastor

I began my tenure at the Peoples Church in late April of 2023. I spent the remainder of the year connecting with members, getting reacquainted with the church, and familiarizing myself with the role as associate pastor.

Campus Ministry

It's been a joy to connect with the college students here at the Peoples Church! We meet each Sunday after the 10:30 a.m. service for food and fellowship in the newly renovated College Lounge. In addition, we join together on one to two field trips or other special events each month, including cider mill trips, movie nights and volunteer opportunities with the church. In addition to these group events, I regularly host "office hours" at a nearby coffee shop. I'm eager to continue to form connections with our students and witness the growth of this important ministry.

Young Adult Ministry

ACHE, our young adult ministry at the Peoples church, continues to thrive. Our group primarily consists of graduate students and young professionals in the East Lansing area. Though the church's Pub Theology nights at Crunchy's are not limited to young adults, that monthly gathering has become a hallmark of our time together. In addition, our ACHE group also meets regularly for movie nights, field trips, and other fellowship opportunities. I'm proud of the way this church has created space for young people to connect and thrive. In addition to our ACHE work, I'm also hopeful that we can create networks of support for parents of young children within the church. In the past year, we've had quite a few new members with young kids join the church, and I'm hopeful we can create more opportunities for connection within that demographic.

Christian Education

After some trial and error with different programming, I've shifted into offering a Bible study on Wednesday evenings after our community meal. My hope with this Bible study is that we'll engage with parts of the Bible we might be less familiar with and deepen our understanding of scripture together. Going into 2024, I'm eager to discover new Christian education opportunities in which our members can learn and grow.

Pastoral Care

Another key component of my work is visitation. It's a privilege to be invited into people's homes and hospital rooms. I find it incredibly meaningful. In 2024, I hope to expand our current laity visitation team and get more folks involved in this important and lifegiving work. In addition to visitation, I find great meaning in working with families through funerals and offering pastoral care amid grief. In 2024, I plan to offer a grief support group for our members.

Worship Leading/Preaching

Sundays are the highlight of my week. It is a gift to learn from Rev. Dr. Monroe and grow as a minister under her example. As I've acquainted myself with Peoples' worship style, I find myself becoming more at ease leading worship.

I hope and pray that the year ahead will be one of growth, deepening connections and imaginative ministry. It is an immense gift to serve the Peoples Church. I look forward to seeing where God leads us in 2024!

Annual Report of the Campus Ministry

Kari Naghtin, Chair of the Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry Members: Rev. Haley Hansen, Associate Pastor; **Chair:** Kari Naghtin, Chair, Council of Elders; Phyllis Grummon, Secretary; Martha Bristor;

Mission Statement: The Peoples Church Campus Ministry is an open-minded college-aged community group that is committed to local outreach, food, faith, and fellowship in a low-pressure, refreshing environment.

Year in Review

As we close out 2023 and look to 2024, Campus Ministry is reflecting on what was a successful year! Despite being a ministry with a very small committee membership, we are doing good work.

Before diving into the work of Campus Ministry this past year, we would like to take a moment to remember an individual in our ministry who was a passionate advocate for supporting college students and young adults in their faith journey here at The Peoples Church. This individual was also their advocate in her day-to-day work at MSU. Julie DeGraw passed away in September 2023 after a very short battle with pancreatic cancer. As a member of this Ministry, Julie served as our 'university' connection during a time of transition of pastoral leadership at the church, and she had a knack for interacting with college students and young adults and knowing what they needed. We are all better members of this committee due to the time that Julie was in our midst!

As we started 2023, there was not an Associate Pastor on staff to lead and support our college students, so the committee members of Campus Ministry, with the help of the church's Hospitality Coordinator, Vince Watson, and a couple of additional church members, made sure that there was a meal every Sunday from January to the end of spring term for the college students who attended church on Sunday morning. Each week we were able to provide a meal for the four to eight college students who regularly attended and participated in Campus Ministry.

After Easter, we were excited to welcome the Rev. Haley Hansen back to The Peoples Church as the Associate Pastor. Rev. Hansen was a pastoral intern at The Peoples Church prior to Rev. Dr. Herrell's arrival in the fall of 2021. There was one Sunday between Rev. Hansen's arrival and the end of the spring term, so we were able to host a welcome reception with Rev. Hansen and the college students.

Campus Ministry spent the months of May through August working with Rev. Hansen to plan a program for our college students and our young adults group, ACHE (Adults Connecting Having Events).

We welcomed the students back to school at the end of August by participating in Sparticipation and the Graduate Resource Fair. Free coffee was available out on the front sidewalk the first day of classes! Rev. Hansen worked with a couple of the college students and a couple of staff members to give the Campus Lounge a major face lift. An Amazon Wish List was shared with the congregation, which helped the Camus Lounge to get new furniture, the walls painted, new kitchen supplies, games for a game shelf, and more.

What college students want and need from a church is often a difficult thing to figure out; one often needs to just try out ideas and see what works and what doesn't work. Rev. Hansen began the fall with a weekly schedule that included a meal after church on Sunday, and dinner and activities on Thursday evenings. The first Thursday of the month was a Bible Study the second Thursday was 'Make Space,' the third Thursday was a book club, and the fourth Thursday was 'Faith and Film.' After running this plan for a couple months it became apparent that Thursday nights are not a good night of the week for such activities, so Rev. Hansen changed things up a bit. The meals after church on Sundays continued, however, the activity portion of the program moved to twice monthly events and activities. Examples included a trip to Uncle John's Cider Mill and handing out candy at the church's "Trunk or Treat" event for families.

As we wrap up 2024, we are looking forward to offering other opportunities for our college students to connect to the life and ministry of The Peoples Church. Rev. Hansen is working on plans over MSU's spring break in March of 2024 for interested college students to travel to Appalachia to work with the Appalachian Service Project. This will be the first "mission trip" for our college students since before the pandemic! As stated at the beginning of this report, this ministry might be small when it comes to the number of members in the ministry, but we are doing good work that is so exciting to see. We would like to invite other members of the congregation who are interested in serving on a ministry in 2024 to consider joining the Campus Ministry.

Annual Report of the Christian Education Ministry

Susan Godfrey, Chairperson of Christian Education Ministry

Ministry members: Michelle Clingenpeel (Preschool), Elisha Smith (Youth), Alexa Hayes-Murray (Children), Liz Reed (Music), Pastor Haley Hansen (Campus Ministry, Young Adult) Susan Godfrey (Library), Ben Eysseleinck (Elder)

Carol Choir – Elizabeth Reed

The Carol Choir consists of children in 1st through 5th grade and is directed by Elizabeth Reed. Carol Choir sang in church services on February 12, March 12, and May 14, 2023. We had one

5th grader, Abe Barton, who graduated to PCYG in May. Abe had been very involved in every Pageant and had the best attendance. In September of 2023, Liz took a three-week sabbatical to go to Sweden. Angela Beidenbender took over Sunday morning rehearsals September 17 and 24, and October 1. Angela is a music teacher with East Lansing Public Schools and did a wonderful job rehearsing the pageant songs with the Carol Choir. Carol Choir sang an arrangement of a Johann Sebastian Bach piece on Reformation Sunday on October 29. We had 15 K-5th graders rehearsing for our Christmas pageant, and they are Hadley and Cal Murray, Melle and Jay Tasarro-Tans, Grace Jenkins, Alice and Henrik Hunter, Declan and Izaak Biedenbender, Madelyn Schutte, Gabe and Theo Eysselinck, Amelia and Malcolm Irwin, and Clara Finland. We added three PCYG members as back up singing shepherds. The pageant was 'The Reluctant Innkeeper' and was performed for the congregation on Sunday, December 10 during the 10:30 a.m. service. Carol Choir sang two of the pageant songs on Christmas Eve at the 5 p.m. Service.

Youth Choir – Elizabeth Reed

The Youth Choir rehearses in the Sanctuary before the PCYG meeting time on Sunday evenings. The choir members have been faithful to rehearsals and are excited to sing together. Youth Choir members are Piper Williams, Quinn and Xander Guthaus, Abby Schuette, Cooper Mellor, Hayley Phillips, Abby Lindley and Zach Wells. The Youth Choir sang in the church service in January and March. They also sang on Mother's Day, May 14, in a combined song with the Carol Choir, and sang the following week on May 21. Youth Choir started rehearsals again in October, and Abe Barton joined the group. They prepared an anthem for Youth Sunday on November 20, and also sang on Christmas Eve at the 5 p.m. service.

Coppertone Ringers – Elizabeth Reed

The Coppertone Ringers rehearse Sunday nights before PCYG. Everyone who is in the Youth Choir is in the bell choir, and Abe Barton joined in October. They sound wonderful! Finding time with this age group can be very hard. They are busy, their families are busy, some also have jobs, and PCYG may do a special activity during the day and cancel a Sunday evening meeting, so attendance can be hit or miss. Coppertones rang on February 12, April 16, and May 21 on the floor in front of the congregation. Coppertones were busy in the Fall preparing to ring for the prelude on October 22, Youth Sunday on November 20, the prelude for the children's pageant on December 10, and at the 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Service.

Campus Ministry, & Young Adult Ministry – Pastor Haley Hansen

(See Pastor Haley's report.)

Library Committee – Susan Godfrey

The Library Committee has been busy this year as we set our goal on revitalizing the library. We have weeded out the old and outdated books and purchased new pastor-recommended books, cleaned up the shelves, and we plan to shift from the Dewey decimal system of shelving to a "topic" shelving philosophy. We are updating our catalogue and hope to have searchable copy available online by Fall of 2024. The year began with a "Tell a Tail" program for children to improve their reading skills by reading to a dog (Reba). We held a successful used book sale in May and made over \$600. The leftover books were donated to the Literacy Coalition in Lansing. We also started a "Free Library" outside the library door. Everyone is welcome to take a book

and to leave books for others. We were happy to support the Henry and Annabelle Larzelere Memorial lecture by making “Jesus and John Wayne” by Kristen Kobes Du Mez available for congregants to purchase after church in the weeks before the lecture. The library will also be sponsoring a book scholarship for a graduating high school senior this spring. Watch for information on the application in early 2024. We also hope you stop by the library to see the adult and children’s books available for check out. And don’t forget to tell us what you would like to see in the library in the future!

The Children’s Education, PCYG, and Preschool reports are on the following pages.

Annual Report of the Peoples Church Youth Group (PCYG)

Elisha Smith, Youth Ministry Director

This year the Peoples Church Youth Group successfully served more than 25 students in grades 6th- 12th. This is my fourth year of employment in this position. Weekly attendance at PCYG has been consistent, with between 10 and 15 students attending regular youth group. During special events we have up to 25 students in attendance.

In January of this year, 12 PCYG students were able to take a Winter Retreat to Kalamazoo, Michigan. We stayed in the home of one of our youth group student’s grandparents and were able to visit a number of art and history museums, experience a Chinese New Year Celebration, and participate in many different activities such as candle making, bowling, and cooking. It was a successful trip and a great way for PCYG to grow and bond.

This year’s cake auction was a huge success, bringing in over \$2,200. The auction was done as a silent auction, which encouraged more congregation members to participate and allowed the auction to move more quickly. We have plans for our next cake auction to include a cake walk for children and a blend of silent and traditional auction items. This form of cake auction was a learning experience for everyone, and the students very much enjoyed being a part of this process.

Over the summer many PCYG students participated in Vacation Bible School as counselors. They were exceptional leaders and role models for the children, and a great help to the leaders. Instead of taking a week-long mission trip this summer, PCYG did small service projects around the Lansing area, which included helping with TPC’s weekly dinners and volunteering at the Allen Neighborhood Center. They also engaged in many fun activities over the summer including laser tag, a trip to Michigan’s Adventure, and many food-related outings.

PCYG had a very successful Youth Sunday. More than 15 students participated in the planning of Youth Sunday, and ten actively participated in the service. Students sang in the youth choir, played bells, wrote prayers and the benediction, presented a children’s message, and more. They were very involved and enjoyed participating in the planning of Youth Sunday under the direction of Rev. Haley Hansen and myself.

So far in 2024, the students have been engaged in a bi-monthly Dungeons and Dragon club led by one of our seniors, a series of lessons on “Monsters in the Bible,” active engagement in both youth choir and Coppertone’s, and many different creative projects such as painting, print making, and sculpting. I have plans this year to include a summer retreat, a church lock-in, cooking classes with our Hospitality Director, Vince Watson, and more opportunities for youth to engage with the larger congregation.

Annual Report for Children’s Ministries

Alexa Hayes-Murray, Children’s Christian Education Director

New Children’s Christian Education Director

Kathi Mitchell was still the Children’s Christian Education director from January-April of 2023. I started as CE director March 2023, and was on a part-time maternity leave in May and June. Due to having a baby in May, Kathi directed VBS and I helped out as I could.

Sunday School

We used the Celebrate Wonder curriculum in Sunday School this year. We ran four classes in the winter and start of spring (pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st-3rd, 4th-5th). We ran two classes toward the end of spring and start of summer (pre-K to 1st and 3rd-5th), and three classes (pre-K to Kindergarten, 1st-3rd, 4th-5th) in the fall.

Spring 2023 brought in several new Sunday school families with kids mostly in the pre-K to Kindergarten range. We had one student graduate to PCYG at the start of the fall ‘23-24 school year.

Sunday School Classes 2023

Grade level is based on their grade for the Fall 2023-24 school year.

Grade level *	Regular Attendees	Average attendance per week (not including summer)
Pre-K to K	13	4-5 kids
1st - 3rd	12	5-6 kids
4th - 5th	12	2-4 kids

Sunday School Teachers

We have 11 teachers on the Sunday School teaching roster, with each teacher usually volunteering for one or two Sundays a month. Since March, we have recruited three new Sunday School teachers (including two MSU students). We lost one Sunday School teacher after his student graduated out of Sunday School.

Vacation Bible School

VBS this year was called “Hero Hotline.”

Helping out there were four youth counselors from PYCG and two counselors in training, and 25 children in attendance. Each day kids rotated between four stations: mission, science, arts & crafts, and games. They also spent one afternoon at the zoo. Additionally, the naturalist from 2022 returned and brought frogs, snakes, and other creatures. Many students chose to hold a snake! Local heroes, some of our first responders from the ELPD, came and visited one afternoon. Lastly, Angela Biedenender was our musical/play director and helped kids learn and rehearse three songs as well as a short play, which was performed on the last day of VBS for parents. VBS ended with an ice cream social.

Pageant

The 2023 children’s Christmas pageant was called “The Case of the Reluctant Innkeeper,” which was performed in front of the congregation on December 10. The students did a fabulous job! We had 15 Sunday School students and three PCYG members participate in the pageant.

Rehearsals for the songs started in October, and rehearsal for both the songs and play began in November. We had our usual pizza party lunch after our final dress rehearsal and a cookie party following the pageant. Santa was even able to visit at the cookie party!

The table to the right shows how many students from each grade level participated.

Grade Level	# of students
K	3
1 st	2
2 nd	4
3 rd	0
4 th	4
5 th	2

Acolytes

We tried to have two acolytes for every Sunday during 2023. Most Sundays we were successful. However, with so many families being extra busy during the summer, we were not always able to have acolytes. In November, we did not have any acolytes due to the decorations on the altar being in place of the candles the acolytes usually light. Acolytes no longer have to return to acolyte at the end of service because a few of them did not like missing Sunday School.

Family Events

Trunk or Treat (October)

Trunk or Treat took place October 28 from 6-7 p.m. in the church parking lot. This was the second annual Trunk or Treat. We estimate we had more than 150 kids in attendance. PCYG members led by Elisha Smith, Campus Ministry members led by Rev. Haley, Rev. Shawnthea and her husband Neil, four Sunday School families, and our Facilities Director Zack Mathews and his wife all handed out candy, cider, and donuts. We had so many kids, everyone ran out of everything, and Elisha and a Sunday School family went to get more!

Due to the change in directorship and my maternity leave, there were fewer family events planned this year. However, there are several events planned for 2024 like a kids' business fair and a kid prom.

Outreach

Valentines Outreach (February)

Many families helped with our Valentine's Day outreach project which involved assembling care packages to give to our elderly and homebound church members. Many families contributed baked goods and/or volunteered to deliver the packages. We made and delivered approximately 40 care packages.

Easter Outreach (March/April)

One of Kathi's final outreach projects was for children and their families to come and make Easter Cross pictures for the elderly and homebound in our church. Kathi, Liz Reed, my kids and I, and a few other kids made approximately 40 Easter pictures to send out. Due to families' busy after-school schedules, attendance at events like this tends to be low.

Thanksgiving & Christmas Cards

Students spent some time in Sunday School classes doing holiday outreach projects. Students made fall wreaths and Christmas cards for Burcham Hills residents. They also made Thanksgiving and Christmas cards for families the church supported during these holidays.

VBS Outreach

During VBS, students did multiple outreach projects including decorating pots and planting flowers for Edgewood, making paper flowers for Burcham Hills residents, making cards for a social worker at ELPD to hand out, and making cards for first responders in the ELPD.

Annual Report of the Building and Grounds Ministry

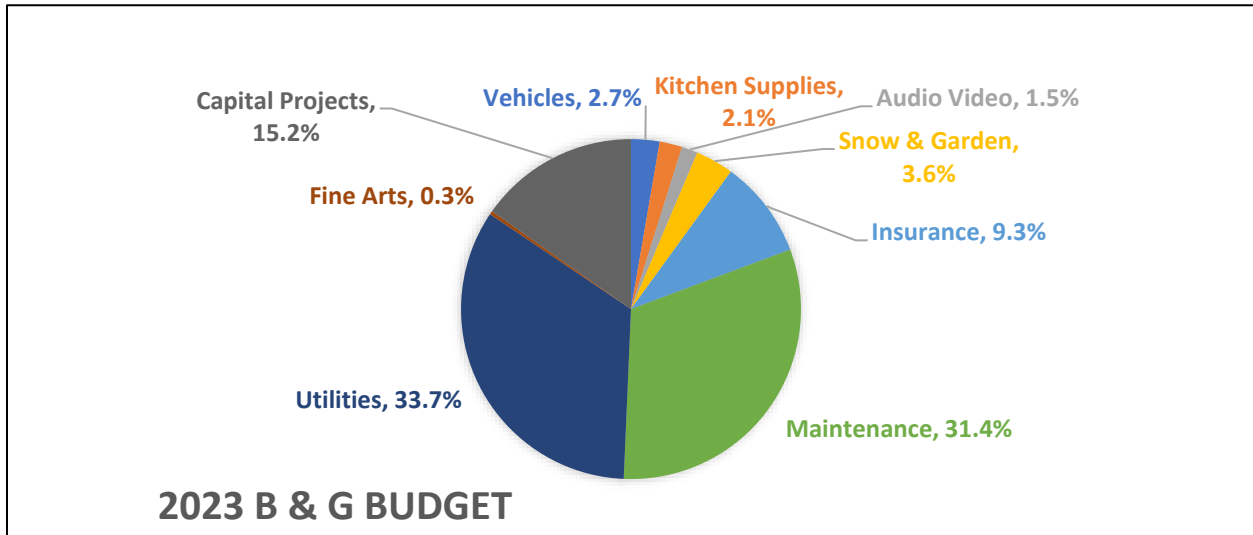
Zack Matthews
Facility Director

Bob Watson
Chairperson of the Building & Grounds Ministry

The Building and Grounds (B&G) Ministry serves The Peoples Church by providing stewardship and guidance associated with the operation, maintenance, upkeep, safety and security of the church building, grounds, furnishings, and equipment of the church. It also supports and works in cooperation with The Peoples Church Development Committee chaired by Dave Ledebuhr, Earth Stewardship Committee chaired by Bill Nash & Susan Kilmer, the Fine Arts Committee chaired by Susan Nowicki and the Accessibility Committee chaired by Susan Nowicki.

The 2023 B&G Ministry members included James Bell, Nancy Danhof, Jack Branta, Bill Nash, Jan Perron, Kim Schramm (Elder), Clyde Flory, Austin Owen, Susan Nowicki (Elder), Bob Watson (2023 Chair & Elder), with significant support from Dana Johnson (Preschool Director), Zack Matthews (Facility Director), and Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe.

The Ministry’s 2023 Budget of \$295,450 was allocated as shown in the graph.



Significant 2023 Facility accomplishments included:

- The internet networking system was replaced, including four switches with back up batteries and 12 Access points. Four new cameras were installed. Adaptive Technology provided the equipment and technical support. A large portion of the labor was done in-house. Recording time for the cameras was brought in-house and increased to four months of video retention. Bringing management for networking and cameras in-house has reduced monthly fees going forward.
- The Welcome Desk has a new computer and monitor that are hardwired. The monitor can view security cameras live.
- The northwest corner of the parking lot was resurfaced.
- Four new lapel microphones and two handheld microphones were purchased to upgrade the sanctuary mics. These have increased sound reliability drastically.
- New drop ceilings were installed outside the library, in the office hallway, and in the second floor west and south preschool hallways.
- Both the sanctuary and chapel pipe organs had various repairs and parts rehabilitated.
- A new water fountain incorporating a bottle filler was installed outside the Robertson Room, replacing the old fountain. The Earth Stewardship committee paid for 50% of the cost.
- A new keypad lock system was installed to restrict access to the preschool. The elevator has a keypad for second floor access.
- The refrigerators were replaced in the Social Hall kitchen.

- The Campus Lounge got a makeover with fresh paint and furniture.
- A new exterior door to the organ blower room was installed. Previously, one had to remove the choir risers to access a floor hatch into the blower room.
- Several art displays throughout the year: (1) 'Wild Fluorescence' by Michelle Word, (2) 'Where ART Thou' by Chance Lipscomb and (3) the MSU Department of Theatre display, were displayed in the church on the main floor.
- Two new informational handouts describing church art, and history and architecture were created and made available.
- 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 Boy Scouts did a spring and fall Clean Up.
- Although room rentals have been down, parking rentals continued nicely in 2023. The Graduate has continued to rent and manage the parking lot for MSU Football weekends. We are looking to add more rental revenues in 2024.

The Church has been exploring the possibility of a Capital Campaign to upgrade the Social Hall, Sanctuary, chancel areas, and the Sanctuary Organ. Nancy Danhof and Sandy Draggoo have coordinated this effort. Matrix was hired to provide the church with construction documents in preparation for a contractor bid to replace HVAC equipment in the Sanctuary and Social Hall. In addition, Matrix was to give a structural report of the pipe organ lofts in the Sanctuary. Barry Rony was hired as a construction consultant for cost estimating and administrative support. Elevate Studio Architects was hired and has provided preliminary renderings for all three phases of the project.

Annual Report of the Community Engagement Ministry

Kim Gools Chairperson of the Community Engagement Ministry

The Community Engagement Ministry continued to be blessed by the giving of The Peoples Church, and the loving generosity of TPC was felt in our own community, the nation, and our faith neighbors around the world. As always, CEM is grateful to the congregation for its support and faith in us to distribute church funds. We hope to establish more volunteer opportunities in the coming year and expand outreach to those in need.

Four members of our congregation serve as denomination representatives: Jim Dalley (United Church of Christ), Susan Kilmer (United Methodist Church), Joan Wright (Presbyterian Church USA), and Phyllis Grummon (American Baptist Churches). There are 13 active members on the CEM roster this year.

2023 Ministry Transitions

We lost a long-time member with the passing of Charles Blackman. Charles always provided a voice of reason with his articulate discourse.

Budget

The 2023 yearly budget approved by the congregation was \$72,000. CEM very much appreciates the trust and support shown by the Elders and Finance Committee with this generous amount.

Giving and Engagement

As in past years, CEM focused on six specific areas for funding: education, food insecurity, homelessness, disaster relief, foreign mission work, and caring ministries. Giving opportunities in monetary, goods, time, and donations continued to increase and be embraced by the congregation.

This year, local organizations received the largest percentage of our funds (53%), with national organizations receiving 14%, international organizations receiving 27%, and both personal needs closet and pastoral fund each receiving 3%.

A detailed report is attached. Some highlights follow:

Local

Local funds were distributed to many area organizations, some as traditional giving and others as new projects:

- Our partnership with Edgewood Village has continued to flourish. We provided our annual contribution of \$3,500 for programming needs. Educational needs of the children continued through the CACS Head-start program that is housed at Edgewood, after-school tutoring, Scholar program for grades 6th-12th to assist in successful admission to colleges, field trips to the Wharton Center, Pistons games, nature centers, and MSU to name a few.
- We increased our support of MSU's FAME department (Fostering Academics Mentoring Excellence) with a \$1,500 gift, and we hosted their annual Harvest Dinner. FAME supports MSU students who have aged out the foster care system and/or are homeless.
- In addition to the four organizations highlighted above, The Peoples Church was able to provide support to the Greater Lansing Food Bank, Advent House, Boys and Girls Club of Lansing, Helping Women Period, Christian Services, Haven House, St. Vincent's Refugee Services, Loaves and Fishes, Southside Community Kitchen, City Rescue Mission, Cristo Rey, and denominational summer camps.

National

Distribution of funds to national organizations included support to Re-Member, which supports the Oglala Lakota Nation in South Dakota, and to the UCC denomination for victims of the Maui wildfires. With respect to disaster relief, our congregation went above and beyond with their personal contributions to these organizations.

International

Disaster relief:

Funds were dispersed to the UCC denomination to provide disaster relief to victims of the Turkey earthquake and to World Community Kitchen to aid in the feeding of victims in Israel and Palestine. As with national disasters, the congregation donated generously to these causes. Additionally, CEM continued to support our denominational missionaries:

- Rick and Anita Gutierrez in South Africa (American Baptist), working to train and equip Health Builders to combat issues such as HIV/AIDs, high blood pressure, diabetes, and malaria. Also training others to begin and hold Bible studies.
- Tracy King-Ortega in Nicaragua (Presbyterian)
- Jefferson Knight in Liberia, Africa (UMC), coordinating the Water for Life program.
- Jeffrey Mensendiek in Japan (UCC), focusing on Global Ministries with focus on dignity education, conflict resolution, and the Aizu Radiation Center.

Distribution of funds to international organizations also included support of:

- NYAKA – providing community-based solutions to address the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children in rural southwestern Uganda. TPC has supported NYAKA since 2010.
- The Haiti Nursing School for scholarships, which continue to be greatly appreciated in this country devastated with natural disasters, disease, and poverty.
- Heifer International – a global nonprofit working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable, values-based holistic community development.
- CROP Walk

Additional Funds

The congregation was extremely generous throughout the year by contributing money for the Holiday Food Baskets, CROP walk, disaster relief, and St. Vincent’s Refugee Services.

Donated Time

Many members of our congregation volunteered for Community Engagement projects. These included shopping and delivering Holiday Food Baskets at Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter for both the Lansing area and Edgewood Village families, Southside Community Kitchen, CROP Walk, Personal Needs Bank, and the Visitation Team.

Donated Goods

There was an outpouring of support from the congregation to Community Engagement’s request to purchase needed donations for various organizations. These donations included Christmas gifts for Edgewood Village children, snowpants and children’s outerwear to Judson Memorial Baptist Church’s Love Clothing Closet, items for the Personal Needs Bank, Undie Sunday, back-to-school supplies for Edgewood children, and items for FAME’s Caring Closet.

Much appreciation and heartfelt thanks goes to those serving on this ministry this year; Mimi Burpee, Jim Dalley, Barbara Dunlap, Phyllis Grummon, Emily Anderson, Lary Hill, Susan Kilmer, Erik Mackey, Ruth Worthington, Joan Wright, Stephanie Ware, Bev Mason, and Kim Gools, chair.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MINISTRY
2023 CATEGORIZED GIVING
Annual Budget \$72,000**

FINAL	LOCAL-4106	NATIONAL-4107	INTERNATIONAL-4110
SPENT	\$30,225	\$7500	\$29.656
EDUCATION Scholarships	One Love Global \$5,000		Haiti Nursing Program \$4000
FOOD CLOTHING SHELTER TRANSPORT	Edgwood \$3500 Lan.Food Bank \$2000 Helping Women Period \$2000 Southside Kitchen \$3500 Food Baskets \$524 Haven House \$735 St. Vincents Refugee Svcs. \$500 FAME \$1500 Christian Svcs. \$1000 City Res. Mission \$ 500 Loaves & Fishes \$1000 Boys & Girls Club \$1000 Advent House \$2000 St.Vincents - boots \$2000 Christo Rey \$319.81	Heifer \$500	Crop Walk \$500 Nyaka \$5000 World Ctr. Kitchen \$5000
MISSIONS Camps Missions	Camps: Methodist \$500 Lake Mi Presby \$250 Det Presby \$250 Baptist \$500	ReMember Indian Res. \$2,000	Baptist \$2500 Methodist \$2500 Presbyterian \$2500 UCC \$2500 Baptist Missionary Brunch \$155.69
DISASTER RELIEF	MSU Spartan Strong Fun \$2,000	UCC Maui Fires \$,5000	UCC (Turkey Earthquake relief) \$5000
CARING 4112	<u>\$2,200</u>		

Personal Needs Bank 4108 Pastoral Fund	<u>\$2,000</u>		
---	----------------	--	--

Annual Report of the Finance Ministry

John Lindley, Chairperson of the Finance Ministry

Members of the Finance Ministry in 2023: John Lindley (Chair), Dave Brower (Treasurer), Ken Beall, Richard Comstock, Ron Dooley, Hunter Johnson, Jon Lundy, Dave Ronk, and Greg Ware, as well as Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe, Jess Beurkens, and Lindsey Bramlet from the Church staff, who participated in most meetings.

The 2023 focus of the Finance Ministry was to continue work to ensure both the short and long-term financial health of The Peoples Church through intentional budgeting, attention to revenue sources and expenses, and process and system improvements where appropriate.

Governmental programs, mostly COVID-19 pandemic-related, designed to provide financial assistance (Federal Paycheck Protection Program or “PPP” loans and State early childhood program grants), ceased in 2023 as predicted. Expenses and spending pressures for 2023, however, continued to outpace relatively stagnant donation levels resulting in the development, passage, and implementation of a 2023 operating budget with expected deficit of roughly \$206,000.

As Church leadership continues to focus on ministry, programming, and attraction that will undoubtedly result in increased attendance and contributions, the significant cash surpluses resulting from COVID-era assistance were earmarked to transition revenues, expenses, and operations into more sustainable, long-term levels.

Through mindful spending, resulting in lower-than expected expenses, and slightly higher than expected revenue from congregation contributions, the Preschool, and other income sources, 2023 closed out with a smaller than expected budget deficit of an estimated \$108,856.

Peoples Church Treasurer Dave Brower worked closely with Finance Administrator Jess Beurkens on two time-saving internal financial management changes in 2023. Monthly and year-end financial statements are now prepared through the Church’s accounting system, ACS, rather than manually prepared, and payroll has been outsourced to a payroll processing company.

Worship Service/Offertory and Giving

In-person worship continued its slightly upward trend toward pre-pandemic levels in 2023. The availability and convenience of online streamed worship services and the caution practiced by many continued to result in high levels of online attendance – consistently ranging from 100 to 200 viewers at each 10:30 a.m. worship service. While the expanded online reach is wonderful

for ministry, capturing the potential generosity of these members through financial contributions poses an ongoing challenge.

The generosity of the People Church congregation was again reflected in roughly \$737,639 in giving this year. This number slightly exceeded the \$720,000 goal for 2023.

The Peoples Church Capital Campaign

Through 2023, members of the Finance Ministry have served in supportive roles as the Council of Elders and the Steering Committee underwent considerable efforts in defining the scope of the Capital Campaign being presented to the Congregation for consideration in early 2024. Ensuring the establishment of restricted funds for accepting contributions and beginning the process of identifying potential financing relationships were among the preparations.

The Peoples Church Preschool

Due to the continued hard work of staff, the Peoples Church Preschool remained nearly full of children and nearly fully staffed throughout the year despite new challenges brought on by the expansion of households eligible for free early childhood care. Further, operations continue to maintain the Preschool's regional reputation and result in waiting lists for families to enroll at many levels. Revenues for the Preschool (\$1,354,350) were \$2,213 below budgeted amount (\$1,356,563). Expenses for the Preschool were \$1,202,412, versus the budgeted amount of \$1,190,798.

Endowment Fund

The Finance Ministry and Endowment Fund Committee continued on the path to reduce the Fund's distribution rate from 5.0% to 4.0%, reaching that goal in 2023. The distribution rate of 4.0% provided for an overall distribution amount of \$118,940 from the Endowment Fund, with a distribution to the Church's General Fund of \$102,845, which was realized over the year.

The investment portfolio under the management of Merrill Lynch generated \$78,779 in interest and dividends and \$117,321 in realized capital gains (total income \$196,100). Domestic equity markets rebounded in 2023 with an increase over 20% while bond markets continued lackluster performance. The Endowment Fund began the year with a balance of \$2,973,500 and increased with market performance, after distributions, to the year-end balance of \$3,101,432.

The Committee will continue to oversee the prudent management of the Endowment Fund's assets, which are invested in accordance with our guidelines in primarily conventional domestic and foreign equities and fixed income securities. The distribution rate is proposed to be maintained at the 4% annual rate in 2024.

2024 Stewardship

Kyle Dymond assumed the position of Stewardship Chair during 2023 and led the 2024 pledge campaign in the 4th quarter.

The 2024 pledge campaign again showed the generosity of Church members, resulting in 189 pledging households for roughly \$605,000. The annual pledged revenue has remained relatively stagnant since 2020 despite creative and thorough efforts of dedicated members and staff.

Annual Report of the Personnel Committee

No report submitted.

Annual Report of the Preschool

Dana Johnson, Peoples Church Preschool Director

Awards, Accreditations, and Certifications

The Preschool won the 'Best of the Best' award for Preschools in the East Lansing area. The Preschool won Best of the Best in the Childcare category for the greater Lansing area for a second year in a row.

A renewal of NAEYC Accreditation was achieved through 2028, following a validation visit in October. The staff prepares program and classroom portfolios for nearly a year in preparation, every five years. The Preschool was originally nationally accredited in 1998.

The Preschool received Nature Explore Recertification in September for our 8th year. We were the third preschool in the state to achieve this certification and we are still one of a small group to achieve this distinction in Michigan.

Community Involvement and Advocacy

The Preschool was once again a host for nursing students from Michigan State University to complete training hours with young children. The preschool also hosted and toured 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 childcare 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 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 childcare professionals, and to highlight the need for federal funding for childcare.

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, as well as the Early Childhood Directors meeting through the Ingham ISD to stay abreast of developments related to funding and the Great Start to Readiness Program (GSRP).

Building Improvements

So many improvements to our facility were made this year! The security system for the preschool, including the elevator, was completed. The building-wide Wi-Fi was upgraded, and the ceiling tiles were replaced on the second floor.

Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom Updates

We had wonderful participation for this spring's Outdoor Classroom Makeover. We relocated the art area and it now includes an acrylic art table, a two-sided see through easel, and a small waterproof storage area for art materials. An accessory wall was added to the waterfall table and regular water table so that items to use inside the table are readily available and easily stored. A large chalkboard wall was also added. The former sound wall area was changed into a cabin/dramatic play area, and the sound wall was relocated next to the addition of four large, new flower chimes. Multiple items were repaired by volunteers, and we renewed our plantings outside the entrance gates and along the fence line. Special thanks to staff and families for helping to achieve this year's goals.

Professional Development

Staff members received Active Violence Safety Training from the East Lansing Police Department. Several staff members attended the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children conference in Grand Rapids. Staff members also attended the Nature Preschool Institute conference in Nebraska this year for the first time.

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

Ful- time Lead Teachers: Thomas Bond, Laura Corr, Jessica Dack, Jessica Derby, Beth Detzler, Shirley Green, Taurie Konkel, Michaela Krohn, Molly Lemke, Julie Pitsonis, Katie Reinecke, Alison Wieland, and Mikayla Williams

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).

Annual Report of the Welcome Ministry

Diane Shafer, Co-Chair of Welcome Ministry

Welcome Ministry duties included overseeing the Welcome Desk and recruiting and scheduling greeters, Holy Grounds Coffee Fellowship volunteers, and parking lot attendants. We held one all-church gathering (the Chili Cookoff) and scheduled volunteers for the fall kickoff chicken dinner. We organized three new members classes and four new member inductions. Ministry leaders included Julie Pierce (Co-Chair), Robin Matheson (Co-Chair), Diane Shafer, and Bob Steinkamp, who took over for Robin Matheson when she left Michigan for the winter. Regular members included Paul Babbitt (head usher), Jessica Eysselinck, Barb Free, Martha Hibbs, Jane Ledebuhr, Nancy Seymour, and Nancy Wilson, who joined our group in July. Bob Ference is an honorary member who lives at Burcham and keeps our TPC members who reside there informed on what's happening at the church. Senior Pastor Dr. Monroe, Associate Pastor Hansen, and Beth Lundy, Membership Coordinator, attend our meetings. Co-chairs for 2024 are Julie Pierce and Bob Steinkamp.

Welcome Desk

Diane Shafer still coordinated one to two people to staff the Welcome Desk on Sunday mornings from 9:15 – 10:30 a.m. who also stay for 15 – 20 minutes following worship. This scheduling allowed us to catch those leaving the 8:30 a.m. service and greet those arriving for the Voices of the Community at 9:30 a.m. (when scheduled), as well as those arriving for the 10:30 a.m. worship service. All Welcome Ministry members pitched in and took turns at the Welcome Desk, greeting people and assisting with questions, but Martha Hibbs volunteered often and was great at introducing herself to new visitors and remembering names. Our goal was to make sure everyone received a smile, hello, handshake and/or hug at every service they attended.

Welcome Area Spruce Up

Bob Steinkamp worked diligently to come up with a plan to spruce up the Welcome Area. The process included working with the staff, Building and Grounds Ministry, and others to ensure that we could move forward with the ideas and colors. Progress was made including purchasing a piece of artwork and deciding on the scope for the project. We are looking forward to proceeding with the project in 2024.

Church-wide Events

On February 12, the Welcome Ministry was excited to again host the Empty Bowls Chili Cook-Off (the first one since the Covid shutdowns). A ton of planning and work goes into this event, but it is so much fun. There was a total of 26 volunteers including servers for 14 adult chili entries, and three youth chili entries. Elisha Smith and Evan O'Hara won the adult category and Gabe and Theo Eysselinck won the youth category. Marc Lyon did a great job as event emcee. The Greater Lansing Potters Guild donated bowls to sell and \$784 was raised for the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

The Welcome Ministry also facilitated and participated in the Kickoff Chicken Dinner on September 10. At least 23 volunteers were involved. More than 200 attended and \$627 in donations was collected.

For both events: Welcome Ministry members scheduled all the volunteers, coordinated the volunteers the day of the event, and worked closely with church staff to plan set up, menus,

and any other needs. We were thrilled to have so many volunteers, especially the families whose young children volunteered with them.

TPC Talk n' Tour, New Members Classes & Dinners and New Member Inductions

'Peoples 101' became 'TPC Talk n' Tour.' The tours were offered on March 5, April 2, May 7, August 9, September 3, October 1, November 5, and December 3. Tours were initially planned for new members and visitors, but they were open to anyone. It was interesting to see how many longtime church members took advantage of this opportunity to tour the church and learn more about it.

New members classes evolved also. Initially a combination class and dinner at Rev. Dr. Monroe's home was offered on February 23, but it was too much for one evening. For the classes offered on April 23 and September 17, people interested in joining attended one class at the church with Welcome Ministry members and a pastor, then attended a dinner at Dr. Monroe's home. Beth Lundy kept track of frequent church attendees and others who had expressed interest in membership. She invited them to the classes and dinners and kept track of paperwork as it was submitted. Robin Matheson handled the follow-up and details for induction. Classes were well attended, and guests welcomed the opportunity to join Dr. Monroe for dinner and meet other potential new members in an informal setting. We were thrilled to welcome the following visitors into church membership. On March 12: Austin Bekkering, Austin Owen, Maryann Boyd, Erika Hall and Austin Scott, Hunter Johnson and Shanna Miller, and Alex Smith. On May 21: Katie and Richard Norton, Tammy and David Grimshaw and Jim McClurkin. On October 29: Kristen and Shawn Calabrese (with Sam, Malcom and Miles), Danelle and Robert Hovenkamp, Holly and Kevin Orr (with Chloe & Lila) and Nancy and John Swart. On December 10: Carlie and John Richards (with Atlan), Cara and Owen Ronk (with Ruby and Kenneth) and Kelsey Osborne-Garth.

Greeters

Julie Pierce led a group of volunteers on Sunday mornings to greet people at the Northwest Entrance as they entered for worship. Greeters volunteered from 10 to 10:30 a.m. and were encouraged to sign up for as many Sundays as they liked, or volunteer one Sunday at a time. There were still very few people who entered at the northeast entrance, so that entrance was typically only staffed for the holidays.

Coffee Fellowship

Diane Shafer, Julie Pierce and Robin Matheson took turns coordinating volunteers to provide coffee and treats on Sunday mornings beginning September 10 after a break during the summer months. Two shifts of one to two people from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. made coffee, set up the tables in Friendship Hall, kept coffee and treats stocked, and cleaned up at the end. We were happy to have new people volunteer, and the Council of Elders also provided volunteers on the Sundays following their meetings.

Parking Attendants

Parking was a challenge, especially when the Farmers Market was in session in Valley Court.

Bob Steinkamp coordinated volunteers to staff the parking lot in two shifts from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. during September and October.

Connections and Ministry Recruitment

Beth Lundy and the pastors make the first official contact with new visitors and worshippers at The Peoples Church. Nancy Seymour continued to send birthday and anniversary cards to new members from her home in Rochester Hills, Michigan and is thrilled to be close enough to attend church in person and meet some of our new members periodically. Welcome Ministry provided candy, and Kathi Mitchell and Alexa Hayes-Murray provided coloring pages and crayons at the Welcome Desk for children. Welcome Ministry volunteers ensured that the sensory kit was available to children who could use the items in the kit during worship for comfort and keeping their hands busy. Additionally, the Welcome Desk is home to a set of new listening devices available to anyone who needs one.

Annual Report of the Worship Ministry

Penelope Swartz, Chairperson of the Worship Ministry

B.3.5.6 Worship Ministry

This Ministry, under the direction and with the approval of the Council of Elders, shall recommend and implement the conduct of public worship including liturgy, sacraments or ordinances, music, usher, and matters relating to special services and arrangements; and shall consult with the Senior Pastor on ministerial and pastoral activities. (A.13.7.6)

B.3.5.6.1

The Ministry shall attend to the spiritual growth of the membership including all aspects of the worship service. The ministry shall oversee the total music program of the church. (Amended 11-15-11)

B.3.5.6.2

The Ministry shall oversee communion and baptism services.

B.3.5.6.3

The Ministry shall recommend guidelines for weddings, funerals, and memorial services. Sometimes it is good to be reminded of the focus of any given ministry. Covid-19 changed many aspects of worship at The Peoples Church during its reign. In-person attendance was suspended for a time, and only cautiously resumed following social-distancing protocols. Weekly Chapel worship was cancelled. Judy Kabodian continued to provide organ and piano music. The Sanctuary Choir was suspended; the music program consisted of masked section leaders carrying the day. The children's Christmas and Easter programs were pre-recorded offerings. Communion consisted of pre-packaged, individual, disposable offerings of a "peel-away wafer and juice shot".

New ways to give stay-at-home congregants some sort of worship experience were initially cobbled together through on-line, real-time streaming from the church sanctuary. Those once “rough-around-the-edges” offerings have evolved into first-rate productions, allowing for the capability to livestream any Sanctuary service, including memorial celebrations, lectures, and other presentations.

As in-house services slowly resumed over the last 18 months, some previous ways of going about worship continued as before. The Sanctuary and Carol (handbell) Choirs resumed. Communion was once again offered by intinction, served by elders and the pastoral staff. Ushers once again collected plate offerings during the Sanctuary service, although many members had already elected to give to the church on-line or through other means. The acolytes, Sunday school children, once again resumed the role of lighting the communion table candles during the prelude music to worship, and extinguishing the candles at the conclusion of the worship. Special thanks go to head usher, Paul Babbitt, for his gentle overseeing of the acolytes, and, with his trusty fellow usher, Gary Coopes, for recruiting new ushers into the weekly service rotation.

Some ushering responsibilities did change after Covid-19. Once Chapel services resumed, ushering duties were all but eliminated. A faithful crew of dedicated Chapel participants took on the responsibility of setting up and cleaning up after communion for the weekly service. Additionally, since there was no longer a formal offering moment, volunteers took on the responsibility of taking any free-will offering to the church office, along with the attendance sheet for the day and any extra bulletins. These dedicated volunteers, all former church elders, served on a once-a-month rotational basis.

Communion preparation for the first Sunday sanctuary communion was accomplished by the volunteer efforts of Kari Devereaux, Karen Flory, Gary Coopes, Jan Perron, and Penny Swartz. The office staff made sure there was sufficient bread (including gluten-free options), grape juice, and a ceremonial loaf for the minister’s use. Dan Taylor has been extraordinarily gracious in providing the smaller, ceremonial loaf for use at the 8:30 a.m. Chapel service.

Taizé Services on the fourth Sunday of the month continued into its second year. Held in the McCune Chapel, monthly musicians include Sarah and Kyle Dymond, Joshua Barton, and a variety of pianists including Mary Anne Larzelere, Mimi Burpee, Neil Mueller, and Judy Kabodian. At the recommendation of our Music Director, Dr. Jonathon Reed, some of these musicians are paid, while others gladly volunteer their services. The Taizé service attracts anywhere from 12 to 28 participants and is genuinely appreciated by those in attendance.

In keeping with previous traditions, but with some tweaking in presentation and timing, sanctuary decorations for Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas continue. While many volunteers are to be thanked, special recognition go to Val Nilson and Dottie Spousta. Pastors Monroe and Hansen have also added their special touches to the season of Lent, including Maundy Thursday, and to World Communion services.

One of the accomplishments of the Worship Ministry this year was the creation of new banners for the Sanctuary, a result of a convergence of ideas. The origami crane chains, flanked by colorful ribbons, were designed to both bring forward the colors of our beautiful stained-glass

window at the back of the chancel, and to symbolize hope, healing, and possibility. As replacements for the commercially produced banners, the crane chains have been well received.

However, one of the most significant changes that falls under the purview of the Worship Ministry came about with the resignation of our Director of Music, Dr. Jonathan Reed, who has served The Peoples Church for over 30 years. His tenure here will end at the end of May 2024. The church and the music program have benefitted enormously under his leadership. His legacy will be well-remembered. Still, this presents yet another opportunity for the church to explore new musical avenues.

Yes, Covid-19 changed many things, but it also allowed, challenged, and sometimes forced us to rethink and redesign the worship experience. In some ways, it liberated us into creativity. I would argue that's been a very good healthy step in the life of any church. My hope would be that ongoing creativity in concept, approach, and practices of worship become the watch words for the future of our church.