



Portal

April 2024

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

ON MY MIND

There is a private Facebook group where women from the greater Lansing area post questions and information, things like: *Where can I find a dentist that takes my insurance? Does anyone have the name of a good mechanic? Check out this new restaurant in Okemos!* When it comes up on my feed, I sometimes scroll through the answers, amazed by the care and concern that is shared.

Lately, though, someone has been asking the same question over and over. Where can I find a church that is welcoming and has great contemporary worship music? At first, people asked clarifying questions: What do you mean by welcoming? (Welcoming of LGBTQ+ was the response.) What kind of contemporary music? (Something with a drum kit and a praise band, was the answer.) Does it need to be a Christian church? (Yes.) The hive mind was baffled. No one had a particularly good answer. A couple people suggested Edgewood UCC or The Peoples Church, but the caveat was that both churches sang hymns and had organs. Other people said that Mount Hope has a great band, but they weren't openly welcoming.

I ventured a response, noting that there seems to be a strange correlation in Christian churches: those with the most progressive music usually have the most traditional (i.e., conservative) theology. This is something I have noticed in my 30 years of ministry, and I think it is especially true for predominantly white churches. Of course there are churches that have both traditional worship music and conservative theology, but you almost never see a church with a praise band and a pride flag. Because of this, contemporary Christian music hasn't produced much in the way of inclusive music; there's no market.

This whole issue has made me ponder what we hold fast to and what we let go of when it comes to worship. If we are willing to stretch and grow when it comes to theology, shouldn't we be willing to stretch and grow when it comes to music? Or maybe the music is just a matter of taste and not every sort of music appeals to every sort of worshipper? For me, though, the true test is the theology. If you preach the transformative love of God for all people – without exception – I don't care what music is playing! It is the welcoming word of the Good News that is music to my ears!



Peace,
-Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe

The office is now using one calendar to schedule all events, replacing The Facilities Dude and Realm Calendars previously used.

FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

As someone who grew up on watered down church coffee, I'm far from a coffee snob. I'll drink just about anything. This lack of pickiness means I developed a pretty mean caffeine habit in my adult life. However, over the past year or so, I've made a pretty earnest attempt to get my intake in check. I try to limit myself to three caffeinated drinks a day, and I stop drinking caffeine by 2 p.m.

Of course, those habits went out the window when I took five college students on a spring break service trip to Memphis in late February. I didn't ingest the same amount of caffeine I regularly consumed in college, but I came close. There were lots of early mornings, long days, and many, many hours in the church's transit van. That means an extra morning cup of coffee or an afternoon Diet Coke were much-needed Godsend.



One of the many organizations the college students and I volunteered at was a place called Manna House, which offers hospitality to Memphis' unhoused population. Lucky for me, Manna House also serves coffee and lots of it. Volunteers brew strong Folger's coffee in giant 100-cup urns so that each person that passes through for a shower or a change of clothes is greeted with a cup. The Manna House organizers also intentionally leave cream and sugar out on a table so visitors decide for themselves just how sugary or creamy they want their cup of joe. Coffee is so essential to the ministry of Manna House that it's part of the homegrown liturgy recited before the center opens each morning.

*God bless the coffee! **Make it hot!***

*God bless the sugar! **Make it sweet!***

*God bless the creamer! **May it take away all life's bitterness!***

My time at Manna House reminded me that a cup of coffee made to your specifications is a small but necessary act of grace that's worth celebrating. In my day-to-day life, I'm not nearly as grateful as I should be. Throughout that week in Memphis, God reminded me over and over again of the power of ordinary blessings. Whether it be your daily coffee habit or your evening walk, may you, too, find God's presence in the ordinary yet precious things of life this Easter season.

God bless the coffee!

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Haley Hansen

EARTH STEWARDSHIP

With the celebration of Earth Day (April 22nd) just a few weeks away, it's a great time to focus attention on the individual and collective steps that can be taken to enhance our stewardship of the environment God has entrusted to us. Earth Stewardship invites all of us to focus on the daily activities in which we all engage. There may be some small or big steps each of us can take to reduce the impacts, large or small, we may be having on the environment. This month, we take a look at our food intake with the understanding that in some cases one may or may not always have a choice in the food they are about to purchase or consume.

A member of our Earth Stewardship committee received and shared with our earth stewardship committee a report that highlighted "individual actions" that impact climate change. The report compiled its findings from several well-known climate and sustainability research studies. The report demonstrated that how we produce and package our food impacts our environment. The worst emitters of carbon dioxide were found in live animal meat production. Beef (cattle) production was by far the worst emitter, more than doubling the emissions of second-place finisher, lamb and mutton. Following beef and lamb, in order, were dairy (cheese and milk), pork, farmed fish, poultry (chicken, turkey) and eggs. Of course, these food sources likely comprise a fairly large portion of most eaters' diet. So it would be difficult (next to impossible) to go COLD TURKEY and eliminate all of these immediately at one time. But it may be possible to reduce consumption of these sources, gradually employing a variety of approaches and strategies. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Try eating more plant-based products or recipes (nuts, legumes, vegetables, fruit).
- Buy in bulk when possible vs. prepackaged foods.
- Start and/or increase composting.
- Plant your own organic vegetable garden (use only natural fertilizers).
- Set refrigerator temps between 36-38 F and freezer temps between 0-5 F.
- Cook food in the microwave or an air fryer instead of the oven (uses 50 percent less energy).
- Buy more seasonal, locally grown foods (several local farmers markets).
- Join a CSA (community supported agriculture) with a food box subscription.

Next month, we will review strategies for reducing our energy foot print on the environment.

CHURCH BY THE NUMBERS

Attendance					Budget			
Date	8:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m. online	10:30 a.m. in person	Total	as of 2/29	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance
01/07/24	10	141	235	386				
01/14/24	13	162	136	298				
01/21/24	17	156	195	368	Pledge	163,039	102,500	60,539+
01/28/24	12	142	230	384	Other giving	13,888	19,167	(5,279)-
02/04/24	20	182	203	405				
02/11/24	15	147	173	335				
02/18/24	19	150	169	338				
02/25/24	20	141	234	375	Total Giving	176,927	121,667	55,260

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

FAMILY GAME NIGHT: We had four families, plus Mrs. Reed, Ms. Elisha, and Reverend Haley attend our family game night on March 16. We ate snacks, played games, and had fun! Thanks to everyone who came out!



SUNDAY SCHOOL: In March, we kicked off March is reading month. We even had Reba the therapy dog come visit Sunday School classes in mid-March. Students also received a free book from the Library



Committee and a bookmark to track their reading over the month. Students who completed 16 days of reading received a prize at the end of the month! Students also learned about Jesus washing the disciples feet, the last supper and, of course, Easter. We continue to practice the Lord's Prayer each Sunday.

CAROL CHOIR: Led by the amazing Mrs. Liz Reed, students sang for the congregation on March 10. They did a fabulous job! Their next performances are April 14 and May 12. We are always looking to add singers to Carol Choir. If your K-5th grader is interested, all they have to do is show up to the Carol Choir room on the third floor at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays.

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 can be completed online through Realm. We also need volunteers to help set up, run the event, and clean up. If you are available to help, please contact me (information is below) or sign up digitally.

THANK YOU: Lastly, I would like to say THANK YOU to everyone who helps make our Sunday School and our Children's Ed programming possible. It is a pleasure to work with you and to see how much our Peoples Church kiddos are blossoming in their faith and friendships.

Peace and Blessings,

-Alexa Hayes-Murray, Children's Ed. Director

PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Hello PCYG Student's and Families,

April means two things... PCYG CAKE AUCTION and SENIOR SUNDAY! I am so excited for this year's cake auction, the chance to come together as a congregation, and the opportunities that will be available thanks to the support of our church family. Be ready for some exciting changes at this year's cake auction... including a cake walk for our younger friends, and a combination of live and silent auction items. I can't wait for April 14th! If you are interested in baking for the cake auction this year, please reach out to me via email so I can make sure we have enough cakes!

April 28th is this year's Senior Sunday! Our undergraduates will be making breakfast for our seniors and their families prior to the service. After being recognized during the service, our seniors will be hanging out in the Friendship Hall after the service — stop by to say hello, check out their senior-boards, and encourage them as they step into their next adventure!

If you know any students or families interested in PCYG, please reach out to me so I can get them connected! You can reach me through my email esmith@thepeopleschurch.com.

Joyfully,

-Elisha Smith, Youth Director

PEOPLES CHURCH PRESCHOOL

Perhaps above all, our goal is to contribute to making the children that attend Peoples Church Preschool responsible, caring citizens. Beginning in the Infant Room, the children are taught about being kind and gentle with one another, animals and nature. This is done through reading books, speaking to the children (taking advantage of teachable moments) and through modeling prosocial behavior. Once the children are in Preschool, they are taught to think about what is in their, and others' best interest, and to speak out if there is unfairness.



The experiences children have and the concepts they learn from birth to age 8 can impact their entire lifespans (*Britto, Engle, & Super 2013*).

For this reason, when creating the curriculum, it is recommended that there is equal emphasis placed on social studies, similar to that of science, technology, engineering and math. To be successful in teaching these topics, new educators are taught the importance of understanding how much children are capable of and building on those skills.

To do this, teachers ask preschoolers about their opinions. Questions often begin with, "What do you think?" Children are able to navigate problem solving when educators frame the dilemma and ask the children to come up with ideas on how to proceed with fairness. This practice introduces them to topics such as thinking about the perspective of others, fairness, equality and justice.

-Dana Johnson, Preschool Director

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

We are pleased to give you an update on progress of our People's Church Capital Campaign — Generation to Generation! You can rest assured that we are moving forward.

At the Council of Elders meeting held on February 26th, the Chair of Elders, John Lindley, led our Elders meeting with great efficiency. An updated report was given by Sandy Draggoo, co-chair of the Capital Campaign (along with Nancy Danhof).

As you know, we have three phases of the campaign: Phase 1, the Social Hall renovation and our impactful community outreach project; Phase 2, the Sanctuary renovation; Phase 3, the replacement of our organ. As of 1/1/24, over \$1,381,000 has been either pledged or contributed to the Capital Campaign. Of this amount, unrestricted cash on hand totals in excess of \$181,000. The goal is to bid Phase 1 in the fall of 2024 and for construction to start in the summer of 2025. Phase 2 will go to bid in the fall of 2025, with the hope of construction in the summer of 2026.

In addition, Elders unanimously passed three resolutions. The first resolution was to name Zack Matthews as the project manager in order to assist with the Capital Campaign construction planning and oversight. The second resolution authorized the execution of the contracts of Elevate Studios and Matrix Engineering Consultants to present more detailed and final plans for the improvements, as well as overall administration of the construction process. The third resolution authorized the expenditure of up to \$1,500 of campaign funds for fundraising, communications and marketing.

With your continued prayers and pledged gifts, we will continue to move forward with our exciting Capital Campaign. Thank you for both!

- Sandy Draggoo,
Co-Chair of The Peoples Church Capital Campaign

MUSIC MINISTRY

Music Sunday is **April 28**. Please join us as the Sanctuary choir performs an iconic work, *Mozart's Requiem*, with full orchestra. This will be Jonathan Reed's last Music Sunday so you won't want to miss it!

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With your pledges and contributions, The Peoples Church Community Engagement Ministry is honored to be able to financially contribute to Cristo Rey Community Center - a center that serves, without discrimination, a multitude of vulnerable people in our tri-county area. Your dollars have an important impact there for 78,000 people annually. Cristo Rey is a great example of caring for the whole person by offering one stop shopping with their free clothing bank, a free food pantry and community garden, free access to legal advice, and free access to primary care medical services staffed by doctors. All this is under one roof - how impressive! It is also on the bus line for easy access. Cristo Rey gives complimentary guided tours for the public every second and fourth Tuesday from 8:30 a.m. to approximately 9:30 a.m. If interested, please phone (517) 372-4700 in advance to let them know you are coming.

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 side of the Sanctuary. In April, we will be collecting men's and women's shorts, shirts and belts.

WELCOME MINISTRY

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

If you'd like to learn about becoming a member of The Peoples Church, join Rev. Dr. Monroe and several ministry representatives in the 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.

The Knitting People

We will meet in the Robertson Room on April 25 from 1-3. Please bring completed items for blessing. We continue to work on baby blankets, prayer shawls, hats, mittens and slippers. We have contributed more than 175 pairs of slippers to kits for women who are being treated for breast cancer! We invite knitters and crocheters to join us; we have everything you need to get started, in addition to many experienced teachers!

The Annual Book and Jewelry Sale

The annual book and jewelry sale will be held on Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19. Book donations are now being accepted and can be dropped off in the stage area of the Social Hall any time prior to May 12. Jewelry donations may be dropped off year round!

TPC TALK N' TOUR

Due to the new members' interest class scheduled for Sunday, May 5, there will be no TPC TNT (Talk 'n Tour) in May.

The Reading People

The Reading People will meet in the Robertson Room on April 18, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., to discuss *A Rip in Heaven*, by Jeanine Cummins, with our discussion led by Margie Steinkamp. We welcome you to come at 1 p.m. with your sack lunch for a time of conversation and fellowship before our discussion. All are welcome!

PUB THEOLOGY

with
The Peoples Church

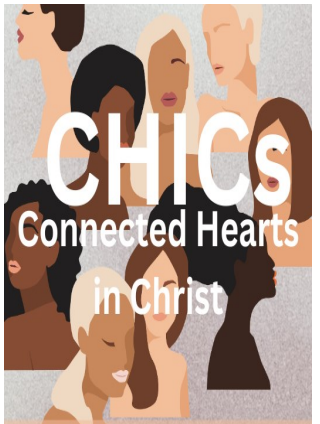
1ST TUESDAY
OF THE MONTH
APRIL 2 | 6:30
PM

Thoughtful conversations about faith, scripture, & spirituality.

HOPCAT 300 GROVE ST.
EAST LANSING, MI

Welcome Back to In-Person Great Decisions
Topic: Climate Change in the Great Lakes Region
May 9, 4:30 - 6 p.m.

Save the date! We invite you to come to our first post-Covid Great Decisions program on May 9, from 4:30 to 6 p.m., in the Robertson Room. In conjunction with the Peoples Church Earth Stewardship Committee, we are pleased to welcome our speaker, Omar Gates, a Climatologist for GLISA, the Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments Center at the University of Michigan. He will address the topic of Climate Change in the Great Lakes Region, with a focus on Michigan; this will be followed by a Q and A session. Please join us!



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 pm, 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

SOUPER SUNDAY

MARK YOUR CALDENARS FOR APRIL 21 IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 10:30 A.M. SERVICE FOR THE PEOPLES CHURCH SOUPER SUNDAY. WE WILL BE OFFERING 3 DIFFERENT SOUPS, SALAD, BREAD AND DESSERT. JOIN US IN THE SOCIAL HALL FOR THIS FUN CHURCH COMMUNITY EVENT. SUGGESTED DONATION \$5 PER PERSON.



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