



# Portal

## June & July 2023

Rev. Dr. Shawntea Monroe

Senior Pastor

### FROM THE ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Without a doubt, I believe one of the best things about warmer weather is the chance to get outside and play ball.

Playing recreational league softball has become a hallmark of my summers. Do not mistake me. I would never in a million years describe myself as 'athletic,' but I do love the camaraderie, community and the promise of a post-game burger and a beer.

This love of a rec. league sport would be a shock to my tween self. I was quite anxious about playing sports as a kid. Every mistake I made felt enormous, every strike out was a deep source of embarrassment. For a while, I played the lucrative shortstop position on my 12U softball team, but over time I grew more timid and less sure of my ability to stop the ball.

All this made me a bit hesitant to play again as an adult. I didn't want to be reminded of my athletic shortcomings and childhood embarrassment. But I quickly found that an adult rec. league was a different world entirely. Wins and losses didn't really matter. Folks with all sorts of athletic abilities take the field. Over time, I discovered I was no longer filled with dread walking up to the plate. I actually looked forward to the games.

So what's changed since my childhood softball days? Well, I can safely say my athletic aptitude has not improved. I am not faster nor am I a better hitter. What has vastly changed in the intervening years is my willingness to fail and embrace my shortcomings.

This change has required a great deal of effort on my part. You see, I am a bit of a perfectionist. I want to do things right and I want to do them well. I worry about looking stupid or, heaven forbid, being "bad" at something. I'm often reluctant to try new things. For a long time, my perfectionism was a security blanket. It made me feel safe. However, I eventually realized that my perfectionism held me back. As a kid, my perfectionism kept me from enjoying sports. Today, it often keeps me from being vulnerable and taking risks.

I'm making progress, however. You see, my perfectionism dwindles the more I embrace the Good News. In John's Gospel, Jesus said that he came so that we could have abundant life, and this abundant life allows us to embrace life in its fullness, without fear of failure. After all, God loves us as we are, accepts us regardless of our shortcomings or abilities and fully includes us as members of the beloved community.

As we at the Peoples Church continue to dream and hope together, I pray that we are able to embody this sense of abundant life. I pray we are able to make mistakes and bold choices without fear of failure. After all, the Kingdom of God is a lot like a good rec. league softball team. And the team doesn't need superstar sluggers with perfect batting averages. What it needs is more folks willing to cheer on their teammates and take a big swing when the time comes.

Yours in Christ,  
*Rev. Haley Hansen*

## NEW MEMBERS

On Sunday, May 21, The Peoples Church welcomed five new members! Katie and Richard Norton, Tammy and David Grimshaw, and Jim McClurkin. If you see our new members around the church and wider community, be sure to say “welcome!”



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@TPCEASTLANSING



THE PEOPLES CHURCH  
OF EAST LANSING

## ON MY MIND

“Therefore, welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Romans 15:7

June is Pride Month, when we recognize and celebrate our LGBTQ family. There will be parades and pageants and rainbow flags. As a church that strives to welcome all God’s children, we rejoice in the diversity of God’s creation and recommit ourselves to treating each person with the same love, respect and care that Christ has shown to each of us.

But let’s be clear: it isn’t easy.

It feels like the world is changing with unprecedented speed and it’s hard to keep up. Plus, we all have our own unique histories, experiences and values, and we all make our own assumptions and judgments.

Human beings are so good at drawing lines, making sure that we are always on the right side of the line.

Here’s the catch: Jesus doesn’t draw lines like that. His ministry was all about *erasing* lines, *extending* welcome, and *gathering* all God’s beloved children into God’s kingdom. If we want to be the body of Christ in this place and time, then that is our ministry too. It’s more than flying a flag or a set of words. It’s about loving people as God loves us, with our words and our actions.

My prayer is that all people feel welcome at The Peoples Church!



Yours faithfully,  
-Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe



Every Wednesday  
at 5:30 p.m.  
in the Social Hall

Wednesdays @ Peoples Church is a community dinner  
followed by programming. All are welcome!



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Boys and Girls club of Lansing was founded in 1964 and in 1988 a Capitol Campaign raised \$1,300,000 to build its current facility on Pleasant Grove Road in Lansing. The Club is designed for underprivileged youth and provides a variety of recreation and socialization. More recently, the Club added education and life skills to their focus.

The facility is a safe haven for youth to attend after school and on days school is closed for a \$10 annual fee. It offers pool tables, games, computers, an art room, karate room and a dance room, to name a few, for kids to both entertain and educate themselves and make friends under supervision. Meals are also served. Former MSU basketball players are involved, some of whom hold free basketball clinics.

Funding is provided by large community donors, and two annual fundraising activities during the year – a golf outing in June, and their “Night to Remember” in September. The Community Engagement Ministry donates annually to this incredible organization. To support the Boys and Girls Club of Lansing financially or by volunteering, visit [www.bgclansing.org](http://www.bgclansing.org).

## PEOPLES CHURCH PRESCHOOL



Once children are nearing three years old, their imaginations expand quickly and they begin to participate in what is called Small World Play. For SWP, educators provide materials that allow children to create a life scene where they are the creator and narrator. Materials used include animals, people, pebbles, tree slices, blocks, pretend grass, sand, and other materials. SWP allows children to use their own experiences to build on them by trying out new ideas, and offers the opportunity for children to act out daily routines or past events such as putting a doll to bed or driving a car. It also allows them to experience fantasy play, build their vocabulary, solve problems, and observe cause and effect. In the photos above, the three-year-old classroom has set up Fairies SWP, the four-year-old class has set up bunnies in the forest, and the Jr. Kindergarten class has set up cars and other vehicles.

*-Dana Johnson*





## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Hello!

Here are a few updates and highlights from our Christian Children's Education Program:

VBS registration is still open! This VBS will be at the church, June 19-23, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will be half-day VBS and half-day summer camp adventuring! We need adult and teenage volunteers to help! Please email [vbs@thepeopleschurch.com](mailto:vbs@thepeopleschurch.com) for more information. This once a year event is important not just for the Bible lessons kids learn and mission projects they complete, but also the experiences they have and the friendships they form! Please help us make this week a success!

Sunday school students continue to learn stories from the Bible while engaging in fun games and crafts. On May 14, students painted rocks to honor Peter, the 'rock' on whom Jesus built the church. These rocks will be displayed on the church grounds soon. Also on May 14, we showed appreciation to our fabulous Sunday school teachers. Thank you very much to Jennifer Hunter, Joshua Barton, Danika Van Niel, Angela Biedenbender, Amanda Holmstrom, Kelsey Osborne-Grath, Kristen Calabrese, Phyllis Grummon, Cathy Lancaster, and Margaret Tassaró for helping with our Christian Children's Education program. We appreciate you!

Peace and blessings,  
-Alexa

## PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP



A few members of PCYG enjoy a game of Settlers of Catan.

Do you like laughing, learning, and building community? How about hanging out with youth as they build community and explore who they are and what they believe? If you answered yes, then we're looking for you! PCYG is searching for new, energetic volunteers for the 2023/24 school year! Our beloved volunteer, Jordan Holmes, is headed off to Hong Kong with his wife to teach at an English-speaking school! We are so excited for them as they embark on this adventure, and very sad to lose such a committed and consistent volunteer. Volunteering doesn't require a weekly commitment; it can be flexible! Please reach out to me if you have any interest by emailing [esmith@thepeopleschurch.com](mailto:esmith@thepeopleschurch.com).

The date of the PCYG Family Picnic has been changed! The new date is June 25 following the 9:30 a.m. service!

PCYG students and families, if you are not receiving the PCYG emails, please let me know! Stay safe, soak up the sunshine, and have a wonderful summer!

-Elisha Smith




**SUMMER WORSHIP**  
at  
**The Peoples Church**  
One service at 9:30 AM  
In the Sanctuary

Memorial Day Weekend through  
Labor Day Weekend



All are welcome

**VBS AT THE PEOPLES CHURCH**



COKEBURY'S  
**HERO HOTLINE**  
Called Together to Serve God!

Scan the QR Code to register!



**JUNE 19-23**  
**9 A.M.-3 P.M.**

**COST: \$75**

**HALF DAY OF VBS & HALF DAY SUMMER CAMP ACTIVITIES!**



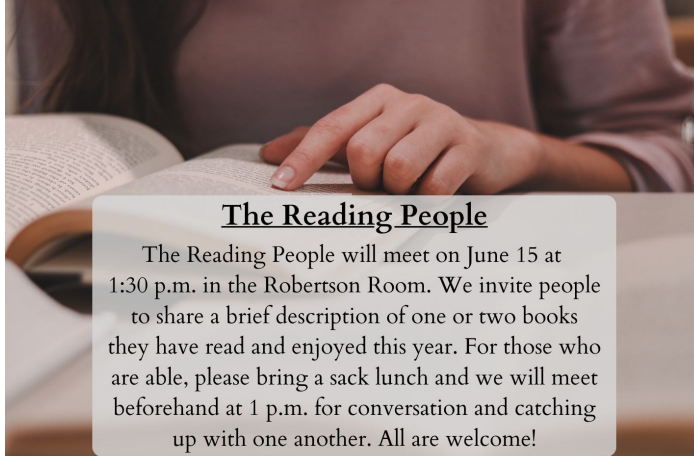
**It's not too early to think about joining BELL CHOIR!**

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

**Pub Theology**

**JUNE 8 • 6:30 PM • CRUNCHY'S**

Engage in conversation about faith, life, and what is happening in the world.

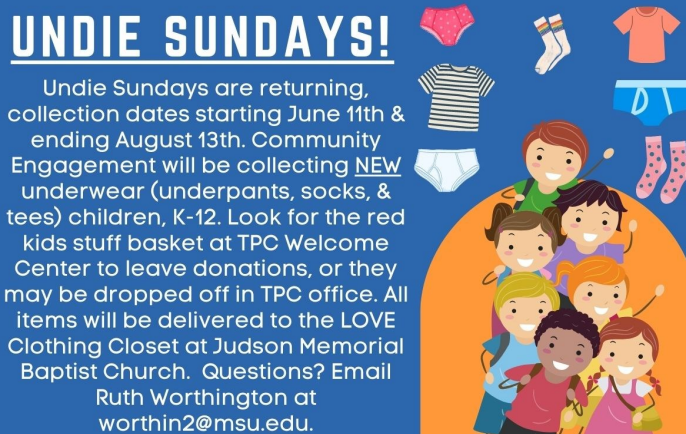



**The Reading People**

The Reading People will meet on June 15 at 1:30 p.m. in the Robertson Room. We invite people to share a brief description of one or two books they have read and enjoyed this year. For those who are able, please bring a sack lunch and we will meet beforehand at 1 p.m. for conversation and catching up with one another. All are welcome!


**UNDIE SUNDAYS!**

Undie Sundays are returning, collection dates starting June 11th & ending August 13th. Community Engagement will be collecting NEW underwear (underpants, socks, & tees) children, K-12. Look for the red kids stuff basket at TPC Welcome Center to leave donations, or they may be dropped off in TPC office. All items will be delivered to the LOVE Clothing Closet at Judson Memorial Baptist Church. Questions? Email Ruth Worthington at [worthin2@msu.edu](mailto:worthin2@msu.edu).




**VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY**

Voices of the Community has concluded for this year. Thank you so much for your attendance and support of this adult education program. We will begin again on September 10 with Johnny Agar from Rockford, Michigan. Johnny is an incredible person living with Cerebral Palsy and participating, with his father, in multi-marathons. Please take time to view his accomplishments on YouTube! Have a great summer!





## NEWS FROM OUR DENOMINATIONS



**umc Michigan**  
**Annual Conference!**

Friday, June 2 - Sunday June 4  
Grand Traverse Resort, Acme MI

June 1: Clergy Session 2 PM

June 2 : Opening Worship and Memorial Service 1 PM. Laity Event 4:15 PM.

June 3: Plenary Sessions, Corporate Session, Service of Recognition Commissioning and Ordination.

June 4: Annual Conference concludes at 4 PM



June 30, 2023 – July 4, 2023

Join us for General Synod 34: the United Church of Christ's first 100% in-person gathering in almost four years! General Synod will be in Indianapolis from Friday, June 30 to Tuesday, July 4. Come to Indianapolis for the United Church of Christ's "Family Reunion," and register to access all things General Synod:

- Inspiring worship services
- Optional fellowship and dining events
- Dozens of engaging workshops
- The exhibit hall
- An electrifying keynote speaker
- Faith-filled business proceedings
- and much more!

Register at [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

There are several ways to keep up with our denominational news, such as subscribing to their online newsletters:

- [www.umnews.org/en/](http://www.umnews.org/en/)
- [michiganumc.org/subscribe/](http://michiganumc.org/subscribe/)
- [ucc.org/news/](http://ucc.org/news/)
- [www.michucc.org/news](http://www.michucc.org/news)
- [www.abc-usa.org/news/](http://www.abc-usa.org/news/)
- [abcofmichigan.flocknote.com](http://abcofmichigan.flocknote.com)
- [www.pcusa.org/blogs-eneewsletters/](http://www.pcusa.org/blogs-eneewsletters/)

Or find & follow our denominations on social media!

**American Baptist Women's Annual Conference**  
**JUNE 2-4**  
St. Francis Retreat Center, Dewitt, MI



**Key Verse: MICAH 6:8**  
He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

**Speaker: DR. TAMARA T. SCOTT**  
LEADING LADY, GALILEE BAPTIST CHURCH KALAMAZOO



- Anointed and highly-sought-after presenter, author, and speaker
- Intercessor and prayer strategist
- Women's Ministry Pastor to wives of Pastors and Ministers
- Chaplain at Bronson Methodist Hospital

**Workshop Leaders**

- Drs. Anita & Rick Gutierrez
- Pastor Sheryl Lucas
- Rev. Nikita McCalister

**American Baptist Women's MINISTRIES OF MICHIGAN**

For More Information  
[loriz@tsshome.com](mailto:loriz@tsshome.com) or 734-904-1874

Registration Deadline: May 19, 2023  
[forms.gle/t7c5dVPrNsNJUr1a8](https://forms.gle/t7c5dVPrNsNJUr1a8)



Register now for the 2023 Biennial Mission Summit, June 23-25 at the Puerto Rico Convention Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico!

With the theme "For Such a Time as This," the biennial event is the premier opportunity for American Baptists to gather and connect with one another, hear directly from American Baptist partners and friends, worship together as one family of God, and learn the latest happenings across the American Baptist denomination.

Register at [www.americanbaptists2023.com](http://www.americanbaptists2023.com)



If you would like to submit an article for the August Portal, please email [adroscha@thepeopleschurch.com](mailto:adroscha@thepeopleschurch.com) by July 15.



Dr. Monroe co-leading a discussion with Michigan Conference minister, Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel.



Clergy taking a welcome break on the beaches of Lake Michigan.



Dr. Monroe leading breakout sessions over snacks.

## REST AND RENEWAL

In May, I co-led a UCC clergy retreat with the Michigan Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel. We spent three days at Tower Hill Camp with eighteen UCC pastors. We watched sermons from the Festival of Homiletics, talked about the craft of preaching, and spent time getting to know one another.

Since I serve an interdenominational church, I haven't had much time to get to know the UCC clergy in Michigan. What a delight it was to meet people from all over the state who serve churches of every shape and size! We shared stories, talked about the trials and tribulations of post-Covid church life, and heard some fantastic sermons. There was also ample time to walk around the Tower Hill Camp area, which is situated right on Lake Michigan.

The best part of the retreat, though, was meeting new friends who know what a strange and wonderful thing it is to serve Christ's church. In the end, it was not just a retreat, but a time of renewal, and I look forward to leading more in the future.

*Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe*

