

# Kickoff Sunday!

Mark your calendars—Kickoff Sunday at The Peoples Church is September 19th! Join us in celebration and enjoy a delicious chicken lunch! This will be an excellent opportunity to meet our new Associate Pastor, Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell.

### Menu

- Fried Chicken ~ Baked Chicken
- Redskin Potato Wedges
- Wild Rice with Mushrooms
- Mixed Greens Salad
- Dinner Roll
- Fresh Fruit Bowl
- Assorted Sweets

### Children's Table Menu

- Chicken Tenders
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Veggies & Dip
- Fresh Fruit



The next *Portal* deadline for the October issue is September 15th.  
Submit content to [eprice@thepeopleschurch.com](mailto:eprice@thepeopleschurch.com)

SEPTEMBER 2021 PORTAL

ThePeoplesChurch.com  
517.332.5073

200 W. Grand River Ave.  
East Lansing, MI 48823



September 2021

Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe, Senior Pastor

Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell, Associate Pastor

## On My Mind: The Gospel of Ted Lasso



There are many ways to mark time in the Covid Pandemic. You can do it in months of the year, in waves of infections, or in phases of public health recommendations. But I like to mark Covid time by TV shows.

I won't go into details. Maybe I'll put this in a blog post. But the list is telling: *The Tiger King* (Did Carol kill her husband??), *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* (Rest in peace, Ed Asner), *M\*A\*S\*H* (I), *Sch\*\*\*'s Creek* (Ew, David!), and *The Mandalorian* (This is the way). Each show was what I needed at a particular moment in Covid time.

Then came the summer and vaccines and the hope that we were finally going to put this virus behind us. Free at last! Free at last! Like so many others, I believed all would be well. I stopped watching television and started making plans for life PP (post-pandemic).

But it was an illusion. The politicization of the virus (and the vaccine) created a culture of fear and misinformation in this country. Then, as if to make a point, the virus morphed into the Delta variant, and suddenly we were right back to the spring of 2020, fighting over masks and social distancing. I fell into despair. What was the point of trying to do the right thing when so many people chose to do nothing? Cynicism crept into my soul and I had fleeting thoughts of re-watching *The Tiger King*.

Then I met Ted Lasso. *Ted Lasso* is a show on Apple+ and it is a revelation. The central story is a typical fish-out-of-water tale about an American football coach (Ted Lasso) who is hired to coach an English football (soccer) team. But it is so much more. Ted Lasso is tirelessly optimistic and positive. He believes there is good in all people and his hopefulness is contagious. In the face of disrespect, Coach Lasso offers kindness. When enemies attack him, Coach Lasso responds with grace. When others give up on themselves, Coach Lasso shows up with just the right response. "You beating yourself up is like Woody Allen playing the clarinet. I don't want to hear it." As one critic put it: *Ted Lasso* is about a good man doing good.

It took me a little time to get into the show. Lasso is such a positive character, such an upbeat person that I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop. Surely he would turn out to have ulterior motives, or it would all be just an act. But by the third episode, Ted had won me over...along with all the other skeptics.

I think Jesus had the same trouble: people could not believe he was as genuinely good as he appeared to be. They figured he would turn out to be like every other fake messiah - only out for his own benefit. If you read the Gospels in this way, each encounter with Jesus - from the first leper to the Roman soldier by the cross - is a chance to realize he really is as good as he appears to be. He came to bring us life - and bring it abundantly.

This is a good word in times of suffering, trials or temptations. This is a good word when we are sitting in a masked funk of disappointment and depression. This is a good word when we surrender to cynicism and think the world is going straight to hell. This is a good word when we're contemplating re-watching *The Tiger King*. (Don't do it!) Jesus shows up and cares for us in ways we can't even imagine. And once we accept that Jesus is the fullest revelation of God - and God really and truly loves us - then everything gets better.

Now if you decide you want to watch *Ted Lasso*, I should warn you: the language is very salty. But these days, Coach Lasso reminds me of what I want to be in the world - a good person doing good things. Thanks be to God.

- Dr. Monroe

## September Birthdays

\*80 & over

9/4—Crary Grattan  
9/4—Lois Bauer  
9/4—Reginald Lancaster  
9/10—Jan Tranter  
9/14—Mary Lou Johnson  
9/14—Jim McCoy  
9/15—Clare Mackey  
9/15—Stephen Wagner  
9/19—Ron Dooley  
9/20—Arylie Campbell  
9/22—Renate Carey  
9/23—James Panetta  
9/23—Anne Bailey  
9/24—Marion Bird  
9/28—David Smith  
9/29—Marilyn Grove  
9/30—J. Clyde Spencer

## September Anniversaries

9/2—Terrell & Beverly Oetzel (59)  
9/13—Mike & Jeanie Cain (52)  
9/18—Mitch & Nancy Rinek (50)  
9/20—Jennifer & Jonathan  
Novello (25)

*If we have missed you, please accept our apology. Contact the office to make sure we have your correct information on file.*

### New Members Class!

If you are interested in becoming a member of The Peoples Church, or simply want to know more about this remarkable community of faith, consider joining our next New Members Class on October 3rd at 11:30 a.m. We are currently planning a class at the church and will be watching state and local guidelines closely to determine if we can safely meet in-person. If interested in joining us, please e-mail Robin Matheson at [matheso4@msu.edu](mailto:matheso4@msu.edu). You may also contact Robin at 517-290-3223 to register or for more information.

### AgeAlive's Town & Gown

We are pleased to share the good news that our Great Decisions programs will now be coordinated by the MSU's AgeAlive Senior Ambassadors Town & Gown program. The program began on August 31st with speaker Gabriella Karin. The Town & Gown program will meet weekly on Tuesdays from 5pm to 6:30pm. Participants may either attend in the Robertson Room or join by Zoom. Our Great Decisions program on Human Trafficking, presented by Dr. Amanda Flaim, will be highlighted at the September 21st presentation. For more information about future speakers, please take a look at this [flyer](#). The weekly topics from a wide variety of excellent speakers will be announced in our monthly Portals and in our weekly E-blast and Bulletins. We invite you to join us as we welcome Town & Gown to our church community! You can register to [attend via this link](#).

### The Reading People

The Reading People will meet September 16th at 1:30 p.m. to discuss *The Women of the Copper Country* by Mary D. Russell. It is also the Great Michigan Read for 2021. We plan to meet in person in the Robertson Room, and offer an online option, which is the hybrid model the church is using for now. If you are interested in joining online, go to Join Zoom Meeting or in your Zoom app enter the Meeting ID: 859 3401 9302 and when asked for a password enter: 158952. Hope to see you there!

### The Knitting People

The Knitting People will meet on September 23rd at 1 p.m. in the Robertson Room to share completed projects, good fellowship, and new ideas. We will follow Church guidelines for being masked. Interested knitters and crocheters are always welcome!

### Henry and Annabel Larzelere Memorial Lecture Series

We are pleased to invite you to the 5th annual Larzelere Memorial Lecture, to be held on October 17th in our sanctuary. Our speaker, Rev. Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell is Professor of Theology at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She has authored three books and numerous articles. In addition, she co-authored *Living Christianity: A Pastoral Theology for Today* with Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe, and *No Innocent Bystanders: Becoming an Ally in the Struggle for Justice* with Christopher Doucot. We welcome you to join us for this lecture and discussion of how we can build a more just and inclusive society.

#### Lecture Title:

Christianity, Racism, and the Blessing of Faith

#### Description:

In this lecture, Rev. Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell offers a theological perspective on the topic of racism. As an introduction, it covers where we are regarding race in the United States and how we got here, including pivotal points of American history rarely taught in school. This lecture views race and racism through a specifically Christian lens and points forward to how we can faithfully respond to the present moment. With lots of room for questions, discussion, and new ideas, Craigo-Snell will engage what race and faith mean to The Peoples Church.



## Peoples Forum

**Sundays; 9:30-10:15 a.m.; Robertson Room**

**September 19** – “COVID Update”, Elders of Peoples Church

**September 26**– “Packard Cars”, Professor Charles Blackman

**October 3**– “What is that Tall Building over there?”, Tom Fehrenback, East Lansing Development Authority, and Dave Ledurbur, TPC Liaison

**October 10**– “Getting to Know You”, Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell, TPC Associate Pastor



## Rev. Penny Swartz Says Goodbye...

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, adieu!

Liberally borrowing from Rodgers and Hammerstein, I write to say my goodbyes—for the second time—to all of you: members, friends, support staff, and colleagues at The Peoples Church. Last November you made it easy for me to take a sabbatical from seven years of retirement to return to the fold. Granted, the pandemic was a bit problematic, but it has been delightful to reconnect with peoples I knew before, and to meet new folk—members and staff—who've joined the church since 2013. It's been a joy to come back and help out my colleague of long standing, Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe during staff changes. It's been marvelous to serve this congregation once again. My arrangement with the church leadership was that I would come back on a part-time, short-term basis and work through the end of September. That time is rapidly approaching. I leave knowing that the staff shortages have been beautifully filled with talented and dedicated people. I rejoice that Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell will be arriving soon to become your permanent, full-time Associate Pastor. I leave knowing this grand old lady of a church is in excellent hands. You may see a bit more of my husband Mike and me around from time to time, but until then—so long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, adieu!

*Pastor Penny*

## ...& Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell says Hello!

Hi Church!

I have been waiting with great anticipation for this moment of greeting! I can't wait to meet you and serve alongside you in ministry! My head and heart are full of excitement as I wonder what God has in store for our journey together. I am eager to connect with you and encourage you to reach out and say hello. I look forward to learning from you and hearing about your connections with the church and community. For this first month, I plan to be in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m.—1 p.m. and would love for you to stop by. I'm always open to grabbing a coffee, taking a walk, or connecting in ways convenient to you.

You can always reach me the following ways:

Email: [devonherrell@gmail.com](mailto:devonherrell@gmail.com)

Cell: 231-649-2302

See you on the 12th!

*Rev. Dr. Devon Herrell*

## CHILDREN'S EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLES CHURCH



I'm so excited to be able to plan Sunday School again and get 'my' kids back into class! It was a strange thing to look at my rosters and realize children will be 2 grade levels higher than last we met! Incredible. While it's sad that some have grown and are now part of our wonderful PCYG, joyously, some younger siblings are now old enough for Sunday School—yay!

I hope kids and families join us for our Welcome Back/Welcome to Sunday School party on Sunday, September 12th. This will be in room 306 during our usual class time (after the children's moment during the 10:30 service.) We'll do a craft and dance along to some VBS songs in our newly decorated 2nd/3rd classroom! It will be fun to gather in a more relaxed atmosphere before classes begin officially on September 19th. Please Note: Masks are required for everyone 2 and up.

Thank you to my Sunday School teachers! I appreciate you! If you would like to teach Sunday School, I am always looking for volunteers, especially for the younger ages (Pre-K—1st). You don't need vast Bible knowledge, just some patience and a love for kids. Acolytes needed! This ministry opportunity is for children in 3rd through 5th grade during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Volunteers are trained and guided by the head usher. It's a wonderful way for children to help serve the church. Schedules are flexible. Please contact me to sign up!

Christmas Pageant rehearsal starts 9/26! We are hoping to do in person rehearsals during Carol Choir for another virtual pageant. Safety will always be a priority, so look for more information in emails. Please contact me if you are not on my Sunday School mailing list and would like to receive future updates. You can reach me at [kmitchell@thepeopleschurch.com](mailto:kmitchell@thepeopleschurch.com).

Peace,

*Kathi Mitchell*



## PCYG PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Hello PCYG Students and Families!

It's hard to believe that September is here, and we are ready to resume our regular PCYG programming! Here's the schedule for this fall, but please keep in mind that different safety precautions may be implemented, and this schedule is subject to change.

We will resume Middle School Youth Group on Wednesday September 15th. Youth group will run from 5:30-7:30 p.m., and include dinner, youth choir, and youth group programming. High School Youth Group will resume on Sunday, September 19th. Youth group will run from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., and also include dinner, choir, and programming!

\*If, due to COVID restrictions, we are unable to resume youth choir, the above youth group times will be shortened by 1/2 an hour (MS 5:30-7:00, HS 6:00-7:30)!

Kickoff Sunday is September 19th, so stop by the youth table after church to fill out your yearly registration form and grab your t-shirt! I'm so excited to see everyone, and to have a great year together!

Please reach out if you have ANY questions or concerns!

Joyfully,

*Elisha Smith*

## From Our Kitchen to Yours

### Recipes by Gerri Lynn



Looking for an easy summer salad to accompany your meal? Look no further - Our talented hospitality director, Gerri Lynn, has the perfect recipe for you!

#### Mediterranean Chopped Salad with Pita Bread

- 1 small head Romaine lettuce, chopped
- 1 - 15 ounce - can chickpeas, drained & rinsed
- 1 tomato, diced
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup sliced kalamata olives
- 3/4 cup feta crumbles
- 1/2 cup of your favorite summertime salad dressing

Mix all ingredients together, and continue until combined. Serve with warm pita bread.



#### Undie Sunday

People's drive for underwear.  
Piled on tables and every chair.  
Not a derrière left bare.  
Thanks to those who care and share!  
In Gratitude—a heartfelt prayer.

## SAVE THE DATE

The Reverend Dr. Shawnthea Monroe preached her first sermon at The Peoples Church on Sunday, October 20th, 2019. In the United Church of Christ, pastors are officially installed at the beginning of their ministry.

It's been nearly two years since Dr. Monroe preached her first sermon and the Peoples Church has yet to install her. Several factors have contributed to the delay, the biggest of which has been the global pandemic that began in March of 2020. Now that The Peoples Church is back to holding in-person worship services, we feel it's time to have an Installation Service for Dr. Monroe.

#### *The Installation Service will be held on*

Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, at

1:00 p.m., in the sanctuary of

The Peoples Church

200 W. Grand River Ave., East Lansing, MI 48843

A Reception will follow the service.

A formal emailed invitation will be sent to all church members and selected guests at a future date. If you have any questions, please contact Kari Naghtin, Chair of the Council of Elders at [naghtin@msn.com](mailto:naghtin@msn.com).