



Portal

June & July 2024

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

ON MY MIND

*Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
~Dylan Thomas*

My mother has terminal cancer. At least that's what the oncologist told me over the phone. He'd read her CT scan and measured the tumors. This was, in his words, her final illness. I asked how long she had left. "Two months" he replied matter-of-factly. He seemed sure. The doctor handed the phone back to my mother. "Well," she said brightly, "at least we know how this story ends!"

Of course, that was four weeks ago and my mother shows no signs of dying. Although she gets regular visits from the hospice nurse, they haven't had much to do. She is getting tired, but she isn't in pain, she still has an appetite, and her spirits couldn't be better. In the evening, she likes to have a glass of chardonnay and watch re-runs of NCIS. (I suspect she has a crush on Agent Gibbs.) Every time I call her, she tells me not to worry or be sad. "This is just the way things work. We all owe life one death – and I've had a wonderful life!"

My mother's acceptance of death comes as a surprise to me. It was she who introduced me to the poems of Dylan Thomas. In fact, when I was young, she could recite "Do Not Go Gently into that Good Night" from memory. It made quite an impression on me as a child. Based on the poem, I thought death was something one could outwit or postpone by sheer force of will. "Rage! Rage against the dying of the light!" I figured if anyone could outwit death, it would be my brilliant, beautiful mother. But that is not the way things work.

My mother is an atheist, an unfortunate bi-product of growing up a strict Missouri Synod Lutheran. She does not believe there is anything after death; life simply ends, like a candle going out. I have other thoughts on the subject, but we don't discuss it. As I have said from the pulpit, I do not believe that God sends people to hell; God loves us too much for that. Maybe Jesus will want to have a quiet word with my mother, but whatever glory and wonder comes next, I don't believe she'll be turned away when she dies. Boy, won't she be surprised!

The doctors who thought mom only had two months to live might also be in for a surprise. The way she's going, she may still be around for Christmas. But you never know. Things can change quickly and I am trying to make the most of whatever time she still has. I call her regularly and we talk about the garden and my children and laugh over shared memories. And at the end of the conversation, I always say, half in jest, "If this is the last time we speak, remember that everything is good between us: I love you and I know you love me." "I do love you" she replies, "And I know you love me." I believe that's how this story ends.



Faith, hope and love – these three endure forever. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Have a blessed summer.
- Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe

FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

In early May, I went to the Twin Cities to officiate the wedding of one of my college friends. Always the maximizer, I decided to make a road trip out of the ordeal so I could see as many friends as I could on the way there and back. As I returned to Lansing, I could hardly believe my efficiency! I went to a Twins game with the bridal party the day after the wedding. In St. Paul, I got coffee with my pal Jackie, and we reminisced about our college newspaper days. I ate cheese curds with my college roommate Claire near a lake in the suburbs of Milwaukee as we talked about grief. I gossiped about local municipal drama with my former co-worker, Sarah, while we toured the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison.



Needless to say, the trip was a major jaunt down memory lane. I went to college in the Twin Cities (Go Gophers!), and I spent two consecutive summers interning in Madison and Milwaukee. As I drove around these towns, I was struck by how much had changed. The dive bar I lived across the street from in Madison shuttered during the pandemic. The McDonald's adjacent to the University of Minnesota — once an important respite of food and warmth on long walks home — was long gone. Milwaukee's Miller Park, once home to the Brewers, is now called "American Family Field." I felt a familiar refrain rise in my throat: "Things were so much better back in my day!"

We do this all the time in the church. We get caught up in what was before. We daydream about days when the chancel was full during Christmas pageants. We reminisce about old programs. We long for simpler times when denominational meetings seemed less contentious. We sometimes get so preoccupied with what came before that we don't have enough imagination to envision what might be ahead. Nostalgia clouds our judgment, and we have an even harder time letting go of the "good old days."

This isn't to say I'm wholeheartedly against thinking about prior days. As Christians, we have to look at the past in order to better understand what God is doing in the present as well as where God might be leading us in the future. But too much nostalgia is detrimental to our dreaming when we think of the past as being more attractive than today or tomorrow. The past can bog us down and make us reticent to look toward the future.

This sort of longing for the past has always been an issue for people of faith. In Isaiah, God says to our ancient counterparts, "Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing. Now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:18). Our job as the church is not to forget nor romanticize the past. Rather, our calling is to continually remember God's ability to bring about newness in surprising ways.

May we perceive the new thing God is doing in our midst, come what may!

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Haley Hansen

EARTH STEWARDSHIP

Reducing Transportation Footprint Protects the Environment

In this third part of our climate impact series of reflections, Earth Stewardship invites all of us to focus on the daily activities we engage in that involve use of transportation. By looking at these activities, there may be some small or big steps each of us can take to reduce the impacts we may be having on the environment.

A member of our Earth Stewardship committee received a report that highlighted “individual actions” that impact climate change. He shared his report with our Earth Stewardship committee. The report compiled its findings from several well-known climate and sustainability research studies.

The report offered several different steps we can take to manage our transportation to reduce energy use and pollution. Various constraints can play a role in our capacity to take any or some of these recommended steps. But as is the case with other climate saving strategies, there’s always something we can do, or do a little bit better, to improve our climate. Here are just a few suggestions offered by the report:

- Probably the easiest one for most is to use public transportation options. CATA (Lansing area busing system) offers many discounted options for riders. Buses and trains (when available and accessible) are an easy way to reduce energy usage and pollution.
- Drive a hybrid or electric vehicle. This depends on your own driving circumstances. If you are commuting long distances, a hybrid is probably your best option to consider. Obviously, financial considerations are a factor in the choice of your next vehicle. Consider used as well as new when making your next purchase.
- Fly less when possible.
- Avoid cruises which have carbon burning engines.
- Walk or bicycle to work or school whenever possible.
- Use an electric scooter or bicycle to travel to nearby places.
- Work remotely when possible.
- Carpool (2 or more passengers) to work, school or an event.

We will focus on water usage in the fourth part of our climate impact series.

SUMMER MUSIC OPPORTUNITIES

Greetings to All! My name is Michael Huey-Jones, and my family and I are so excited to be a part of Peoples Church. As most of you know, after over 30 years, Jon Reed has retired as the minister of music, and I am taking the reins. I am honored to join in the legacy of excellent and meaningful worship music that he and others have left behind.

I want to draw your attention to three music-making opportunities open to any singers or would-be singers in our midst. Once a month this summer, we will organize a pick-up choir to offer special music during worship. We’ll meet in the Sanctuary after church the week before to learn the music, then warm up and sing the following week. In June, we’ll have a tenor/bass choir, in July a treble choir, and in August a mixed (SATB) choir. If you’re a music lover and you’re in town for any of the dates below, please join us and invite your friends! I’ll also send this message to area congregations whose choirs are on break for the summer, and may be interested in the chance to make music together. I look forward to making music together this summer!

June, tenor/bass choir

Rehearsal 6/23, 10:45-11:10 in the Sanctuary

Special Music 6/30, 8:30 warm-up

July, treble choir

Rehearsal 7/14, 10:45-11:10 in the Sanctuary

Special Music 7/21, 8:30 warm-up

August, mixed choir

Rehearsal 8/11, 10:45-11:10 in the Sanctuary

Special Music 8/18, 8:30 warm-up

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Here is the latest from Children's CE at The Peoples Church!

- **VBS 2024:** VBS 2024—Camp Firelight—is coming up and we are looking for volunteers, sponsors, more kiddos to register, and donations for some of our summer camp fun events.

VBS kiddos will take a field trip to the MSU planetarium and the MSU Dairy Store. Additionally, we have Impression 5 staff and a naturalist coming to visit us. We also have a variety of crafts and other projects that we will be working on. We purposely keep the cost of VBS low so that attending VBS does not pose a financial hardship to families. Any financial support you can offer to help offset our VBS costs would be greatly appreciated! Please contact Alexa for more information on how you can help!



Registration: If you are looking to register your child for VBS, go to

<https://tinyurl.com/VBS2024TPC>.

- **SUNDAY SCHOOL:** In May, Sunday School students focused on God's messages of love. Our biggest project was painting mother's day cards. We continue to practice the Lord's Prayer every Sunday, and so many of our Sunday School kiddos have this prayer memorized or almost memorized! As far as Sunday School over the summer goes, we will run 1 or 2 classrooms per week during the 9:30 service, but please note, there will be no Sunday School on the following dates: June 17, June 23, July 7, July 14, August 4, August 18 and September 1.
- **TEACHER APPRECIATION:** On May 19, we honored our amazing Sunday School teachers! Without them, Sunday School could not happen. Thank you to Mandy Holmstrom, Addy Gavey, Margaret Tassaró, Faith



Brown, Austin Owen, Jen Hunter, Kristen Calabrese, Holly Orr, Drew Murray, Cathy Lancaster, Julie Haskell, Angela Biedenbender, Phyllis Grummon, and Kelsey Osborne-Garth for being our Sunday School teachers and helping our kiddos grow in their faith and love in God.

- **CAROL CHOIR:** Carol Choir put on another beautiful performance on Mother's Day. They have finished up their performances for this school year and will resume rehearsals in the fall.

Peace and Blessings,



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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

TPC has provided storage space for this ministry so we can collect and organize donations. Community Engagement will be collecting a specific item each month. We are not asking for new items, but items that are donated must be laundered and in good repair. If you have gently used and clean items, please place them in the large blue plastic storage bin located near the Church offices on the east side of the Sanctuary. In **June**, we are collecting men's and women's underwear and socks. In **July**, we are collecting men's and women's jeans, sweatpants and work pants.

PEOPLES CHURCH PRESCHOOL

The Jr. Kindergarten class in the Preschool has always had an affinity for taking care of lots of plants due to the teacher's love of gardening and plant care. This year they took things a step further by putting a greenhouse in the classroom over the late winter and starting the vegetable plants that they would then transfer into the Preschool's Outdoor Classroom gardens in the spring.



The children have been involved in every aspect. To give them a more enhanced hands-on experience, their teacher arranged a field trip to a local community garden. The children will have their own plot to visit and tend to.



Gardening fosters childrens' self-esteem as they learn that, though they are young, they can plant a seed, care for it, and watch it grow into food or flowers. It provides a sense of accomplishment and also sensory experiences by working with the soil and identifying fragrances. Children learn about sustainability and tasting fresh food that they have grown.

Over the years, the preschool children have grown many vegetables including tomatoes, peas and green beans. This year's Outdoor Classroom Makeover day will focus on making improvements to our garden areas.

-Dana Johnson, Preschool Director

PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Hello PCYG Student's and Families!

It's hard to believe the school year is coming to an end already! The spring semester seems to fly by, and summer is just around the corner. This past month we have had a blast creating cards, playing D&D, and getting no sleep at our annual lock-in (I am still recovering...)!

June is an exciting month for us! We will have our final "regular" PCYG on Wednesday, June 12! We will be eating dinner, playing games, and reflecting on the ways we have grown individually and as a group this past school year. Many of our students will be working as counselors and counselors in training at this year's VBS, and we can't wait! If you or your kiddo is interested in volunteering with VBS, it's not too late! Please reach out to myself or our Children's Director, Alexa Hayes-Murray, to get involved!

On June 28, we will be loading up the van and heading to Ohio where we will spend a weekend camping, swimming, roasting marshmallows, and relaxing at our PCYG Summer Retreat! When we come back, we will be embarking on a summer of service projects around the East Lansing and Lansing community.

If you know any middle or high school students who may be interested in joining us for our summer of service projects (this includes 5th graders who are headed into 6th grade this fall), please reach out so I can connect with them! We can't wait to become further connected and supportive of the beautiful community all around us!

Joyfully,

-Elisha Smith, Youth Director

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

As plans roll out for our church’s first capital improvement project in decades, we are indeed lucky to have Facilities Director Zack Matthews on our staff. That’s because Zack has the education, experience, and talent to serve as our Construction Manager (CM)—a key position that we won’t have to hire for.

Prior to coming to the Peoples Church, Zack worked in facilities management for the City of Dearborn’s Parks and Recreation Department, where he oversaw the renovation of an older building and the construction of three recreational splashpads. Together with his bachelor’s degree in Business Studies and Economics, Zack has the right know-how for the CM role.

He also has back-up and support from two veterans of the architecture, engineering, and construction industry. Former MSU senior architect Greg Houghtaling, now retired, is donating his time as Zack’s assistant and mentor. In addition, local construction consultant Barry Roney, who was a CM for Granger



Construction for 25+ years, is available on a part-time basis to help Zack with anything he might need. The three of them meet frequently to discuss project status.

The CM is responsible for supervising all aspects of construction, from reviewing and approving architectural plans to putting out bids for contractors, confirming the correct materials are delivered, monitoring costs, and ensuring adherence to the construction schedule. Another bonus of having Zack in this role: by the end of construction, he’ll be completely familiar with all the new equipment and systems he will maintain as our Facilities Director.



Zack says he’s excited about the Capital Campaign project and the difference it will make for our church and the wider community. He says architectural and engineering design meetings will be happening regularly throughout the summer, and we are on pace to bid out Phase 1 (renovation of the Social Hall) in the fall. If all goes well, construction will start in June 2025.

CHURCH BY THE NUMBERS

Attendance

Budget

Date	Attendance			Total		Budget		
	8:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m. online	10:30 a.m. in person			YTD Actual	YTD Budget	above/(below) budget
04/07/24	26	127	170	323	as of 4/30			
04/14/24	21	133	185	339	Pledge	252,380	205,000	47,380
04/21/24	18	137	222	377	Other giving	27,626	38,333	(10,707)
04/28/24	14	198	256	468	Total Stewardship	280,006	243,333	36,673

THE USED BOOK AND JEWELRY SALE

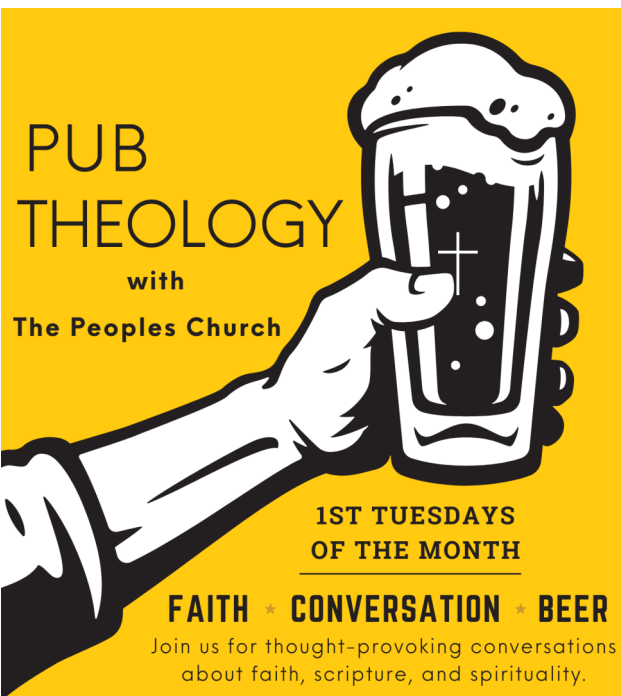
The Library and Jewelry Sale Committees would like to give a huge thank you to the congregation for all their donations to our annual sale. We really do rely on your generosity and contributions each year. We are so grateful to everyone who came out to purchase items as well. Thank you for taking time to attend our sales and for giving these treasures a new home to be loved again!

We want to especially thank our volunteers who did the huge job of setting up and tearing down, sorting and pricing for months ahead and working the sale itself. We appreciate you all so much! We also want to give much appreciation to our church staff who make our church such a beautiful place for our sale! They created the posters, the hanging banner, set up all the tables, kept track of outdoor signs and the parking lot, supported all our volunteers during the week and provided extra last minute requests. They were always ready to help. Thank you so much church staff!

The sale proceeds support the Fischbach Library fund and the WPC fund for Women's programming. The combined sales raised over \$4,000 this year. We are truly blessed and grateful!

The Reading People

The Reading People are in for a real treat this month! We will meet in the Robertson Room, June 20th at 1:30 p.m., where Betty Moore will join us to present a literary paper and power point presentation about artist Charley Harper, who said, "In a world of chaos, the picture is one small rectangle in which the artist can create an ordered universe." Everyone is invited to come and learn more about the life and work of this amazing artist! We also encourage you to bring a sack lunch, and meet at 1 p.m. for a time of fellowship before our meeting begins.



**PUB
THEOLOGY**
with
The Peoples Church

**1ST TUESDAYS
OF THE MONTH**

FAITH * CONVERSATION * BEER

Join us for thought-provoking conversations about faith, scripture, and spirituality.

6:30 P.M.

CONTACT HHANSEN@THEPEOPLESCHURCH.COM
FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, call (605) 380-0245, or visit www.thepeopleschurch.com



EVERY
WEDNESDAY

5:30 P.M.
SNIDER
SOCIAL HALL

COMMUNITY MEAL: 5:30 P.M.

DANCE AEROBICS: 6 P.M.

BIBLE STUDY: 6:30 P.M.

TPC TALK N' TOUR

Mark your calendars! The next TPC Talk 'n Tour (TNT) will take place Sunday, June 2 after the 9:30 a.m. service in the Sanctuary. The tour will take about 45 minutes. Come and learn more about this beautiful church. All are welcome.

