



ON MY MIND: THE POWER OF PRUNING

I love growing tomatoes. Actually, I love eating and canning tomatoes, so I grow them. Usually, I plant too many tomatoes and by July, my garden is often overgrown and showing signs of blight.

This year, since I had extra time on my hands due to Covid-19, I did a little research about growing tomatoes and discovered I've been doing it wrong. It turns out the key to a bountiful tomato harvest is pruning. In my 25 years of tomato cultivation, I have never tried pruning. Sure, I clip the leaves off when they become diseased in late July, but I've never pruned healthy growth. It just seems wrong! Yet every gardening expert I consulted said the same thing: Prune Your Tomatoes.

So I did...and what a difference it has made! The plants are healthy and show no signs of disease. The fruit is setting faster and the tomatoes are bigger. Every few days, I head out to the garden to prune unnecessary leaves and suckers. It still makes me wince to pinch off green leaves, but the plants are thriving. I'm glad I took the risk of trying this new technique. There really is power in pruning.

Last fall, when I came to The Peoples Church, my first goal was to learn about this new community of faith. I wanted to understand you: your gifts and your graces; how you worship, how you serve, and how you care for one another. After almost nine months together, I'm beginning to understand you and see the places where a little bit of pruning will bring new growth.

We're going to start in September by making two changes to our order of worship. We will update the words of our doxology so the God-language is not male. Instead of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, we will sing Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. These words capture a fuller picture of God as God is in relation to us: our creator, our Christ and the Spirit that flows through us. It also helps enrich the way we imagine the Almighty One, who is so much more than just our Father. That's the first change.

The second change we need to make might be a little harder: we're going to stop singing "Go Now in Peace" at the end of every worship service. Instead, we will sing this wonderful song on Communion Sundays and special occasions. I know this song is beloved by many, but there is a rich tradition of sacred music that can shape the close of worship—music the worship staff is anxious to explore. The Peoples Church is blessed with exceptionally talented musicians and we should trust them and give them a little more room to express their gifts.

Neither of these alterations is very big, but the truth is any kind of change is hard. It takes time to get comfortable with new things and establish new habits, whether you're gardening or worshipping. But if we're patient and allow ourselves to try something new—to do a bit of pruning—there is real potential for growth. My prayer and my desire is for us to thrive and grow as the Body of Christ! May God bless us in this season.

Dr. Monroe

WELCOME ELISHA SMITH!



It is with joy and honor that I take on the role of the Youth Director here at The Peoples Church. After working the past four years with youth in the Lansing area, I know that my passion lies in working with youth and in inspiring them to follow the Lord. I've spent time over the past few years working in residential foster care as well as in Restorative Justice facilitating, but feel that the Lord is calling me to youth ministry.

This year I am finishing up my degree at Michigan State University as I pursue my BA in Human Development and Family Studies with minors in LGBTQ and Sexuality Studies, and Law, Justice, and Public Policy. I was raised in the beautiful state of Wyoming and will always have a little bit of cowgirl in my heart, but have found and fallen in love with Michigan and the home I've created here.

After spending the last two years as a part of The Peoples Church and TPC Campus Ministries, I am confident that The Peoples Church is my home and I am looking forward to spending time with the wonderful youth and families that make this church so special. I am looking forward to settling into this new "normal" together as we explore and grow in our faith, and I am anxious to begin meeting and establishing relationships with each and every one of you.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

JULY BIRTHDAYS

*80 & OVER

- 7/4 - Patricia Howell
- 7/9 - Nancy Wilson
- 7/11 - Lary Hill
- 7/12 - Jim Dalley
- 7/12 - William Walworth
- 7/16 - Helen Ramsey
- 7/21 - Martha Bristor
- 7/22 - Connie Close
- 7/24 - Rosemary Walker
- 7/25 - Marilyn Harding
- 7/30 - Mary Fossum
- 7/31 - Terrell Oetzel

JULY ANNIVERSARYS

- 7/4 - Sal & Joanne DiFranco (67)
- 7/5 - Denny & Gretchen Rosenbrook (62)
- 7/7 - Thomas & Traci Dudley (30)
- 7/26 - Tony & Lois Bauer (62)

CORRECTIONS from June Portal:

The following couples have been married for 65 years (not 60 years):
Lary & Mary Hill
Don & Evelyn Davis

The following couple has been married for 66 years (not 60 years):
Robert & Helen Ward

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



PROGRAMMING

Our WNL! adult programming has been suspended for now. However, we are still offering a community meal, paper bag style, that can be picked up in the Northwest entrance of the church on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.

We will keep you informed as to when WNL! will be back in full swing.

VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS

Stay connected with us and join one of our virtual meetings or Bible studies. See below for what is currently being offered:



MONDAY MORNING BIBLE

Join us Mondays at 11:00 a.m., as we continue our study of John's Gospel. To join the meeting, [click here](#). Or, on your Zoom app enter meeting ID: 369 714 134. You can also dial 1-312-626-6799 and when prompted enter 369 714 134#.

WEDNESDAY SERMON PREP GROUP

The Wednesday morning Sermon Prep Group meets via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. each Wednesday. For more information on how to join Dr. Monroe for the Sermon Prep Group, please email Dr. Monroe at smonroe@thepeopleschurch.com.

TUESDAY MORNING MEN'S GROUP

Tuesday Morning Men's group meets at 8:00 a.m. Join them following the link below: [Join Zoom Meeting](#); Meeting ID: 963 085 991. Or, on ANY phone dial 1-646-558-8656 and when prompted for a meeting code enter 963 085 991.

VIRTUAL FELLOWSHIP

You're invited to join us for a virtual Friendship Hall each Sunday, following the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Grab a cup of your favorite coffee and a sweet snack and log on to Zoom. Join the meeting here: [Join Zoom Meeting](#). Or, in your Zoom app enter Meeting ID: 837 9739 7682 and when asked for a password enter: Peoples. You can also join us from ANY phone! Dial 1-312-626-6799 and when prompted for a meeting ID enter 837 9739 7682# and the password is 50803#.



CHILDREN'S EDUCATION UPDATE

by Kathi Mitchell, Children's Education Director

I am so excited to begin Sunday school on **July 19!** As we usually do in the summer, we will have one room with 3 year olds up to 5th grade together during the 10:30 a.m. service. We will meet in the Robertson Room for our lessons and activities, so the children just have to go across the hall after the Children's moment. The class format is going to be the same as we've done before—video, lesson, activities—hopefully the familiarity will help the children adjust to the few changes we've had to make.

Parents, it might be helpful if you start to discuss with your children how Sunday School will be this summer. Most importantly, all children will need to try and wear a mask during class. I know this may be difficult for some, but we want to encourage this as much as possible, since this will be the norm for many months. For their safety, the tables will be separated and we will have one child or set of siblings per table. We will have tubs of supplies for each family to use each time, so there won't be any sharing of materials. I will make sure each child has all they need to do the activities. Remind your children that Sunday School will still be a time for learning, fun and sharing! We have to do these little inconveniences to be able to be together. I am hoping the familiar class format will help them all adjust. Of course you are always welcome to keep your children with you during the service. We will have individually packaged children's bulletins and crayons at the welcome desk.

If you are not planning on attending church this summer, that's okay, too! The lessons will still be available online and I will continue to send those links via email. The decision to gather together again is a personal one for each family and we all will completely understand.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please [contact me](#).

-Kathi



Hello people of Peoples!

As part of my internship this summer, I've spent a good chunk of my time chatting with Campus Ministry students about their hopes for the program going forward. I've been amazed at their creativity, insight, and passion for the group and for The Peoples Church as a whole.

In our conversations, all of the students identified relationships as a key ingredient in what makes Campus Ministry unique. For many students, the group has proven to be fertile ground for lasting friendships. Despite social distancing, those relationships remain strong during the pandemic. It's been a real privilege to get just a small look at those friendships as we've become better acquainted the past few weeks via Zoom Bible studies and game nights.

We've spent a good portion of our time together in recent weeks talking about ways we can individually and collectively address systemic racism. These conversations have been challenging at times, but I believe they're an integral part of our journey to live into God's call to do justice work.

In the next few months, I'll be working with Joe Kennedy to ensure a smooth transition into the fall semester for our students as the church searches for a new leader for Campus Ministry. While it's still unclear what learning during a pandemic will look like, I have no doubt that this group of students has the endurance and resiliency to take on whatever challenges lie ahead.

Blessings,
Haley



Hello PCYG Members and Friends!

I have had the absolute pleasure of being the Director of Youth Ministry here at The Peoples Church since 2017. In that time, I've been extremely privileged to grow and learn alongside the youth of this wonderful church!

I have been challenged, and loved, and pushed, and supported in so many ways I can hardly begin to count them all, and all of these experiences have provided a very firm foundation for my call to ministry.

I have received many cards and well wishes from so many of my friends here, and I will carry them with me as I continue on to my seminary education in Tennessee. The Peoples Church is a huge part of my life story now, and I hope in some small way that I have been able to contribute to the life story of this congregation. I have so very much to be thankful for, and that list starts with you.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!
(And goodbye for now!)

-Joe Kennedy



BLOOD DRIVE

IN HONOR OF JOHN KREER



JULY 21, 2020
11:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m.

John was a professor of electrical engineering at MSU where he was also a department chair. He served his country during WWII in the US Navy. He received his Master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois and came to teach at MSU in 1964 then retiring in 1992. He was an active member of The Peoples Church and served on the Board of Elders.

John became a dedicated blood donor after his infant son required blood during surgery and while listening to a church sermon that suggested things people can do to help others. Over the next 30 years, John regularly donated blood totaling 20 gallons in his lifetime!

After retiring from MSU, John began volunteering in the Lansing Donor Center. His time of service and friendship with the Red Cross volunteers and staff was of great joy to him.

Please help us honor the memory of John Kreer by giving the gift of life. To schedule an appointment, log onto RedCrossBlood.org, and use the sponsor code: **PeoplesChurchEL** or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

RETURNING TO WORSHIP

We are opening our doors for in-person worship services, in the Sanctuary, beginning **July 5!**

Rest assured we are doing our part to provide a safer environment for worship. We ask that you do your part and review our [Returning to Worship Guidelines](#) and [Safety Measures](#) on our website prior to attending a service.

DO NOT come if you are feeling unwell, are experiencing any symptoms of illness, or if you have come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Wear a mask, practice social distancing and follow the safety measures that we have put in place, and, most of all, enjoy worshipping with us!

