



Portal

November 2023

Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe,

Senior Pastor

Rev. Haley Hansen,

Associate Pastor

ON MY MIND

Towards the end of her life, my mother-in-law, Dorothy, was unable to cook for Thanksgiving. We still traveled to her house for the holiday, but I had to do all the cooking. I like to cook, so this wasn't a problem. The problem was Dorothy had a list of dishes she wanted prepared and I didn't always know how to make them. For example, she loved green bean hot dish, but I couldn't use Durkee fried onions on top; I had to use frozen, breaded onion rings. Dorothy also wanted sweet pickles on the relish tray even though no one else liked sweet pickles. She liked homemade pie, but pie crust is one thing I never mastered. And then there were the yams with marshmallows... even Dorothy didn't like the taste, but she always insisted we make them. Yes, Dorothy had a specific list of foods she wanted on the table or else it wasn't a traditional Thanksgiving.



Thanksgiving dinner is the one meal about which everyone seems to have an opinion.

I suspect our Thanksgiving food preferences are mostly shaped by childhood memories and traditions. If you always had a deep fried turkey, then that is what you crave. Or if your mother thought canned cranberry sauce was a fantastic invention, then only that purple, quaking cylinder will do. And if your grandmother always brought a box of Andes Mints for each grandchild at Thanksgiving, then Andes Mints are part of a traditional meal.

That last one is mine. Every Thanksgiving, my grandmother Ruby would give each grandchild a box of Andes Mints. We thought they were so exotic and delicious that my sister and I usually ate them all before the turkey was carved. As an adult, I realized that Andes Mints are not high end chocolate. My children say they taste chalky and dry, and they won't eat them. But oh, how I crave Andes Mints at Thanksgiving! Yes, they may be tasteless and waxy; yes, nobody else will eat them; but I still want them because they remind me of my grandmother and bring back fond memories of the good old days!

After 30 years in ministry, I have come to believe churches can fall into the same pattern, holding on to traditions or practices long after the meaning (and the flavor) is lost. We do what we've always done because it reminds us of long-lost loved ones and brings back memories of days gone by, even though the younger generation doesn't really like what we're putting on the table.

Don't get me wrong: not every church tradition is a box of Andes Mints. Some of them are green bean hot dish with fancy onion rings on top – which turns out to be pretty darn tasty. The key is to share what is important to you, listen to what is meaningful to others, and be willing to adjust. That's how family traditions change. That's how churches grow.

I hope you all have a happy Thanksgiving!

-Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe

FROM OUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Late fall was always an important marker for my family growing up as November officially marks the end of harvest season. The first 18 years of my life moved via the ebbs and flows of farming. Season after season my family would plant and tend and gather, whether it was the oceans of soybeans stretching out on the prairie or the tomatoes my mother planted in our yard.

Some of my most visceral memories from my childhood and youth come from my time doing farm chores and gardening. I spent hours in the garden with my mother as a child, carefully pulling weeds and watering via the complex web of hoses and sprinklers my father affectionately dubbed our “redneck watering system.” My least favorite task was something called picking rock. My sister and I would sit in the bucket of a tractor as my dad went up and down our fields. We’d throw our hands in the air any time we saw a rock bigger than a softball, pry it from the prairie dirt and throw it in the bucket and continue the process until we filled the bucket or my dad decided we were done – whichever came first.

And yet despite that work, despite those hours of watering, weeding, planting, tending and picking, we were often unsuccessful. You name it, it has happened to the family farm: weeds, floods, too little rain, hailstorms, tornadoes, frost. Sometimes the fruits of our labor failed to appear come harvest time; all that rock picking for nothing.

Many of the stories Jesus tells are about farming, and one of my favorites is the parable of the sower. In the story, a farmer goes out into a field and spreads seed on different types of soil – some rocky soil, some thorny soil, some good soil. Naturally, some of the seeds don’t quite make it. The seeds that fall in a path are eaten by birds. The seeds that fall upon rocky soil wither away in the sun, and the seeds that fall among the thorny part of the field are choked out.

The parables of Jesus always have some strangeness to them, and the twist in the parable of the sower is that despite all the failure, there are a handful of seeds that yield an exceptional harvest. The surprise of the story is that there is life changing abundance right next to commonplace failure. This kind of a bountiful harvest was successful in a way that no amount of rock picking or watering or weed pulling by human hands could ever bring about. This was a miracle.

So what’s the good news in this mixed bag of a harvest? It’s that God’s grace will continue to surprise us. It’s that plentiful bounty is God’s plan for humanity, not failure, not oppressive systems, not despair. The Good News is that even in the worst of circumstances, God is still with us. The Good News is that resurrection means that failure never gets the final word.

Every time we planted a garden, my mother and I would always plant marigolds. We’d plant the marigolds every year from the previous season’s dead and withered flowers. Year after year new life would burst forth from the previous decay, from the previous year’s frailty. I didn’t realize it at the time, but those seeds were a gift from God. As we enter into another new season, may we here at the Peoples Church keep our eyes peeled for the ordinary miracles all around us, come what may.

Yours in Christ,
-Haley Hansen

 <p>WEDNESDAYS @ PEOPLES CHURCH</p>	<p>WEDNESDAYS AT PEOPLES CHURCH</p> <p>Join us every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in the Social Hall</p> <p>Wednesdays @ Peoples Church is a community dinner followed by dance aerobics at 6 p.m. & 'Faith & the News' at 6:30 p.m.</p>	 <p>THE PEOPLES CHURCH</p>
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NEW MEMBERS

The Peoples Church is growing!

On Sunday, October 29 during the 10:30 service, we inducted eight new members into our congregation! These new members attended new members classes, learned about the history and identity of The Peoples Church, and have committed to using their spiritual gifts in our community. If you see these faces around the church, or in the community, be sure to welcome and congratulate them!



If you are interested in joining our church and would like to learn more about how to become a member and what being a member of our church entails, you can send an email inquiry to office@thepeopleschurch.com and our staff will get you the information you need.



Holly & Kevin Orr,
Chloe & Lila



Kristen & Shawn Calabrese,
Sam, Malcom, & Miles



Nancy & John Swart



Danelle & Robert Hovenkamp

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN MEETINGS

There will be several congregational meetings in the month of November to present the capital campaign information with project descriptions, timelines, architectural renderings of the proposed projects, and overall budget estimates. There will also be opportunities to ask questions. These meetings will be held at a variety of times to best accommodate varying schedules and are open to all members of The Peoples Church. If you have any questions regarding these meetings, please call the co-chairs of the capital campaign: Nancy Danhof (517) 285-1666, and Sandy Draggoo (517) 719-2919.

The meeting dates are as follows:

Wednesday, November 1 at 1:30 p.m.
Sunday, November 5 at 12 p.m.
Thursday, November 9 at 10 a.m.
Sunday, November 19 at 12 p.m.

Tuesday, November 21 at 7 p.m.
Thursday, November 30 at 7 p.m.
Sunday, December 3 at 9:30 a.m.

All capital campaign meetings will take place in the Robertson Room.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

SUNDAY SCHOOL: First, I would like to express how exciting it is to see our Sunday School program growing. We have been blessed to have many new Sunday School students join us these last few weeks!

Sunday School is the culmination of work by many people, but especially by our volunteer Sunday School teachers who dedicate their time and energy one to two times a month to teach a lesson and lead activities. We still need more Sunday School teachers! All materials, including a script, are provided. Please email me at ahayes-murray@thepeopleschurch.com if you can help out with Sunday School, even if it's just once a month!



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT: This year's pageant is "The Reluctant Innkeeper." Rehearsals started in September when Carol Choir resumed. We look forward to putting on the pageant during the 10:30 service on Sunday, December 10. Our annual cookie party will follow the service. Thank you to all the parents who are helping to make the pageant a success!

VALENTINES OUTREACH CARDS & CARE PACKAGES: Starting in January, Sunday School students will make cards to include in care packages that get delivered to elderly or homebound members of our church. We will need volunteers to make baked goods and to deliver the care packages. Baked goods are due by February 11 so delivery can take place that week.

Check out the photos below of our very successful Trunk or Treat event on Saturday, October 28, and our Carol Choir performing Sunday, October 29 during the 10:30 a.m. service.



Peace and Blessings,
-Alexa Hayes-Murray, Children's Ed. Director

HENRY & ANNABEL LARZELERE MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Peoples Church is hosting Kristin Kobes Du Mez for our annual Henry & Annabel Memorial Lecture on Sunday, November 12. Dr. Du Mez is a New York Times bestselling author and Professor of History and Gender Studies at Calvin University. She holds a PhD from the University of Notre Dame and her research focuses on the intersection of gender, religion, and politics. She has written for The New York Times, The Washington Post, NBC News, Religion News Service, and Christianity Today. Her most recent book is 'Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation.'



Kristin will begin her time with us by giving a brief presentation during the 10:30 a.m. worship service, and then will give her full lecture, 'Jesus and John Wayne and the Evangelical Reckoning,' at 1 p.m. There will be a book signing following her lecture. This free event is open to anyone who would like to attend; all are welcome.

The Henry and Annabel Larzelere Memorial Lecture Series was established in 2017 to honor Henry and Annabel Larzelere's interest in continuing education on topics of international interest and theological thought. Our desire is that these lectures will inspire and strengthen us to serve with compassionate love as we strive to build a more just and peaceful world.

EARTH STEWARDSHIP

Many of us recognize fish as a low-fat source of protein that supports a healthy body. However, mercury can be found in the fish that we buy at the store and eat in restaurants, and too much mercury can counter benefits we seek from eating fish. 'Buy Safe Fish ... Mercury Guidelines for Store-bought & Restaurant Fish' is the title of a trifold brochure produced by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) that focuses on the dangers of eating too much mercury through frequent fish consumption.

The MDCH recommends how much fish to eat a month so as not to consume too much mercury. It grades the amount of mercury that can be found in commonly consumed fish species. The point scale is called "EAT 8!" which means only consume a total of eight fish points per month to remain healthy. For example, our favorites like salmon and shrimp have a low score of 1, but only one meal of canned Albacore tuna has a high score of 4. There is a full review of different fish species and their respective mercury levels in the brochure from MDCH, which can be found online at www.michigan.gov/eatsafefish, along with health safety information regarding local fish caught in Michigan waters. Copies of the *Buy Safe Fish* brochure are available at the Church Welcome Desk.

FINE ARTS COMMITTEE

The Fine Arts Committee cordially invites the congregation and members of the community for a special reception in honor of our resident artist, Chance Liscomb, whose exhibit "'Where ART Thou?'" — Playful Reflections on Religion and Scripture' is currently on display throughout the main level of the church. The reception will be held Tuesday, November 7 from 4 to 6 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Enjoy touring the exhibit and chatting with Chance about his work. All are welcome free of charge.

The exhibit includes mostly assemblages, paintings, mobiles, and small sculptures that highlight various messages from the Bible and provide a tongue-in-cheek look at religious ceremony, scripture, and pomp and circumstance. With a range from whimsical to seriousness, the goal of the show is to inspire, contemplate, and strengthen faith through good Christian humor and folly.

HOLIDAY FOOD BASKET PROGRAM

The Holiday Food Basket Program has been part of The Peoples Church since its beginning, and until 2000 it was handled by the Church staff. We believe from 2000 to 2013 it was Jati McKimmie who handled many volunteer programs for the church, and the Holiday Food Basket program was something that we looked forward to each year. Delivering a holiday meal's worth of groceries to a family who desperately needed the assistance was a wonderful way to help feed our community and feel connected as a giving church.

In 2004, Joan Wright started delivering food baskets, then stepped forward in 2013 to keep the program afloat, and was the coordinator from 2014 to 2019. She looked for volunteer help and received some from Carolyn Schuster and Jessica Eysselinck. We did all the shopping ourselves and everything was fresh from a local grocer utilizing the sale prices to get more bang for our buck. We asked the congregation for drivers to pick up the food from the store and then deliver it to the homes of our list of adopted families, recommended to us by Christian Services. We always ask for the most low-income families that surround the supermarket we were working with to help foster a relationship after the holidays. In 2019, Jessica Eysselinck agreed to take over as the coordinator to keep this program going with Joan as an assistant and mentor.

When things shut down in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, Jessica and Joan had to get creative and come up with a way to serve the families in a contact-free way. They worked with the local grocery store to create a food credit that each family could use to get their food selections or buy other items they needed, like diapers or formula. We still adopted 30 families, but gave a list of names to the store instead of purchasing identical food items. We then contacted all the families to let them know they had a food credit waiting for them at the store, and that we could provide transportation if they needed assistance.

And this is where we are today. We give \$75 per family of four to six people to cover the traditional holiday meal food purchases. The food credit gives each family the freedom to purchase the things their family wants for their holiday meal, instead of a pre-selected food choice. We have had many families tell us how grateful they are to use the food credit for other food items if they do not celebrate Thanksgiving or Christmas, or if they do not know how to prepare a turkey or spiral ham. Some recipients do not even eat meat at all, and some of that donated food would just get wasted. We hope that by providing a food credit we can afford each family their own ideal holiday feast. Last year we were able to serve 30 families for each holiday. Roughly 80 children from those families were right here in Lansing.



This year we need \$2,000 in donations each holiday to help cover the cost of this program. Donations can be made online, or in the church office. The QR code can be scanned to make online donations. You can donate anytime between now and December 31. Please consider giving to support this vital program this holiday season. Thank you!

-Jessica Eysselinck



THE PEOPLES CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, November 5 during the 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary service, we will hold our annual meeting to elect new elders and nominating committee members for 2024. Candidate bios can be found at the Welcome Desk. We invite all voting members of the church to join us for this important meeting.

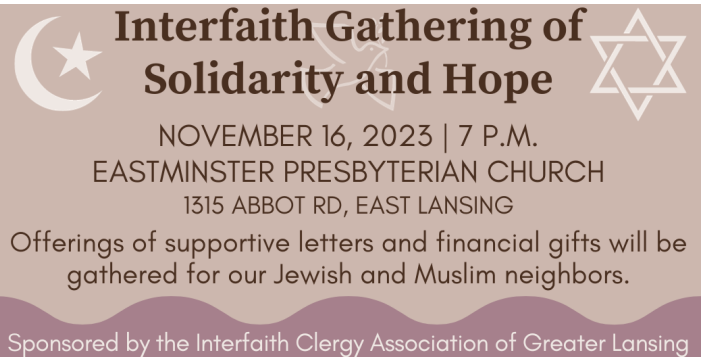
PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Thank you all for your participation in Youth Sunday! I love Youth Sunday because it allows the congregation to get a little glimpse of the joy and love in our PCYG family. November is a fun and busy month for PCYG! This month we are kicking off our D&D club. Come use your creativity and wit to navigate a treacherous fictional world! We will also celebrate Friendsgiving on Sunday, November 19, so prepare your favorite dish and come enjoy laughter and good food! If you have any questions, please contact me by emailing esmith@thepeopleschurch.com.

Joyfully,
Eisha Smith

VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY

Sunday, November 5, we are delighted to host Ody Norkin, a generous local man who has provided four ambulances filled with medical supplies to Ukraine. Ody has made several trips to the war-torn country in an effort to fulfill the needs of its citizens. He has quite a story to tell. To hear Ody's story, join us at 9:30 a.m. in the Robertson Room.



Interfaith Gathering of Solidarity and Hope

NOVEMBER 16, 2023 | 7 P.M.
EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1315 ABBOT RD, EAST LANSING

Offerings of supportive letters and financial gifts will be gathered for our Jewish and Muslim neighbors.

Sponsored by the Interfaith Clergy Association of Greater Lansing

The Reading People

The Reading People will meet Thursday November 16 at 1:30 p.m. in the Robertson Room to discuss 'The Agitators' by Dorothy Wickenden. Susan Nowicki will lead the discussion. We invite you to bring a sack lunch and come at 1 p.m. for a time of fellowship prior to our book discussion. Email Katie Slabaugh at kslab@hotmail.com for more information.

The Knitting People

The Knitting People will meet Monday November 30 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Robertson Room to share our projects and bless our completed items. We invite interested knitters and crocheters to join us! Yarn and needles are available. We are working on prayer shawls, baby blankets, hats, mittens, and slippers for chemo patients. Questions? Email Mary Anne Larzelere at malarz@aol.com.

EDGEWOOD VILLAGE CHRISTMAS GIFT PROJECT

Share Christmas joy by providing a gift for a child at Edgewood Village. If you would like to purchase a gift for a child, or if you would like to support this program financially, please contact Emily Anderson via e-mail, anderson2910@icloud.com, or by phone, (517) 648-0632. She will provide all the information you will need: gender and age of the child, item the child wishes, and details for delivering the gift.

MUSIC SUNDAY

NOVEMBER 19 | 10:30 AM

Please join us as our sanctuary choir performs 'Gloria' by Randol Alan Bass, and 'O Be Joyful in the Lord' by John Rutter.

The Peoples Church of East Lansing



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