



LIVE LIKE GRACE

My grandmother Grace had a card on her desk that said, “Women are like tea: you never know how strong they are until you put them in hot water.” She knew something about hot water – having raised seven children during the Depression in South Dakota. One of my favorite Grace stories is about the day her youngest boys knocked over the china cabinet. Don (my father) and David were running around the dining room and one of them (my dad swears it was not him) knocked one of the legs out. The whole cabinet fell over with a deafening crash. Grandma ran into the room and found that every dish she owned—including her wedding china—had been smashed to bits.

You may wonder how my grandmother punished her sons for this act of destruction. I can’t tell you, because that was never part of the story Grace told. Her story was about how she replaced those dishes. My Grandmother Grace threw a fancy tea party and invited all her friends. The price of admission was one complete place setting of dishes. It didn’t matter if it was fancy china or everyday dishes—you just needed to bring a plate, a bowl, a cup and a saucer. The party was a grand success; Grandmother ended up with a magnificent set of dishes—one set for every day, and another set of fine china. She didn’t mind that it wasn’t a perfectly matched set, because each setting represented the love and care of a friend.

The season of Lent begins early this year. We begin the 40-day journey on February 17, Ash Wednesday, when we will virtually mark ourselves with the sign of the cross. We will remind ourselves that we are dust and to dust we shall return. It is a somber season, a season of self-reflection and discernment, a season of stripping away what is not necessary so we can refocus ourselves on what is essential.

The power of Ash Wednesday is that it reminds us that we are mortal. No matter how much we pretend we are in control or self-reliant, the truth is we are finite, fragile, and (as Shakespeare put it) subject to “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” Ash Wednesday reminds us that one day we will die, which shatters our illusions of power and self-importance the way two young boys can shatter an entire collection of china. What we do in response to that shattering is the work of Lent.

When I think about my Grandmother Grace and the struggles she faced in her life, I always remember the story of her china. She could find joy in times of sorrow and potential in times of destruction. Grace was a life-long Methodist and her faith was the central narrative of her life. My goal is to be more like Grace each and every day. When life shatters my fragile illusions of control, my goal is to be like Grace and set my feet on the solid foundation of God’s presence and love, one place setting at a time.

Dr. Monroe

LENT 2021: WALK & TALK WEDNESDAYS

Eager for an opportunity to walk out in faith during these up and down days? A unique resource at The Peoples Church can help. I invite you to come to the church, walk the labyrinth in the Snider Social Hall and have a conversation with me, if you desire.

The labyrinth is not a maze to confuse and confound. Rather, the labyrinth is a spiritual tool and discipline dating back centuries in the Christian tradition. The whole point is to experience a “mini-pilgrimage” by following an intentional, guided walk toward a centering point, where you might experience God and God’s word for you. During the upcoming season of Lent in these continuing unprecedented times of Covid-19, walking this sacred path may be exactly what your soul and spirit need.

Because the church is following CDC pandemic guidelines, walking the church’s labyrinth will be by appointment only. Walks and subsequent conversation will be offered in 90-minute blocks of time, on a first-come, first-served basis. Walks will be offered on Wednesdays, February 24 through March 31. I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to bring before God your hopes, fears and desires for the days ahead. The labyrinth is open for your engagement.

Please contact me at: pswartz@thepeopleschurch.com or 517-648-8987 to schedule a time to walk and talk. I look forward to seeing you.

Rev. Penny

Birthdays & Anniversaries

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

*80 & OVER

- 2/01 - Alice Crist
- 2/11 - Eleanor Chapin
- 2/14 - Bob Cantrell
- 2/15 - Thomas Wilbur
- 2/17 - Ann Heisey
- 2/18 - Roger Grove
- 2/19 - Irene Cantlon
- 2/22 - Shirley Noetzold
- 2/26 - Marilyn Vaughn Hoffman
- 2/27 - Gary Wegenke

GREAT DECISIONS

On February 25 at 4:30 p.m., Dr. Rebecca Malouin will be our speaker on "The Role of International Organizations in a Global Pandemic." Dr. Rebecca Malouin is the Director of the Master of Science in Global Health Program, the Director of Research for the Institute for Global Health and Associate Professor in Family and Community Medicine at Michigan State University.

All programs will be virtual, via Zoom, at 4:30 p.m. and the link/information will be available in the bulletin prior to the program. Interested participants can email malarz@aol.com to be added to our mailing list or with any questions.

The *Great Decisions Guide Book* is available as a digital edition on Amazon for \$22.99 if you are interested in learning more!

THE READING PEOPLE

The Reading People will meet on February 25, via Zoom, at 1:30 p.m. They will be discussing *The Dutch House*, by Ann Patchett. To join the meeting and discussion, open Zoom and enter the meeting ID: 636 517 5503 and passcode: katiejeff

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

We are in the beginning stages of planning *Knights of North Castle* to visit Woldumar Nature Center **June 21-25, 2021**. Woldumar had a successful summer camp last year with no COVID cases, so we feel it is safe to plan for VBS this year. If your child is in K-5, you will receive a survey, so please keep an eye out for that in your email. Parental input is vital to help us gauge participation.



THE MANY BENEFITS OF PUZZLES AND PIECES

by Dana Johnson, Director, Peoples Church Preschool



Around the age of one year, children begin to move beyond interacting with objects by tasting and shaking them, into a stage of manipulating those objects with improved hand-eye control. At Peoples Church Preschool the children are provided with a variety of objects each day that can be manipulated. These include both stacking and interlocking pieces, such as those shown in the adjacent photo.

Puzzles can be flat or three-dimensional. When a child works with these materials, the following skills are being practiced:

Cognitive skills

- Understanding the surrounding world—there is no better way for your child to gain an understanding of the world around them than by letting them literally manipulate the world around them.
- Problem solving—either the piece fits or it does not. Children use critical thinking skills to reach their goal.

Emotional skills

- Patience—puzzles are not like sports, you can't just step up to the plate and swing until you knock it out of the park. You must practice patience and slowly work through the puzzle before you reach the ending.

Physical skills

- Hand-Eye Coordination—your child will develop a keen relationship between what their eyes see, what their hands do and what their brain relates to this information.
- Fine Motor Skills—small and precise movements, such as the movement of fingers to get a piece in exactly the right spot, are built and can lead to better handwriting and typing skills.



CHILDREN'S EDUCATION UPDATE

by Kathi Mitchell, Children's Education Director

I hope you and your children have been enjoying Sunday School at home. My online lessons/videos are available to anyone; if you haven't received a link, please contact me. In each video I read a Bible story, discuss the lesson, bring up discussion points, and of course, create a craft! Activity books are also available; if you need one, let me know and I'll send one to your home.

Get ready, get set—we are visiting Mr. Pigg's Barbecue Emporium this spring! Yes, for the first time we are having an Easter pageant! Ten children are working hard learning their lines and we look forward to another fabulous virtual pageant! We are so grateful to these kids and their parents for helping us create something the whole congregation will enjoy.

Let's try this again—"Knights of North Castle" are coming to VBS in June 2021! Woldumar had a successful, safe, summer program last year. With that experience, plus our own success with our preschool, we feel comfortable in planning VBS this summer. If your child is interested in being a camper or counselor, please contact me. More information to come in the next few weeks!

Take care, stay safe and please tell your children that Mrs. Kathi misses them!

Peace~

Kathi

REV. SWARTZ RECEIVES MINISTER EMERITUS HONOR

Rev. Swartz was ordained by the National Association of Congregation Christian Churches in 1995. After two successful pastorates, she was called to serve The Peoples Church as Associate Pastor in 2002. Rev. Swartz brought excellence and enthusiasm to all her pastoral duties, serving us faithfully until her retirement in 2013. During her tenure with The Peoples Church, she not only served as Associate Pastor, but also stepped in to be the Interim Senior Pastor for a year following Reverend Dr. Harry Johnson's retirement.

During her time at The Peoples Church, Rev. Swartz focused her energies and gifts on pastoral care. She provided leadership in the organization and implementation of Stephen Ministry, the Caring Ministry and the Grief Recovery program. She was also instrumental in incorporating spiritual direction practices into the ministry of the church. As a certified Spiritual Director, Rev. Swartz helped create the long-running TPC Women's Spirituality Group and the Upper Room-inspired Companions in Christ, a covenant group that has met for over a decade.

Another important part of Rev. Swartz's ministry was teaching. She developed and led a variety of programs for Lent, Advent and WNL! with topics ranging from Spiritual Disciplines, Synoptic Communities, Non-Canonical Christian Communities and Writing Your Spirituality. Rev. Swartz also took an active role in mentoring pastoral interns, helping to guide and shape seminarians on the path to ordination. And though preaching was not her primary responsibility, Rev. Swartz's sermons made a significant contribution to the spiritual growth and theological education of many members of the congregation.

Rev. Swartz has served The Peoples Church with distinction and grace. Her ministry enriched the lives of church members and brought recognition to the work of The Peoples Church in the greater Lansing community. With her distinguished career and countless valued contributions to The Peoples Church, it is fitting that we honor the Reverend Penelope Swartz as "Minister Emeritus of The Peoples Church." Please join us in congratulating her on this honor!

PCYG

PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP



Hello PCYG Students and Families!

Thank you so much for your consistency and energy as we continue to meet virtually each week! I am planning on some outdoor events this month (think sledding and snow building), depending on the weather! These events will be emailed out and posted on our Facebook page as soon as plans are set.

We will continue meeting via Zoom on Wednesday evenings (middle school) and Sunday evenings (high school) from 6:00-7:00 p.m.! Thank you again for continuing to show up and bringing such good attitudes to our PCYG time. I love seeing the ways you connect and grow, even in difficult times.

Joyfully,

Elisha Smith

ASH WEDNESDAY

February 17, 2021



WELCOME ABOARD ZACK!



Hello, my name is Zack Matthews. I am excited for the new opportunities of being the facility director at The Peoples Church. Everyone I have met so far has been so welcoming and I look forward to meeting everyone as time allows. I am also excited to take part in the many projects happening around, and within, our beautiful church.

I was born and raised in Dearborn, MI and attended the University of Michigan-Dearborn where I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Economics and Business management. I have lived in the Lansing area for about three years now, with my fiancé Rachel, who I will be marrying in July.

In my free time, I enjoy working out, camping and watching Netflix.

FEBRUARY 2021 PORTAL

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