



IS THIS A JOKE?

Due to the vagaries of the calendar, Maundy Thursday falls on April Fool's Day this year. Of course some people will see this as hilarious, that one of the most solemn days of the Christian year falls on a day set aside for pranks and jokes.

A good joke plays off on our sense of order and turns it on its head. The setup tells us what to expect, but then the punchline is a surprise and it's the surprise that makes us laugh. Like the jokes my children used to tell: What do you call a fly with no wings? A walk. Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building? Of course! The Empire State Building can't jump.

I wonder if the disciples thought it was a joke when Jesus got up from the table and tied a towel around his waist and began to wash their feet. Here was their revered Rabbi, stripped down and doing the work of a lowly servant. Reading John's Gospel, you get the sense the upper room was filled with an awkward silence as Jesus set about his task. Finally, when it was his turn, Simon Peter asked, "Are you really going to wash my feet?" Peter might as well have said, "Is this a joke? What do you think you're doing, Jesus?" Jesus said they wouldn't understand what he was doing, but later, it would make sense. Later.

After he was betrayed and condemned, the Roman guards had their own fun, mocking Jesus and making jokes at his expense. He was whipped, beaten and crowned with thorns. Jesus had to drag his own cross through the streets, streets that were crowded with people who found his suffering entertaining. Even as he hung on the cross, the guards and the crowds laughed at him. What a joke! Here was the King of the Jews – the so-called Christ – suffering a humiliating death for all the world to see! What a joke!

Then came Easter morning. The stone was rolled away and the linen shroud was lying where the body should have been. The women claimed the tomb was empty...and the disciples thought they were joking. Later, Jesus appeared to the disciples – all except Thomas – and when they told Thomas that Jesus was risen, he thought he was being pranked. Only the risen Christ could convince Thomas it wasn't a joke.

In first century Corinth, many people thought the Apostle Paul was a joke. He was preaching about Jesus Christ who was crucified, who died, and who was raised from the dead. Many people dismissed Paul's testimony because it seemed silly that the Messiah – the Son of God – would die on a cross. Such a death was humiliating, even embarrassing. But Paul had met the risen Christ and he believed that Jesus' death had the power to save us. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." (1 Cor. 1:18)

The resurrection – like a good joke – plays on our expectations. Jesus, the one who came to bring us the abundant life, was betrayed and crucified. His ministry and message should have died with him. But God had the last laugh and raised Jesus from the dead so we would know who and what he was.

Christ – the Lord – is risen today! Such a wonderful surprise makes me want to laugh! Happy Easter!

Dr. Monroe

GREAT DECISIONS

On April 22, Dr. Matt Zierler will speak on Brexit and the European Union. Professor Zierler's research and teaching interests are in foreign policy, international security, international relations theory, international law, and international cooperation. He is the associate dean of the MSU Honors College.

We will meet at 4:30 p.m. on Zoom; the link and meeting information will be provided in an upcoming Sunday bulletin. Interested participants can email malarz@aol.com to be added to the mailing list or with any questions.

Brexit: Taking stock and looking ahead: With the "Brexit transition period" coming to an end this year, the United Kingdom will formally leave the European Union at the start of 2021. With negotiations between the two entities continuing to stall, what does the future of Europe and the UK look like? Will the UK survive a possible Scottish vote to leave? Who will step up and take command of Europe now that Angela Merkel is out of the spotlight?

**TO MAKE A
GIFT ONLINE!**

[CLICK HERE!](#)





APRIL BIRTHDAYS

*80 & OVER

- 4/01 - Gary Calkins
- 4/03 - John Larzelere
- 4/09 - Boyd Kinzley
- 4/10 - Janet Woolsey
- 4/25 - Ed Marin
- 4/28 - Dorothy VanLooy

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- 4/11 - Andrew and Sandra Conner (51)

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

NEW MEMBERS

We are blessed to have so many visitors attending The Peoples Church virtually and in person and so many interested in learning more about our wonderful faith community! We are thankful that technology gives us the opportunity to share God's word and offer programs and classes virtually! Are you interested in learning more? Consider joining us for our next Zoom New Members Class on April 18! Sign up by contacting Robin Matheson at matheso4@msu.edu or 517-290-3223.

THE READING PEOPLE

The Reading People will meet on April 15, via Zoom, at 1:30 p.m. They will be discussing *The Giver of Stars*, by Jojo Mayes. To join the meeting and discussion, open Zoom and enter the meeting ID: 636 517 5503 and passcode: katiejeff

THE KNITTING PEOPLE

The Knitting People will meet virtually on April 8 at 1:00 p.m. To join this meeting [click here](#) or open the Zoom app and enter the meeting ID: 976 926 4464 and passcode: llove2knit.

THE PEOPLES FORUM

The Peoples Forum offers monthly presentations from a dynamic lineup of guest speakers! The meetings take place via Zoom, once per month, at 9:30 a.m. Mark your calendars for our upcoming forums:

April 11: Marie Blair, Concert Pianist

May 2: Sean Holland, One Love Global

June 6: Dick Peffley, GM and CEO of Lansing Board of Water and Light

[Join the Zoom meeting here](#); Meeting ID: 952 4386 8996 and passcode is TPCPF. Or, dial 1 301 715 8592 and enter the meeting ID: 952 4386 8996 and passcode TPCPF. Email questions to [Mary West](#).



WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD: APRIL 12-16

by Dana Johnson, Director, Peoples Church Preschool



The children have been enjoying the spring weather and getting lots of time to play outdoors. During the second week of this month, we look forward to a special celebration! From April 12 - 16, Peoples Church Preschool will be joining with early childhood educators and children around the nation to celebrate these special days.

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|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| April 12 | Music Monday |
| April 13 | Tasty Tuesday |
| April 14 | Work Together Wednesday |
| April 15 | Artsy Thursday |
| April 16 | Family Friday |

The Preschool is asking for donations of recyclable, reusable and repurposed materials that we can use to enhance our Art Centers to give us the best ever **ARTSY THURSDAY!**



Suggestions:

- Clean and washed plastic caps • Large buttons • Stamp pads
- Envelopes • Ribbon • Nature items • Yarn • String, Twine
- Faux flowers and greenery or leis • Packing peanuts • Bubble wrap
- Old large paint brushes • Foil • Round oatmeal or pringles containers

If you have materials you can donate and drop off at the church, members of the Preschool staff would be happy to pick them up in the NW Entrance. Please call (517) 332-2885 if you will be dropping off art items. Thank you!

EARTH DAY: APRIL 22

Earth Day 1970 gave a voice to an emerging public consciousness about the state of our planet. In the decades leading up to the first Earth Day, Americans were consuming vast amounts of leaded gas through massive and inefficient automobiles. Industry belched out smoke and sludge with little fear of the consequences from either the law or bad press. Air pollution was commonly accepted as the smell of prosperity. Until this point, mainstream America remained largely oblivious to environmental concerns and how a polluted environment threatens human health.



Over the decades, EARTHDAY.ORG has brought hundreds of millions of people into the environmental movement, creating opportunities for civic engagement and volunteerism in 193 countries. Earth Day engages more than 1 billion people every year and has become a major stepping stone along the pathway of engagement around the protection of the planet.

Now, the fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency, as the ravages of climate change become more and more apparent every day. Reducing our carbon footprint is critical.

This year on Earth Day – the Earth Stewardship Team encourages you to take on an activity such as planting a tree, picking up trash, reducing plastic use, reducing energy use, or increasing your home recycling efforts. Together each one of us can make a difference.



CHILDREN'S EDUCATION UPDATE

by Kathi Mitchell, Children's Education Director

Hello from Children's CE!

We are keeping busy in the Children's Education department with our pageant, outreach projects and, of course, Sunday School!

Our Easter Pageant, "Mr. Pigg's Barbecue Emporium" will premier April 11 and we are so excited to share it with you! Ten kids have been working for weeks learning their lines and songs and they did a fabulous job recording their parts. I think you're going to love it!

Our current outreach project is working with Community Engagement to send Easter greetings to elderly or homebound members of the congregation. I love that the kids are doing these service projects on their own. What a wonderful lesson in serving others.

Sunday School is still available online with a weekly video discussing the lesson, reading a Bible Story and doing a craft. This month we are learning about the Resurrection, Great Commission, Peter and John, and more. If you know someone who would enjoy working along with me in one of these videos, please contact me for the online link. Printed materials are also available by request!

Peace,
Kathi



Hello PCYG Students and Families!

What a joy it's been to see your *masked* faces back in-person this month! We will continue meeting in-person at the park or in the Rotunda (weather dependent). Middle schoolers are meeting Wednesday evenings from 6:00-7:00p.m., and high schoolers are meeting Sunday evenings from 6:00-7:00 p.m. Thank you all for your participation this past month in our Bob Ross painting fun, and snow creation building!

Mark your calendars because PCYG is canceled for spring break the first week of April (4/4 and 4/7). Our meeting will be held virtually on 4/11 (high-school) and then we will be having fires, s'mores and playing yard games on the 4/14 and 4/18!

I'm looking forward to another exciting month, and appreciate your consistency and support for our PCYG family!

Elisha Smith



THE PEOPLES ALL-CHURCH TALENT SHOW APRIL 25!

Do you have a talent you'd like to share?

[Email Diane Shafer](mailto:Diane.Shafer@thepeopleschurch.com) with your name and your talent by Sunday, April 11.

Then, make a recording of you and your talent on a phone, tablet or computer (HORIZONTALLY) and email it to teamaudio@thepeopleschurch.com. Acts are limited to 5 minutes.

This event will be assembled ahead of time and premier on The Peoples Church YouTube page.
At least 10 acts are needed for this event and the event is limited to one hour.