

ON MY MIND: *The Real Power of the Resurrection*

Of all the services of the church year, my hands-down favorite is Maundy Thursday. The altar is bare, the liturgy is spare, and we sit together, watching the light fade as we recall how Jesus suffered and died. Maundy Thursday is the darkness that prepares my soul for the glory of Easter. Without the crucifixion, the resurrection loses its power to astonish.

Many Christians focus attention on the death of Jesus, but lately, I've been thinking about his suffering. I credit this change of focus to a beautiful passage in the 2014 book *Ordinary Grace* (by William Krueger). The Rev. Drum, a Methodist minister whose missing daughter has been found dead, preaches a sermon in the immediate wake of his family's tragedy. He stands in the pulpit, mastering his emotions, and speaks about the darkest moment in the Gospels. It isn't the death of Jesus, for in death, Christ gives himself over to the divine will. No, the worst moment is when Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matt 27:46) This is the soul-wrenching cry of one who has lost the very thing they loved most.

Rev. Drum looks out at his congregation and says, "Alive, Jesus, like us, saw with mortal eyes, felt the pain of mortal flesh, and knew the confusion of imperfect mortal understanding. What then do we have left when the thing we love most has been taken?" (p. 194) Then he quotes 1 Corinthians 13: *Faith, hope and love; these three are eternal. But the greatest of these is love.*

He goes on, explaining that God has given humankind control over these three things, which are the building blocks of eternity. In the face of tragedy and loss, if we can hold fast to faith, hope and especially love, we will not be defeated. Rev. Drum ends with these words: "The miracle is not that the bad thing will be undone, but that you will rise in the morning and be able to see again the startling beauty of the day." (p. 195)

This side of heaven, we cannot grasp the full power of the resurrection. But we do know our share of sorrow and suffering, and there are times when tragedy drives us to our knees, like it did on February 13, 2023. "My God, my God, why have you abandoned us?" The darkness is so deep and so overpowering that we feel forsaken, isolated, and alone.

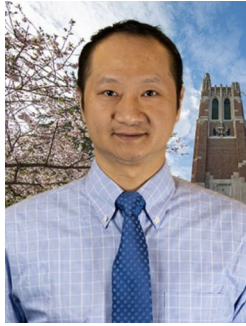
Yet there is no limit to the power of faith, hope and love. We've experienced this first hand and seen evidence of it all around us in the last six weeks. It is a miracle...and the power of the resurrection in this life.

Easter is coming and the sun will rise. Whatever darkness we have endured, whatever grief or tragedy we are experiencing, it is not the last word on us. And we are not alone. Jesus, the one who knows the depths of mortal suffering, is with us and leads us forward so we can see the startling beauty of the day.

Blessed Easter to you all.
-Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe

AGE ALIVE: TOWN & GOWN

UPCOMING SPEAKERS



Tuesday, April 11, 5 p.m.

In the Robertson Room & over Zoom

“The Latest in Dementia Research”

Scott Counts — Associate Professor of Transnational Neuroscience and Family Medicine (Left)

Fei Sun — Professor of Social Work (Right)



Tuesday, April 25, 5 p.m.

In the Robertson Room & over Zoom

“MSU IMPACT Alliance and AgeAlive”

Clare Luz — Associate Professor of Family and Community Medicine, Founding Director of AgeAlive (Left)

Lori Strom — AgeAlive Consultant (Right)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Nyaka

80,000 Nyaka children have been reached through Nyaka’s programming! 20,000 grandmothers are participating as caregivers for vulnerable children! Wow! Nyaka has come a long way since its inception in 2001. The Peoples Church has helped move Nyaka forward with yearly donations as well as supporting two school children there. Our former pastor, Andrew Pomerville, led a mission trip to Nyaka. Nyaka is designated as one of our international missions. Kudos to The Peoples Church for its continuing support of the important work that this organization is doing.

Nyaka was founded 22 years ago by Jackson Kaguri. Jackson is a Ugandan native, but has lived in Okemos for about 2 decades. Nyaka was founded in response to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS in Jackson’s home village and surrounding areas. Using \$5,000 of Jackson’s personal savings, Nyaka began as a single school house with 2 teachers in the southwestern Ugandan village of Nyakagezi, or Nyaka, as it is more commonly known. It provides free education, uniforms, books and pencils to children who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. Today, Nyaka has grown to include 2 elementary schools, 1 secondary school complex, grandmother’s programming, health and nutrition programs, and sexual and gender based violence programs. It represents a holistic approach to serving the most vulnerable children. To read more about Nyaka please go to www.nyakaglobal.org.

If you would like to submit an article for the May Portal, please email adroscha@thepeopleschurch.com by April 15.



VOICES OF THE COMMUNITY

Sunday, April 2, 9:30 a.m.
In the Robertson Room

Speaker: Dr. Mitch Rinek
Topic: ‘Oh, my; What is that Spot on my Skin?’



BOARD OF ELDERS

Get acquainted with The Peoples Church board of elders! Here they are at their February meeting. The elder board meets the fourth Tuesday of every month. Learn their names and faces so you can recognize them around church!

(Pictured left to right) Back row: Brad Williams, Bob Watson, Dave Brower, Ben Eysselinck. Middle row: Sandy Dragoo, Dottie Spousta, Mary West, Sarah Dymond, Erik Mackey, Kim Schramm. Front row: Kari Naghtin, Emily Anderson, Diane Shafer, John Lindley, Susan Nowicki. Not pictured: Rich Patterson and Bob Steinkamp.

NEW MEMBERS



On Sunday, March 12, we inducted eight new members into our church body! Learn their names and faces so you can recognize and welcome them! Left photo (left to right): Austin Bekkering, Austin Owen, Maryann Boyd, Erika Hall, Austin Scott, Alex Smith. Right photo: Hunter Johnson and Shanna Miller.

Great news! Due to increased demand, we've added a new members class **Sunday, April 23, 9:30 a.m.** in the Centennial Room. No RSVP is required. Childcare is provided by request only. Questions? Contact the church office, or Robin Matheson by calling (517) 290-3223, or emailing matheso4@msu.edu.

If you are a new member, or are interested in membership, then this announcement is for you! One Sunday a month we offer tours of the building after the 10:30 a.m. service. After the organ postlude, join us in front of the church, and we can start a tour and answer as many questions as we are able. No RSVP required.



Every Wednesday
at 5:30 p.m.
in the Social Hall

Wednesdays @ Peoples Church is a community dinner followed by programming. All are welcome!



PEOPLES CHURCH YOUTH GROUP

Calling all bakers! Our annual PCYG Cake Auction is taking place **Sunday, April 16, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** This year's auction will be a silent auction, allowing the space and time to celebrate Kathi Mitchell's farewell that same day. There will be time before and after service to bid! **WE NEED CAKES!** Please send an email to esmith@thepeopleschurch.com if you are planning to bake a cake (or other dessert) for the auction. Cakes need to be dropped off that Sunday morning by 10:00 a.m. Come support PCYG as we prepare to head to Chicago this fall for a mission week!

-Elisha Smith

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Our Sunday School students have been learning a lot this spring. We've quietly talked about Good Samaritans, foolish/wise decisions, and Easter and we've noisily made roller coasters and had a Palm Sunday parade. It's been wonderful to watch these kids enjoy Sunday School!



It's time to register for VBS! This year our Vacation Bible School will be at the church, **June 19-23, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** You can scan the QR code to register your children. We are planning a super fun week with half day VBS, half day summer camp. Our campers will enjoy a trip to the zoo, a visit from the naturalist, put on a Grand Finale production and more! As always, we can't do VBS without your help!



We need adult volunteers to be field trip chaperones and station leaders (science, crafts, mission, games) and teenagers to be crew leaders. Please email vbs@thepeopleschurch.com for more information. This once a year event is important not just for the Bible lessons learned and mission projects completed, but also experiences had and friendships formed. Please help us make this week a success!

When I leave as Children's Christian Education Director this month, I'm excited to have Alexa Hayes-Murray taking over! Alexa is a church member, Sunday School teacher, and the mother of two of our current students. She is also a school teacher, so she has many years of classroom experience and will do a wonderful job for your kids! I am confident I am leaving you in good hands! You can help Alexa this spring by volunteering to teach Sunday School. Her phone number is 517-899-4646 and her email is ahayes-murray@thepeopleschurch.com.

Thank you for all of your support the last 3.5 years I've been your Children's C.E. Director. This has been my favorite job ever! I will miss you all.

Peace and Blessings
-Kathi

PEOPLES CHURCH PRESCHOOL

In February, the Preschool conducted its annual Professional Development Day. On this day the staff attended training sessions on Play-Responsive Teaching, Nature-Based Learning, and Building Successful Children—The importance of Learning Through Movement. Staff members were treated to a spectacular lunch provided by the Preschool Advisory Committee. The morning session featured a tour to another nationally accredited preschool while it was in session with children. In the afternoon, after training segments, the teachers split into three "tribes" and participated in a team-building game of Survivor.

-Dana Johnson

FINE ARTS COMMITTEE

The Fine Arts Committee has announced its latest exhibit, “Wild Florescence” by Lansing-area artist Michelle Word. It is now on display throughout the halls bordering the church Sanctuary, the Thomsen case across from the library and the kiosk in the Rotunda.

The unique display features a collection of collage, a technique that creates assemblages of materials and different media that are formed into multi-dimensional artwork. The term collage derives from the French term *papiers collés* (or *décollage*), used to describe techniques of pasting paper cut-outs onto various surfaces. It was first used as an artist’s technique in the early twentieth century.

In explaining her work the artist notes that, “Collage pushes the additive and subtractive aspects of the artistic process – it is additive as elements are glued onto the surface and, conversely, subtractive as they are removed to leave behind a residue, scratched into or destroyed.” She goes on, “Collage provides a sense of touch, both through surface implications and the physical construction process. With the combination of collage and assemblage, painting and drawing, and additional mixed media, I am able to explore contrasts such as gestural and controlled, familiar and unknown, material and illusion, natural and artificial.”

A native of Kentucky, Michelle currently serves as the Director of Education at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum. She came to the MSU Broad in 2014 after serving as outreach/programming coordinator and a faculty member in MSU’s Department of Art, Art History, and Design for nine years. There she regularly taught lecture and studio courses on the creative process, drawing, painting, and the collaged aesthetic. She holds a BA in studio art and art history from DePauw University and an MFA in painting from MSU.

Michelle took a unique approach to creating this exhibit, in that some pieces were completed works, while other pieces on display, including the items in the Thompson Case and Kiosk, were all created on site.

Interestingly, she did not assign names to individual pieces, rather she named them as groupings. For example, the larger pieces in the hall are collectively called “With Love, from the Plantsman.” The pieces in the Thompson Case are named “Ghost Garden,” and the collection displayed in the Kiosk is called “Glass House of Floribunda.”

This colorful and imaginative exhibit will be on display through **June 8**. Pick up a catalog for the exhibit in the NW entrance of the church. To learn more about Michelle’s work visit her website www.michelleword.com.

The exhibit was curated by Sue Patterson. It was installed by the artist along with the assistance of The Fine Arts Committee including Susan Nowicki, Chair, and members Mary Liechty, Sue Patterson, Suzanne Mills as well as friends of the committee Chance Lipscomb and Kelton Reedy.



‘With Love, from the Plantsman,’ located outside the Sanctuary.

Holy Week Services

Sunday, April 2
Palm Sunday

Thursday, April 6
Maundy Thursday
Service 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 9
Easter Sunday
Identical Services,
8:30 & 10:30 a.m.



MUSIC SUNDAY

APRIL 30 - 10:30 AM

*Please join us as the sanctuary choir performs
Franz Joseph Haydn's 'Lord Nelson Mass' with full
orchestra. You won't want to miss it!*

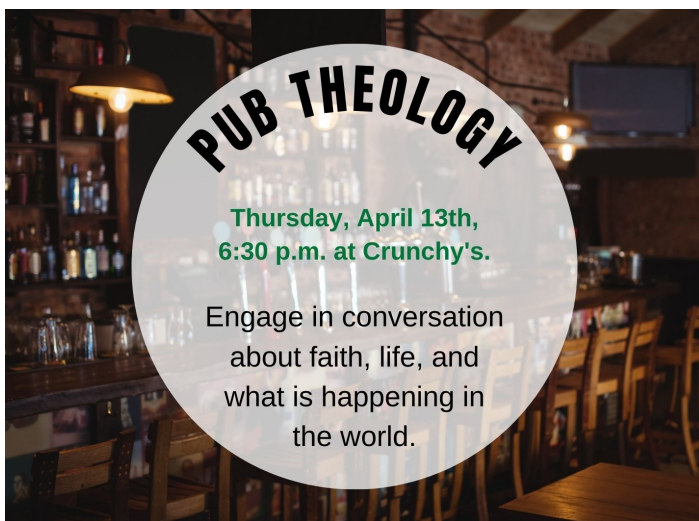
The Peoples Church of East Lansing



PUB THEOLOGY

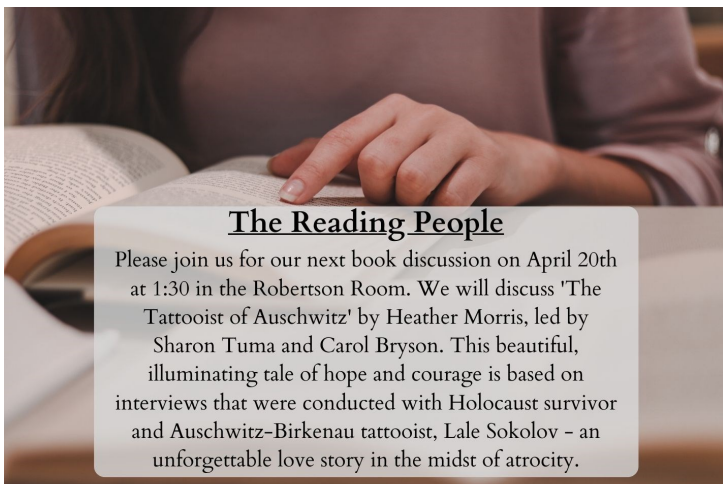
Thursday, April 13th,
6:30 p.m. at Crunchy's.

Engage in conversation
about faith, life, and
what is happening in
the world.



The Reading People

Please join us for our next book discussion on April 20th at 1:30 in the Robertson Room. We will discuss 'The Tattooist of Auschwitz' by Heather Morris, led by Sharon Tuma and Carol Bryson. This beautiful, illuminating tale of hope and courage is based on interviews that were conducted with Holocaust survivor and Auschwitz-Birkenau tattooist, Lale Sokolov - an unforgettable love story in the midst of atrocity.



Annual Book Sale & Jewelry Sale

The Knitting People

Welcome knitters and crocheters! Our next meeting is April 27th, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Robertson Room. Please bring completed blankets, hats, mittens, slippers, and other items for blessing and sharing. New knitters? We have needles and yarn to help you get started! We enjoy a time of fellowship and sharing our projects with one another and the wider community.



Sat., May 20, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sun., May 21, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Book donations accepted until
Monday, May 15, and jewelry
donations accepted year-round.



EARTH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

REMEMBERING JOHN BEHRENDT

John was a member of Peoples Church who passed away on January 20, 2020 at the age of 80. During the last five years of John's life he was an active and enthusiastic member of the Church's Earth Stewardship Committee (ESC).

Immediately after the morning service on **Sunday, April 30**, the ESC will hold a dedication ceremony in the Memorial Garden at the site of a newly planted redbud tree, which was planted in memory of John. Fittingly, April 30th is "Arbor Day!"

Beth Lundy, John's daughter, is currently a staff member at The Peoples Church. Below, you will see Beth's moving message about her father and his love of nature and the environment:

"Earth Stewardship was a natural endeavor for John. He felt it was important to take care of God's Creation. He was a natural caregiver and nurturer, so taking care of our planet was just an extension of his character.

Whether it was Rotary, church, or other volunteer opportunities, John always seemed to gravitate toward earth stewardship efforts. Planting trees, ideas for fostering corporate and community relationships, and delivering recyclables to township collection spots were all things that filled his days, even at the end. No part was too big or too small for him. He was always thinking about what could be done to make a difference and protect the planet for our future generations.

One of John's proudest moments was when Claire, his granddaughter, served on The Peoples Church Earth Stewardship committee. They would chat about their ideas and made plans together. He encouraged her and many others to think differently about how we should be living alongside God's creation. In his example, the connections he made, and his relationship with people and planet, he made a difference, and his legacy continues.

Planting a tree to honor John is fitting; he planted many trees. Some were in honor of special people or important days. One still stands next to the house that was his home for over 30 years, providing shade and protection to those who live there now."

If you are able, please join the members of the Earth Stewardship Committee in the Memorial Garden on April 30th to honor the memory of John.



We are called to respond to God's love through our words and actions. The psalmist states, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it." (Psalm 24:1)

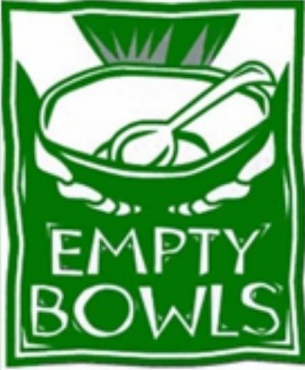
The familiar first line is incomplete without the second, less well-known declaration, which calls us to love not just God's earth, but also everyone in the world. Work for justice, especially for those, often the most marginalized among us, who suffer because of climate change.

Identify in your home or workplace ways you made thoughtful changes in the past year because of your love for creation and humanity. Are you consuming less? Have you cut down on food waste or started composting? Make a list or tally mark of your actions and celebrate. Then talk about the exercise with someone. Find out what they are doing. Encourage each other.

At a meal or other food-inclusive event, provide compostable napkins, plates, and cups— and a compost service (either from members or a commercial provider). Announce their use as a way to show love to the earth.

Although the psalmist's declaration was first offered to listeners many centuries ago, the exhortation to us as today's custodians to do everything we can, individually and collectively, to protect and love God's creation and people, remains critically relevant.

-Marc Lyon



EMPTY BOWLS CHILI COOK-OFF

Congratulations to the Empty Bowls Chili Cook-Off Winners!

From the Over-18 Category:

1st Place: Elisha Smith & Evan O'Hara (white bean chicken chili)

2nd Place: Beth Lundy (family white chicken chili)

3rd Place: Nancy Danhof (black bean vegetable)

From the Under-18 Category:

1st Place: Gabe & Theo Eysselinck (Temple of Boom)

2nd Place: Brody Turner (buffalo & bacon chili)

3rd Place: Ben, Noel, & Sam Dymond (Just Like Home turkey chili)

Shoutout for all the wonderful staff and volunteers who helped make the Empty Bowls Chili Cook-Off a huge success. There were 18 entries (including 3 youth) and the sale of pottery bowls lovingly made by the Greater Lansing Potters Guild raised \$784 for the Greater Lansing Food Bank. Thanks to TPC staff for all their hard work with planning, setup, cooking a meal for the event, and cleanup! Thanks to the volunteers as well for their help with planning, setup, serving, and cleanup. We could not have enjoyed this fabulous time of fellowship, food, and fun without you!