

On My Mind: *Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit*



The second most widely read Christian text is *The Imitation of Christ* by the medieval Catholic priest Thomas à Kempis. Kempis was a member of the Modern Devotion spiritual movement during the late medieval period and his gift was connecting the stuff of everyday life with the life of faith.

The quotation above is from Kempis's most famous work, and it is translated as "Man proposes, but God disposes." The idea is that people can make all sorts of plans, but in the end, we do not control our lives or our destinies. You need look no further than 2021 to find the truth of this quotation.

I had many plans for 2021. When I set goals for 2021, I naively wrote, "As the pandemic draws to a close, there are some areas of ministry and mission that will bear new fruit." None of us could have known that a year later we would still be dealing with the Covid pandemic. We had other plans, didn't we?

In 1995, I had a plan. Neil and I were finishing our master's degrees and he had applied to a doctoral program in New Haven. I knew he would be admitted to the program and so I had made plans. I would take a job in the admissions office at the seminary, Walter would be enrolled in a local preschool, and we would continue to live in our cute little apartment. The plan was perfect!

Except Neil did not get admitted to that doctoral program. When he broke the news to me, I burst into tears. All my plans were ruined! What would we do?! Where would we go?! It felt like a disaster.

Then came the news that Neil had been admitted to the doctoral program at Boston University. And then came the news that there was a church in the Boston area looking for an associate minister. And then came the news that there was a sunny three-bedroom apartment available in Boston. By the time 1996 rolled around, we had a whole new life in Boston. In fact, it was a better life than I had planned in New Haven, and it set me on the path that led me to Peoples Church. Amazing!

Man proposes, but God disposes. Some people might think this is a negative statement, that humans make plans and God actively thwarts what we are trying to do. Others might think that this statement means humans have no free will. But neither of those readings is accurate.

What I think Thomas à Kempis was trying to communicate is that human plans often fall apart and not always because of circumstances beyond our control. But God's plans do not fail and when we trust in God to lead us, things work out better than we could possibly imagine.

How God is going to transform and redeem these last two years has yet to be revealed but I am trying to hold it all lightly. The grief, the disappointment, the worry, the anger, the uncertainty - I am determined to give this all to God and trust that God will do something good and new with it.

Whatever plans you have for 2022, I pray they all work out. But come what may, know that God will always be with us. Happy New Year!

- Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe, Senior Pastor



January Birthdays

*80 & over



1/03—Helen Ward

1/06—Peggy Sherman

1/08—Susan Allis

1/13—Jane Harrison

1/14—Carol Dooley

1/15—Randy Wirth

1/19—James Harrison

1/20—Bill Dansby

1/24—Fran Bradley

1/24—Pat Brogan

1/26—Jeanne McKowen

1/30—Jean Moore

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



New Members Class

If you are interested in becoming a member of The Peoples Church, or simply want to know more about this remarkable community of faith, consider joining our next New Members Class on **January 23rd at 11:30 a.m.** Please contact Robin Matheson at matheso4@msu.edu or 517-290-3223 to register and/or find our more information.

The Reading People

The Reading People will meet **Thursday, January 20th, in the Robertson Room** to discuss *Even As We Breathe* by Annette Clapsaddle. This is the story of a young Cherokee man, growing up in North Carolina during World War II, setting out in the world, and discovering that in returning home, he might finally realize his full potential. Join us on zoom or in person!

The Knitting People

The Knitting People will meet **Thursday, January 27th, from 1-3 p.m. in the Robertson Room.** Please bring completed projects, especially baby blankets, to be blessed and given. All knitters and crocheters are invited to join us for fellowship and friendship; we have yarn and needles, and just need your willing fingers!

Stephen Ministry Update

The Stephen Ministry program is actively walking with church members grieving a loss or experiencing another difficult life event. Monthly, the Stephen Ministers meet for supervision, which includes continuing education and support. We continue to be available to any church member needing a confidential, listening ear during or after challenges on life's journey. This coming Spring, there will be another training for church members interested in becoming Stephen Ministers. Feel free to read our page on the church website for more information. If you have questions or feel called to become a Stephen Minister, contact Aram Kabodian (akabodian@gamil.com) or Chuck McNeil (chcomcneil@yahoo.com).

The Peoples Forum; Sundays in the Robertson Room; 9:30-10:15 a.m.

1/09—Kent Ames, Retired Veterinarian

1/16—Jim Dover & John Pirich, Sparrow Hospital

1/23—Christy Crandell, The Willows

1/30—TBA



Rebekah/Hannah Circle

Rebekah/Hannah Circle will meet for fellowship and conversation on **Wednesday, January 26th** at noon in the Centennial Room. Bring your own brown bag lunch. Beverages will be provided. Pastor Devon will be our guest. Other guests are welcome to join us. If you have questions call Gretchen Rosenbrook at 332-5132 or Joan Wright at 349-1074.

Community Engagement Thanks You!

My heart is filled with gratitude each time I think of the generosity that flows out of this church. On behalf of the Community Engagement Ministry, I'd like to extend a HUGE Thank You to each and every one of you for trusting the church with your hard-earned money.

"Pray first, God provides", words spoken by Mark Criss, became the heartbeat of the ministry. The Peoples Church gave out benevolence funds of over \$1,000 this year! This figure includes the funds collected during the Advent Season for the refugees coming into our community, as well as the amount given for Holiday baskets that will provide a special meal for families in the Lansing area. Your gifts impact so many people!

The Community Engagement ministry celebrates and Praises God for all the good He is doing through each of you.

Peace and Joy,
Bev Mason
2021 Chair of Community Engagement

Refugee Services Thank You

Years ago I was talking with a most interesting man. When asked why he married his wife, he answered "Because she makes me a better man." That is how I feel about being part of the People community. Recent response to the underwear drive and now the appeal for gift cards for Refugee Services support this. Many have said that they have been blessed and it is their joy to share. We at Peoples are part of a community that has consistently, and now again, demonstrated overwhelming generosity. The spirit does move among us. Something happens here. Thank you all.

Ruth Worthington

Edgewood Village Thank You

To all the Elves: Thank you for providing holiday gifts for the children of Edgewood Village. This year we were able to provide gifts for 108 children from 47 families. Your generosity in shopping, wrapping, providing donations and delivery is deeply appreciated.

Emily Anderson, Head Elf





CHILDREN'S EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLES CHURCH



I hope you all enjoyed our wonderful Christmas pageant! We hope it is our last virtual pageant and we can do a live performance for you this year.

Sunday School begins again on **January 9th** as we start to learn about Luke 3:22 and our theme of journey. We have more fun and crafts planned to go along with our weekly Bible lessons. Teachers are always needed and welcome! Please contact me if you'd like to spend some time on Sunday mornings with eager children and helping them learn the word of God. I prep the materials and lessons for you—you just need to show up and have some patience, energy, and fun!

Kathi Mitchell, Children's Christian Education Director, kmitchell@thepeopleschurch.com



Hello PCYG Students and Families!

I hope you have had a restful and fun break from school these past few weeks! You have all worked so hard, and greatly deserved this break. I'll continue to pray that you are feeling recharged and ready to take on the second half of the school year!

I truly had the most fun celebrating Christmas with all of you! Thank you for your participation in both our Christmas Party and Potter Park Light Tour! You make my job so easy and fun!

This month we will resume normal PCYG on January 9th! This will follow our joint PCYG schedule - please reach out if you have any questions!

Although we cannot take a ski trip safely this year, an extra fun lock-in is in the works. I look forward to sharing details with you soon!

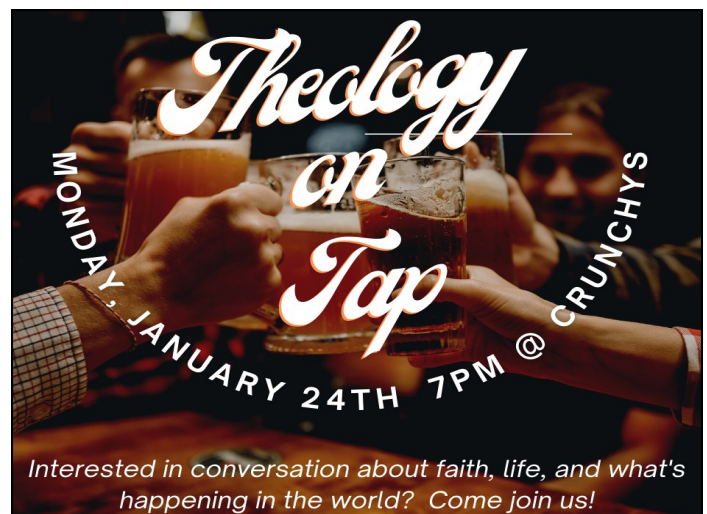
Elisha Smith, Youth Director, esmith@thepeopleschurch.com

Let's Play Games!

POSTPONED

Family Game Day following worship Jan 2nd!
Bring your favorite games!

**Due to COVID numbers leading to higher risk we will postpone this event to a later date!*



A Word of Thanks

I was deeply touched by all the cards and messages of sympathy I received after the death of my father. It means a great deal to me and brought me a measure of comfort in this sad time. Thank you for all the kindness you have shown me.

- Pastor Shawnthea

Resolute?

Tis' the season for New Year's resolutions, those promises we make with great intention but often less than great follow-through. As I pondered what I hope to commit to in this coming year I looked up how this tradition got started.

Records as far back as 3000 B.C. speak of ancient Egyptians bringing in the new year with great parties. In 2000 B.C. during a 12-day festival marking the start of the farming season (March) the Babylonians would crown their king and make resolutions in hopes of gaining favor with their Gods - they vowed to plant crops, to pay their debts...to return borrowed farm equipment. This practice was later adopted by the Romans and shifted with the Julian calendar in 46 BC, declaring January 1st as the start of the new year. January was named for Janus, a two-faced Roman God (looking forward to new beginnings and backward for reflection) to whom the Romans would offer sacrifices and make promises of good behavior for the year ahead.

Perhaps you knew all of this already? There is something exciting about the possibilities that a new year brings - especially after two years of Covid separation and slow-down. We don't come at the new year making promises to God in hopes of gaining fortune or blessings, but I do hope that we enter into 2022 with intention - that we look back and reflect on what has been, as we look ahead to what we hope will be. What lessons have you learned in 2021? What are your hopes for 2022? What might God be calling TPC to be and do in this next 365 days?

As for my resolutions - they should involve going to the gym and eating less sugar, but mostly I just hope to focus more on celebrating the way God works in the everyday moments, loving people well, and saying yes to adventure whenever it presents itself.

I'm thankful to be on this New Year's journey with you!
- Pastor Devon



Peoples Church Campus Ministry



- Starting Jan. 12th we will meet weekly on Wednesdays at 6:30pm for Dinner & Conversation
- Lunch & Lounge will launch on January 16th following worship.

Earth Stewardship's Monthly Green Message

The Peoples Church Earth Stewardship Committee offers an invitation and more tips to remind us to Reduce, Repair, Reuse, and Recycle. In the spirit of "Ask God's blessing on all your work, but do not also ask Him to do it" please join the Earth Stewardship team to help develop Climate Change focused meetings and events, hopefully engaging with MSU and other students since these issues greatly impact their future. Watch for upcoming events in the spring where we will host a climate change video screening event, discussion, and refreshments.

This month's focus is reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs). Did you know that 1/3 of FOOD for human consumption, generating 8% of greenhouse gases, goes to waste? If it were a country, food waste would be the third largest emitter of GHGs behind the US and China. Downsizing planned meals and using up leftovers helps, but eating less red meat is the single most impactful change a person can make. According to UC Davis, cattle are the #1 agricultural source of GHGs worldwide. Each year a single cow belches our 220 pounds of methane which is shorter lived than carbon dioxide, but 28 more times potent in warming the atmosphere. Methane gas, along with generated waste from cattle, is detrimental to the environment.

Daily doable actions to reduce energy usage: reduce streaming which is now the #1 energy guzzler in the digital world at 15% of broadband; turn off lights when leaving rooms; switch to LED lights; use a programmable thermostat to lower energy use when you're not home; wash laundry in cold water and keep those hot showers short! Watch the Portal for future articles including the Plastic Fast for Lent.

Annual Report

Chairs of Ministry: It is again time to assemble the annual report for Peoples Church. Ministry reports should include activities and achievements of the ministries and other events/information that you would like to share with our church family. The Annual Report of The Peoples Church provides well-documented records for our yearly activities and adds to the rich history of Peoples Church.

Reports are due on **January 10th** and should be sent to Elizabeth at eprice@thepeopleschurch.com. Below you will find a list of who submitted a report in the 2019 and/or 2020 Annual Report:

- Senior Pastor
- Clerk
- Chairperson of the Elders
- Associate Pastor
- Children's Christian Education Director and Chairperson
- Campus Ministry Chairperson
- Peoples Church Youth Director
- Building & Grounds Chairperson
- Community Engagement Chairperson
- Finance Ministry Chairperson
- Personnel Chairperson
- Preschool Director
- Welcome Ministry Chairperson(s)
- Worship Ministry Chairperson
- Women of Peoples Church Chairperson





Preschool is Always Collecting

Dana Johnson— Director, Peoples Church Preschool

It might surprise you to know, that as the Director of Peoples Church Preschool, I do not often buy toys for the children in the program. This is because products that are marketed as toys usually share three characteristics—these are: they are plastic; they do not particularly encourage a child to use their imagination; and the child becomes easily bored using them because none of us want to do the same thing over and over again, producing the same result.

What I do acquire for the children are open-ended materials. These are items that can be used for many things in many ways. For example, if plastic toy food is purchased, it can only ever be a basket of hollow plastic fruit. If the kitchen area is filled with various recyclable containers, small pine cones, reused muffin tins, small tree sections (tree “cookies”), fall colorful leaves and smooth stones, the children are able to cook and create endlessly. In addition, all of these materials can be used in other areas of the classroom, such as the Math and Science areas.



For this reason, we are always collecting, as our over 100 children daily need lots of materials to challenge their thinking, spur their imaginations, and promote a sense of wonder. If you have any items we collect, now or in the future, please consider donating: *clean, empty milk jugs; container caps-all sizes and colors, metal glass jar lids without sharp edges, all nature items, paper with at least one side blank, and small cast off loose parts created from your work place.*

The Peoples Church Welcomes a New Hospitality Coordinator

The Peoples Church is excited to announce that Todd Smith has taken over the position of Hospitality Coordinator! When asked to share a bit about himself and his plans here, Todd shared the following:

Hello! My name is Todd Smith, and I’m very excited to be your new Hospitality Coordinator for The Peoples Church family! A little about myself: I hold an Associates of Fine Art, which I received from the Kendall School of Design in 1986. There I studied Illustration Design, with a minor in graphic design. For about 24 years I worked at the Hawk Hollow Golf and Banquet Center in Bath, Michigan as the First Kitchen Manager. I left in March of 2020 due to Covid.

While at Hawk Hollow, I developed a gluten free baked goods product line: “Hawk Hollow Simply Free.” Goods in this line were sold in many different stores in East Lansing, Lansing, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, and Brighton, and included: breads, cinnamon rolls, bagels, pies and piecrust, pizza crusts, cupcakes, sandwich buns and muffins. For the past 15 years sharing and baking gluten free food has been my passion, inspired in part, by my own food allergies: gluten, wheat, shellfish, soy, corn, and all types of fish.

I hope that in the year 2022 we will be able to produce gluten free items in the Church kitchen that we can share with all of you! I look forward to working with you all and am excited for all that will come in the new year!”

We welcome you to The Peoples Church family, Todd!



Peoples Church Talent Show

The long-awaited Peoples Church Talent Show is slated for **Sunday, February 13 at 11:30 a.m.!** Come enjoy some food, fellowship and entertainment down in the **Snider Social Hall.**

Talent of all kinds is encouraged: sing, dance, recite and/or show your light to your church family—all are welcome! If you have an act to share, please email Diane Shafer, Welcome Ministry Co-Chair, at dmschafer2001@gmail.com with the details by **February 6th.** Acts are limited to 5 minutes!

The next *Portal* deadline for the February issue is **January 15th.** Submit content to eprice@thepeopleschurch.com



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