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A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association Reverend Dr. Pam Allen-Thompson, Minister pam.allenthompson@gmail.com cell 941-889-8728

Volume 75, Issue 7

February 2014



Church Office Hours: M-Th 9:00am-4:00pm

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FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT, Sue Caulfield

Dear People's people:



As noted in earlier articles, much is happening at People's Church. Our feasibility study just concluded and the board will receive a report from our consultant, Jeff Susor, on February 5, 2014. The board looks forward to learning what you had to share about this important topic, discerning next steps in the process, and returning to the congregation for guidance.

At the Sunday, Jan. 26 service, Rev. Pam announced that she and the board had come to a decision that People's Church would seek a different interim minister to guide the church through the second year of transition. An allchurch meeting was held after this service, the first of three such meetings scheduled for January, February and March. In addition to discussing our unique identity as a community during this time of change, we also discussed what the change in interim ministers meant. The options that have always been available to us are "plan A," one minister for the two years of transition, or "plan B," two interim ministers - one for each of the two years. Indeed, the standard interim contract is for one year, with the possibility of renewal, created that way so the interim minister and board can determine what is best for any particular congregation. It was only after much consideration by the board and Rev. Pam, that a common decision was made to go with "plan B."

As Rev. Pam tells us, it is not uncommon after the departure of a beloved minister to utilize two, rather than one, interim minister, as this approach gives the congregation greater exposure to different ministerial styles and to developing an understanding of how the congregation wishes to move forward with a new settled minister. This likely feels uncomfortable, even unnerving, to many of us, as we are just getting to know Rev. Pam and the many ways in which she can help us navigate this period of transition. This decision, however, was not reached in haste and reflects sound counsel from Rev. Pam and honest discernment of what can be of use to us next year as we search for our next settled minister. Meanwhile, Rev. Pam continues to be our minister through the month of May and will continue to help us do the very important work we are called to do each day.

As we did last year, we will work with the UUA to identify strong candidates to serve as our second interim minister. That process begins with our application, due on April 17, followed by an interview process that begins April 28th or 29th. If we are successful in round 1, as we were this past year, we will make an offer to an interim minister no later than May 9th. If all goes well, we will know who our next interim minister is before Rev. Pam completes her time with People's Church.

(This article is continued on pg 9)

Find an electronic version of this newsletter at peopleschurch.net.

Pam's Peace

News & Views

Pam's Peace

Since we will be looking deeper into the benefits of the "Two Minister Model" for an interim period, I thought it helpful to identify again some of the core work of interim ministry. The following are some of the milestones or accomplishments since August.

I have learned who the leaders are, what wide diversity of issues congregants care about, and what staff members do.

Studied how I could best supervise and support the work of staff, and covered for the absence of our Administrator after injuries from a car accident.

Brought more diversity to the Sunday service by honoring a "Person of the Week," (September–November), and starting the weekly sharing of "This I Believe," which is ongoing.

Worked with the A/V team to improve effectiveness and recruit more people with A/V skills so the core team can benefit from some back-up.

Attended two ISAAC events and participated in four other justice activities.

Asked for conversations with leaders around boundary issues in terms of refraining from contact with the departing minister during the interim period, as advised by UUA protocol.

Held with care the expressions of the sense of loss that comes with having to say good-bye to a long-tenured, beloved minister.

Encouraged hope by asking others to trust in the wisdom of People's leaders and remember that change truly can bring unexpected gifts.

Supported the hard-working and effective Membership committee that lifted up the importance of becoming a member, and recently celebrated 14 new members.

Linked leaders to UUA recommendations for the Start-up retreat in October and the retreat with a Settlement representative in February.

Advised the Board to consider an effective way to merge the two classes of membership into one, with justification for why that would be helpful, and encouraged an assessment of other areas that could benefit from clearer guidelines and stronger development of policy and procedures to create more efficient, effective, and accountable practices.

Encouraged the common read of *Governance and Ministry* to increase understanding of how a Program Church functions differently from the model that currently serves People's Church.

Met with the Capital Campaign Consultant to help with disseminating important information as needed.

Accepted every invitation extended by a congregant, including invites from youth and young adults, except when the timing did not allow.

Plus, the ongoing tasks of ministry include: performing rites of passage, being present for family concerns, leading Sunday Services, recognizing needs and recruiting those who are equipped to address them, supervising staff, and working closely with the Transitions Team and the Board of Trustees.

I will miss you, but we don't have to think about that yet. With appreciation to all who bring positive energy to this collaborative work,

Rev. Pam



Sunday Services—10:45 a.m.

FEBRUARY SUNDAYS

February 2 The In-Between Church Rev. Pam

February 9 Black Women and Civil Rights Rev. Pam

February 16 Claiming and Honoring Our Past Rev. Pam with testimonials from others

February 23 Important Lessons Learned The Transitions Team

PEOPLE'S CHURCH Archives Project



Our story is fascinating! Come and learn more about our history on a

Sunday in February. Did you know that our church library has a set of 3 DVD's about the history of People's Church (1855-2005)?

During the first three Sundays in February you are invited to sample a bit of our fascinating story! View a DVD in Room 8 -Sunday Feb. 2, Feb. 9, Feb. 16 from 10 -10:35 am and 12:25-1 pm.

In 1992 the Adult Education Committee asked the Chair of Archives, Marjory Spradling, to offer a three-session course on the history of People's Church. She researched the Board of Trustees minutes since 1882 and some hand written ministerial accounts. Dave Curl illustrated the story with slides of various artifacts. When the course was repeated in 1994, Ken Burns' Civil War documentary became a model for us to try something similar. Jack and Carol Urban agreed to use their Community Access Center experience to do the technical work. Dozens of members participated by finding pictures and information, being narrators and enactors, writing scripts, interviewing and being interviewed for the videotaping (1995-2005).

In celebration of our Sesquicentennial year, Jack converted the originals to DVD's which are available for all to view. Drop in and get a short preview. On Feb. 17 the DVD's will return to the Library for you to take home and enjoy. Mary Lewis

Women's Retreat

The Women's Retreat will be held at Circle Pines Center on May 9-11. Treat yourself or have your family give it to you as a Mother's Day gift! We end early on Sunday so you can still enjoy church and the day with your family on Mother's Day. Kat VanHammen

Social Justice Coordinating Committee

Lincoln School: Our Boxing Day Sunday Service was a great success! Thanks to all who contributed school supplies and to those who gathered to sort and bag them for distribution. Mary Lewis reports that every teacher received a generous share. Currently there are 9 People's People tutoring or helping at Lincoln. Please contact Mary if you would like to join this very worthy effort.

Special Collection: The January Special Collection raised \$570 for the Recovery Institute. This very effective peer-focused organization is very appreciative of this support for their work.

ISAAC Update: "Love Will Guide Us" is the theme for the ISSAC Banguet to be held early Saturday evening, March 29 at the WMU Bernhard Center. Seating is at 5:00. This year's speaker is Elise Bryant, a highly inspiring speaker from the DC area who helps lead organizations and communities to work and act collectively to benefit the greater whole. Tickets for sale in the fover.

Food Drive: Look ahead to spring for two opportunities to bring food donations for Loaves and Fishes. Watch for dates to be announced. The need in February will be: RICE.



Religious Education Notes

News & Views

Change and Transition

We at People's Church are in the midst of much change and transition. One of the things about this community that I continually admire and appreciate is the depth of connections I witness between people. Even as the leadership is changing, the heart of this community is the people and the ministry that occurs among and between us.

I am grateful to be a part of such a loving and healthy congregation that I continually see rise to challenges with grace and fortitude!



On another note, I recently rescued a Siberian Husky who has spent the last three years chained up behind a garage in my neighborhood. Thank you to the many People's people who supported this endeavor in so many ways.

I hope you all will get a chance to meet Bo. He is shy but very sweet and he seems grateful to begin a new life with Kiera and I.

> Blessed Be, Diane Melvin, Director of Religious Education

UU Young Adults

Over 50 young adults from around the Midwest enjoyed a wonderful conference at People's Church MLK weekend. Special Thanks to Fernando Ospina, Sasha Acker, Aliisa Lahti and Chris Moore for organizing this CON. Great Job!

All young adults 18-35 are invited to participate in this group that meets every other Thursday evenings.

Questions? Contact Fernando Ospina at faospina@gmail.com or 352-328-4964.

Guest at Your Table

Now is the time to return what you've collected. Please write a check made out to UUSC for the total amount and return to the RE program.

High School Social Justice CON

(9-12th grade) Feb 28-March 2 at Birmingham Unitarian Church

Coming of Age—Lunch with the Minster

February 16 - the 9th grade Coming of Age class will bring a potluck lunch and enjoy conversation with the minster after church.

Elementary Sleep Over Feb. 21

All 1st-6th graders are invited to participate in this fun night where the kids take over People's Church and make it their own for the night. Opportunities to make and



deepen friendships abound with fun activities kicked off by a potluck dinner with families at 6:00pm.

Statewide RE Volunteer Appreciation Day at the Detroit Institute of Arts

Save the date: March 8 at 10:00 AM The Michigan UU DRE's are planning a day for all RE Volunteers to tour the Detroit Institute of Arts and to

have lunch together & make connections!

Chalice Sparx UU Family Camp

July 10-15, 2013 Camp Ronora in Watervliet, Michigan will be the location for the first year of this **new** UU family camp. All ages and family configurations are invited to



participate in this fun week designed to bring UU's together for workshops, worship, campfires, swimming, great food and camaraderie with UU's from around the Midwest. Check it out on facebook and at chalicesparx.org!

Open Chalice Circle

2nd Sundays January - April 1-3pm - Room L2 Anyone interested in joining this new small group ministry circle is welcome to participate. These circles are designed to help people get to know one another better by creating sacred



space for deep listening and sharing by fostering trust and openness. If you are interesting in participating, please let Diane Melvin know at 375-3262 or re@peopleschurch.net.

YRUU Youth Group Feb 2nd 4-6:00pm All 9-12th graders invited!

For more information contact Wendy Dawson at-549-5084 or wmdawson40@gmail.com.

Membership Matters

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Membership Matters *By Anna Shade*

Five people attended the recent workshop, *Sharing Our Faith Journeys*. There was so much enthusiasm and connection created

that the group is going to meet again to continue the conversation. The next *Sharing Our Faith Journeys* will be held during our Spring Membership Path.

The next Connections Dinner is Friday, February 7 in Room 19 at People's with a burrito dinner put on by the Membership Committee from 6pm to 8pm. Child care and kids activities will be provided. Come join us for a night of food and fellowship – a great way to casually get to know more People's people one on one. The Membership Orientation is February 16 from 12:30 – 2:00pm. Anyone wanting to know more about Unitarian Universalism and the benefits and responsibilities of membership at People's Church is encouraged to attend.

Our next Membership Recognition Sunday will be March 9. Please make sure to sign-up for the Membership Orientation if you want to join People's on March 9. Also, if you want to know more about membership at People's, feel free to email or call me (<u>anna.shade@gmail.com</u> or 269-372-9847).

In closing, if you are new to People's, please make sure to stop by at either the lower level or upper level information desks to complete an Information Card and get a blue nametag. Taking both of these actions will help us help you become better connected and informed about events and happenings within our church community. In Fellowship, *Anna Shade*

A new communications team is emerging. If you have skills and interest and would like to learn more about what this team will be doing, join the Communications table at the 2nd Sunday lunch after the service, Feb. 9.



Call for Leadership

This time of year we begin the process of nominating candidates for the Board of Trustees and Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee's role is to propose candidates for the Board and Nominating Committee vacancies. The duties also include helping other committees with key vacancies and helping the Board and Congregation with the process of assembling a search committee when the time comes.

Once nominated, candidates complete a petition and our Congregation makes the final selection by vote at the Annual Meeting. Church policies help ensure a democratic and open process. Individuals can, by petition, put themselves on the candidate list for these openings without being nominated by the committee.

We invite you to contact a member of the Nominating Committee if you are interested in a church leadership role or want to recommend someone. We are always striving for our leadership to be broadly representative of the congregation; with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and opinions; and include individuals with different amounts of tenure with the church. To serve on the Board or Nominating Committee, you must be member.

Here is our contact information if you have someone to recommend or would like more information. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Tim Bartik <u>bartik@upjohn.org</u> 269-381-9648 Nadine Godin-Nassaney <u>ngnassaney@gmail.com</u> 269-491-1118 Sarah Hill <u>sarah.hill@wmich.edu</u> 269-532-5799 Missy Howse-Kurtz <u>missyhowse@yahoo.com</u> 616-780-5939 Rick Johnson <u>paywala@aol.com</u> 269-657-3460 Bob Wallis <u>bwallis55@gmail.com</u> 269-344-5202

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New Members

News & Views

New Member Bios

We welcome those who recently became members and signed the Bond of Union:



Andrew Alm is employed at Stryker in the electronics division where circuit boards used in a variety of surgical tools are manufactured. In his spare time Andrew enjoys backpacking, folk music, playing guitar and banjo, reading, cooking, mathematics, computers and electronics. He is particularly proud of completing a 48-hour winter adventure race, managing finances for a student-housing cooperative and for contributing to free software projects.

Brooke Feltner-Beebe is an administrator at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids where she provides direction and support for the nephrology, dialysis, kidney transplantation, urology and ophthalmology divisions. She enjoys spending time with her children Jonah, 11, and Elle, 7, and competing in half marathons and adventures races.





Dyrk Hamilton moved to Kalamazoo from the Appalachian foothills of Southeastern Kentucky in August 2013. He spent ten years in the US Air Force and Air National Guard. He graduated from Eastern Kentucky University at age 40 and utilized his degree in psychology to serve Kentucky families through social work and addiction treatment. He is interested in mysticism, creative projects and song writing. This year he has taken time off full-time work to transition his external gender presentation from female to correctly align with his internal identity as male.

Anisah Haynes has lived in Michigan 8 years, but has also lived in Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, New York, New Jersey and Amman, Jordon. She grew up as a Seventhday Adventist, practiced Islam 14 years, left organized religion before finding a home in a UU in Berrien County, MI 4 ¹/₂ years ago. She has three grown children. Her 10-year old son Ibrahim attends People's with her.



Ben Jones was born in Toronto. He worked in TV and film in Southern California and Toronto and then went into radio news and now works on websites. He and Jana are the parents of Eleanor Neve-Jones, 10 and Foster Neve-Jones, 9.

Jana Watson moved to Kalamazoo from the St, Louis area while in high school and has a fascination with microbial life forms.



Nicky Leigh, a retired bookkeeper, recently moved to Kalamazoo from Florida although she had lived in Colorado 30 years before that. She calls herself an introvert and prefers interacting in small groups. She likes TV mystery series and mystery books as well as non-violent sci-fi. When her daughter was young, Nicky relished traveling with her, introducing her to different parts of the country and experiencing a variety of lifestyles and foods.

Mark Mitchell was raised in Mason City, Iowa. He came to Kalamazoo in 1982 to work as a medicinal chemist for the Upjohn Company after obtaining his chemistry education at the University of Iowa and Caltech. After a 20-year laboratory career, he has spent the last ten years pounding the keyboard as an information scientist at Pfizer. He and Nancy met while skating at Lawson Ice Arena.





Nancy Mitchell grew up in Cincinnati and came to Kalamazoo in 1972 to attend WMU. She and Mark met, married and raised their family here, moved to St. Louis for five years and returned to Kalamazoo in 2012. Nancy has worked for Family & Children Services nearly 30 years. She and Mark have two children: Jeff, 26 and Kate, 25.

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New Members & News

Tim Sparling recently obtained his doctorate in nursing practice at Wayne State University and licensure as an adult and geriatric nurse practitioner. Tim lived in Costa Rica two months, loves to travel and looks forward to taking their children on mission trips (that do not rely on witnessing of faith) to help others in need. He is into living a green lifestyle, and enjoys listening to and supporting, promoting and purchasing local music, food, art and clothing.

Marti Sparling lived in Japan for 2 ½ years. She enjoys nature and the outdoors, camping, hiking, live local music, small festivals and doing pottery at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts. She and Tim have two children, Oliver, 3, and Keller, 7 months.



Erik Pye grew up in the thumb in rural Michigan and was raised in a Lutheran environment. He is currently the Office Coordinator of the Special Education and Literacy Studies Department at WMU and is finishing his Masters degree in Social Cultural Studies in Education. He loves sports, music and watching comedy; and he is interested in local social justice efforts and is eager to explore Earth based concepts related to preservation, interconnectivity and sustainability.

Ally Pye was born and raised in Sao Paulo, Brazil where she lived until she was 19. She was raised in an eclectic religious environment although Catholicism was the foundation of her religious education. Her days are spent making art in her studio, managing therapy clients, providing therapy coordinating home activities and enjoying nature. Ally is interested in social justice and hopes to pursue more activism related activities. She and Erik have three children: Felippe, 16; Lucas, 10; and Isabella, 7.





Ted Schering graduated recently from Kalamazoo Christian High School and currently attends KVCC. He also works part-time on the production line at Zoetis where they produce animal health pharmaceuticals. In his spare time Ted enjoys tennis and is involved in the Young Adult program at People's.

The Study Group

"The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion", by Jonathan Haidt. New members are always welcome to discuss a wide variety of books chosen by members on religious,

philosophical, or scientific topics. Monday February 17 at 7:30pm, at "The Den" at the Fountains. For information or directions, contact Tim Bartik at 269-806-1904.

The Book Group

"Birds Without Wings", by Louis De Bernieres, will take us to Turkey in the early 1900's. Roger Loeffler will lead the discussion. Meet at the Skyrise apartments on February 12th at 1:30. If you have trouble getting a copy of the book contact Pat Nelson. In March we will revisit Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring".



LOUIS DE

BERNIÈRES

BIRD

WITHOUT

WINGS

GREEN SANCTUARY Tap Water = People's Water

Find out why "Tap water is the



People's water." Read about the Green Sanctuary campaign to ban bottled water from People's Church. Encourage your children to share their water wisdom through art. We have little to lose and much to gain by being mindful of our consumer choices. Visit our website at <u>http://www.peopleschurch.net/</u> <u>faith-in-action/committees/green-sanctuary/</u> for more information.

Sock Drive! The *Coming of Age* teens this year will be serving a meal or two at *Ministry with Community* as part of their community service project. We would like to supply each guest with a pair of socks. We are taking donations at church, and would appreciate your contributions. Please place adult socks in the *Ministry with Community* bin that sits behind the Greeters' table at the base of the stairs in the lobby. Our goal is 300 pairs of socks!! Thank You, *Lori Hughes*

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Getting to Know People's People

By Ardyce Curl

Don Miller and Wendy Dawson have been married 21 years but came from different religious backgrounds. Don was raised Catholic in the UP, attended Catholic School and went to Mass every morning.

Wendy grew up in Battle Creek attending the United Methodist Church. She said, "I felt at home at our church, and going to summer camp every summer for eight years was an important part of my childhood. At church I could be myself without being judged; but I began to question the Christian dogma as a teen and left that tradition after emancipating from my childhood home." She visited People's a few times when she was in her twenties.

After four years in the Air Force Don attended St. Norbert College in DePere, Wisconsin where he joined the Order of the Norbertines to study to be a priest. He studied theology and pastoral counseling at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago before dropping out of the Order and moving to Kalamazoo.

Don and Wendy came to People's when Davidson Loehr was the minister. "We loved the sermons, but the rest was not a good fit for us," Don said.

Later when Jill was the minister they returned to People's and started attending regularly when their youngest son was about three years old.

"This was like coming home," Don said. "There was an experience of welcome and acceptance I had not had before and a realization of how much that was needed."

"I remember needing the solace of the Sunday church service during the busy years when our children were very young," Wendy said, "We've developed many close friendships here. The church is a core part of our lives."

Both Wendy and Don are active in the religious education program. Don teaches in the RE program, has been on the board and is currently involved with the Transition Team.

Wendy is leading the Youth Group with Karen Friedel this year and has been recruited to be an adult advisor to the Heartland Area Youth Council because of their son Benjamin's involvement with that group. She has been on the RE committee, an RE teacher, and has coordinated the bazaar kitchen with Deb Wickman.

"I believe strongly in ethical living and try to practice a lifestyle of some simplicity," Wendy said. "I consider myself agnostic. Since I don't believe in the divinity of Christ, I cannot consider myself a Christian; however, Jesus' teaching about peace, love for your neighbor and forgiveness resonate with me. I find spiritual fulfillment in spending some small part of each day in nature, reading and in centering myself with yoga. I am just a UU. It's the label I've found that fits for me."

Don said, "I think our church offers something unique, without the burden of religious dogma, a safe place to ask questions and a base to stretch out into a wider world with a attitude of welcome and acceptance. The UU church has well thought out values I find compatible with my personal psychology and Buddhist philosophy, It makes sense for me that being at People's is like being at home."

(Don, 59, is a therapist and owner of Pathways Psychologist Associates in Plainwell. Wendy, 53, has been a medical social worker at Borgess Hospital. They have three sons: Samuel Boase-Miller who is married to Leigh in New York City; Christopher a freshman at WMU and Benjamin a junior at Loy Norrix.)

HELP CORNER: In need of dog sitter during hours of 8am-4pm for a week around Valentine's Day. For pay. Please call David Greenquist at 569-5442 if interested.

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Money Matters

From the Board President ... Continued from Page 1

I reported in December that church leadership would be on retreat January 18. However, due to illness, our retreat was canceled, but has been rescheduled for February 8th. Our Ministerial Settlement Representative, Naná Kratochvil, will guide us through the initial steps of beginning the search process for our next settled minister (who will begin work with us in August 2015). There will be a report on the retreat at the all-church meeting after the service on February 23rd. Please plan to stay after church that day and be part of that important conversation. We will be discussing the process of forming our settled minister search committee, as well as important lessons we have learned from our past.

Elsewhere in this News and Views is a call from the Nominating Committee, looking for people interested in assuming leadership roles in the church. Each year, the Nominating Committee identifies three candidates willing to serve on the Board of Trustees, as well as members for the Nominating Committee. As with the Board and Nominating Committee, this year we also have to form the search committee for our settled minister. All of these are places where we need representation from across the church. If church leadership is speaking to you, please consider putting your name forward.

The Board of Trustees is actively engaged in reviewing church policies and procedures, with an end goal of documents that are transparent, informative and facilitative. In February, we review the entire church policy manual, having already reviewed membership policy and the personnel policy.

With so much going on, let me leave you with the closing words from our last Board meeting, from the great Persian poet, Jelaluddin Rumi (13th century):

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about. Ideas, language, even the phrase "each other" doesn't make any sense.

As we navigate our transitions, may we stay alive to being in right relationship, and to focusing on our common humanity, not our differences. May we be the fuel that keeps alive the flame of our shared heritage. Together, let us continue to do our best work in service to each other. In peace and standing on the side of love, *Sue Caulfield*

\$Money Matters\$

We have passed the midpoint of the fiscal year at People's Church. Our operating budget shows a small surplus, since income is about 6 percent below budget and expenditures are 12 percent below budget. Our only bright spot on the income side is for Fund Raisers, as pledges, collections, and building use fees are all lagging. Our pledge payments year-to-date are at 56 percent of pledges overall. We apologize for not getting pledge statements out before the end of the year. With the reduced staff, due to illness, we just could not catch up in time to give you statements that were up to date.

With the feasibility study for another capital campaign winding up, it is appropriate to review the pledges and payments to the *Feeding Our Flame* campaign which ends on June 30, 2014.

At this point, we have collected more than 95 percent of the FOF pledge total. This overstates our completion status somewhat as there are 20 pledging units that have overfulfilled their pledge. Thank you to these very special friends of People's Church. If you still have an outstanding balance, please plan to complete your pledge before June 30. *Allan Hunt, Treasurer*

To All Chairpersons

All Budget Request forms should by now be into the Finance Committee by February 9. If your committee has not already done so, please complete and return the forms. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. *Michelle Clark, Finance Chair*



Thank you to **Chris Meazsros** for so generously offering to conduct fun children's activities after church on Jan 26 and for the ongoing work with Roasted Peanuts!

Thank you to **Emily Cutler** for the great job putting together the adult education programs and brochures and for being such a dependable RE volunteer.

Much gratitude to **Wendy Dawson** and **Karen Friedel** for the fabulous work with the high school youth group this year!

Check out our Calendar of Events online at peopleschurch.net/calendar-of-events!