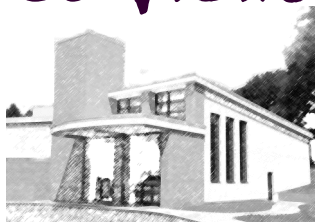


News & Views



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M-Th 9:00am-4:00pm

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People's Church

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 5

December 2013



FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT, Sue Caulfield

Dear People's People, A lot is going on with the church, and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I provide some important updates. On October 26, 2013, the church had its start-up retreat, recommended by the UUA to help us understand what it means to be in transition until we call a new settled minister. People's People were represented by the Board, the Transition Team, and twelve other church leaders, for a total of 25

members working with the facilitator and Reverend Pam. In that process, we concluded by covenanting on how we would be together, going forward. I share this covenant so you can know what to expect from your church leaders:

Show up / Trust that people will do what they promise / Trust that we have a common vision / Assume good will / Encourage naming our own limitations, fears & emotions / Listen for content & feelings / Engage with change intentionally, not reactively / When people are seen struggling, respond to the need / Be transparent where transparency is allowed – when not allowed, explain.

Early in December, we will provide you with a timeline of important dates. In January, we will have a retreat with our Ministerial Settlement Representative, who will guide us in the process of choosing our ministerial search committee and completing the necessary tasks to have a successful search for our settled minister.

Meanwhile, the Board will invite your input regarding whether a second capital campaign this spring should be a priority for People's Church. To facilitate that process, we have hired Jeff Susor, the consultant for our *Feeding Our Flame* capital campaign. Jeff will begin working with us to consider next steps. Please watch for an upcoming invitation to share your input.

(This article is continued on pg 7)



Winter Solstice Ritual

Would you like to help plan and/or lead this year's Winter Solstice Ritual on Dec. 20th? If so, please contact Diane Melvin at re@peopleschurch.net.

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



Membership Matters

By Anna Shade

It's been another big month for the Membership Committee at People's Church. We were happy to partner with the RE Committee on the well attended *Connections Dinner* and were also thrilled to welcome 15 adults and 2 youth to our newly *redeveloped Membership Orientation* on 11/17. We are looking forward to the re-imagined *Membership Recognition Sunday* on 12/8 where we will welcome some of these new friends into membership at People's Church. Please plan on attending that day to join in the celebration with cookies and beverages after the service.

What has really struck me about the two events I mention is the feedback we received when participants were asked why they keep coming back to People's. Here's a quick list of those reasons.

Safe ~ Accepting ~ Authentic ~ Good Vibes ~ Warm ~ Welcoming

I jotted down two great quotes that stuck with me. People's Church is "most like me on the inside". People's Church is "inclusive to church but not exclusive to the community."

It always fills me with gratitude when I hear such articulations of what our congregation means to others. It feels so good to be here at this time and this place to offer the things that people in our community are looking for.

So keep on doing what you are doing, People's People! Our newcomers recognize the value in what we bring to each other. And a resounding WELCOME! for all who will join on 12/8. We couldn't be happier you found us and are committing to do this work together.

In Fellowship,
Anna Shade

HOLIDAY CONCERT

Gettin' in the mood! People's choir, handbells, instrumentalists, and children's xylophone. December 8 at 7:00pm. Refreshments. A free-will donation will be accepted to purchase new music.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

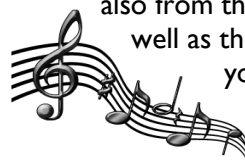
Do you love to spread holiday cheer? Please join the choir for Christmas Caroling to shut-ins from People's, Sunday, December 2nd after church. Following the caroling, we will enjoy cookies and hot chocolate at Jean Bright's home in the Skyrise apartment complex downtown.

DECEMBER 8TH SERVICE

Do you have a special story to share about any of the Christmas songs in our grey hymnal? If there is a song that brings back a fond memory, we would like you to say a few words about it in 2 minutes or less, then the congregation will sing the song with you. If your favorite song for the season is not in the hymnal, you are welcome to sing it yourself or ask a few friends to help. Music Director Scott Beck will preview some pieces from the evening concert. If you want to share, please let me know by December 1st. Thanks.
Rev. Pam, 941-889-8728

THERE'S MUSIC IN THE AIR

Would you like to share holiday joy with your musical instrument during the December 22 service? Brass - percussion - woodwinds - strings. An intergenerational service, so contributions from any age range will be welcome. We will hear also from the Choir and Bell Ringers, as well as the children and youth. Send your ideas to Rev. Pam by December 15 if you are interested.



Pam's Peace



December Sundays will offer music treasures that will delight any age, and sage. From Children's xylophone to white gloved Bell Ringers, from traditional Christmas music to Peter-Paul-and Mary,

from drums to choir delicacies, and so much more. May we let the music in all its glory help soothe any pain or loss from the year past as we embrace the potential awaiting us in the year ahead.

The Sunday Services committee has been considering various ideas we have received from you. We will seek wide input and explore how strong the interest is for each.

Some examples:

1. Utilize our technology to project all announcements in a rolling format during the gathering music. A skilled person who has prepared slides for announcements in another congregation has volunteered to do it here.
2. Grow the A/V team to 6 people skilled in that work, with three in the booth each Sunday, following a rotation schedule.

3. Reconsider continuation of *Person of the Week*. While we love honoring people for the abundance of time, talent, and treasure that they give, we can do so more efficiently and with more people being recognized. The last page of the newsletter, below the mailing info, will be our new *Thank You* page. No doubt it will never be empty.

4. Begin the new year with a shorter service 11:00 to noon, with refreshments after the service rather than before. The idea is that thoughts about the music or message or children's story could be easy conversation openers for engaging with newcomers.

5. Alternate every other month the *Children's Story* and *Joys and Sorrows*.

Rev. Pam



Sunday Services—10:45 a.m.

DECEMBER SUNDAYS

December 01 Holy Holidays for Humanists

December 08 Songs of the Season, with New Member Recognition

Holiday Concert at 7:00pm, led by Music Director Scott Beck

December 15 Bringing our Gifts

December 22 Making Merry with Music, hearing also from children & youth

December 24 Christmas Eve Service at People's, with friends from Portage, at 5:00pm

December 29 Led by members of People's Sunday Services Committee

Multigenerational Holiday Sunday Service

UU Values and the Holiday Season

Plan to join us for this service on Dec. 22 where all ages will be included to explore the question of how we live out our Seven Principles and UU values this holiday season. Enjoy worship and songs by choirs of all ages, art, and sharing together.



Guest at Your Table

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee works with partners around the world to help those in need. They are a leading global voice for human rights and social justice issues.

Winter Solstice Ritual - 6:00pm

All ages are invited to join in for a potluck dinner and Winter Solstice Ritual on Friday December 20. Anyone wishing to help plan the evenings activities, please contact Diane Melvin at 375-3262 or re@peopleschurch.net.

Coming of Age

We are blessed to have 14 wonderful 9th grade youth participating in our Coming of Age program this year. The youth were recently paired up with adult mentors from our congregation who will be working with the youth through the year as they discern and articulate their personal faith statements.

Over the winter holidays the youth and their mentors will be working together to plan and implement a community service project together. Thank you to those who agreed to be mentors: Tim Bartik, Connie Ferguson, Elizabeth Warner, Allan Hunt, Beth DeWaters, Phil Cutler, Kelly Henderson, Colleen Van Slambrouck, Ken Tindall, Kat VanHammen, Jim Gardner, Lori Hughes, Michael Ku, and Marj Lightner.



Coming of Age Leaders and Mentors

Each year, we invite People's people to take home a Guest at Your Table box or envelope and imagine inviting a guest to your table for dinner each night or each week. You can read the "Stories of Hope" booklet with your family to learn about some of the people who are affected by this work.

Enjoy inviting a guest to your table and supporting the UUSC throughout the month of December. In January, we ask that you write a check made out to UUSC for the total amount you collected in your boxes and return those to the RE program.

YRUU Youth Group

Sunday Dec. 1 4:00-6:00pm

All 9-12th graders welcome to enjoy youth worship, fun games and meaningful time together.

The youth will be selling holiday wreaths and swags in the foyer after church this month. Be sure and check them out and purchase your wreath here. For more information contact Karen Friedel at 373-6119 or bkj3@charter.net.



Young Adult UU Group

All 18-35 year olds are invited to participate in our young adult group on the first and third Thursdays at 8:00pm.

First Thursdays: games and activities

Third Thursdays: group discussion

For more information contact group coordinator, Fernando Ospina at faospina@gmail.com or 352-328-4964.

DECEMBER SPECIAL COLLECTION

The 2nd Sunday collection will go to *Ministry With Community* to support their work with people who face multiple challenges: homelessness, poverty, mental illness, and substance abuse. They are open 11 hours every day to provide daytime shelter, showers, laundry facilities, mail services, support groups, counseling and referral, and all in an atmosphere of hope, dignity and unconditional acceptance. Breakfast and lunch are served seven days a week, and transportation to employment at Michigan Works



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Teachers at Lincoln School are sending Thank-you notes for our \$50 per teacher gifts this fall.

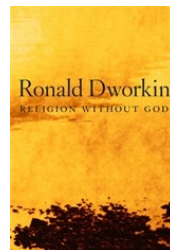
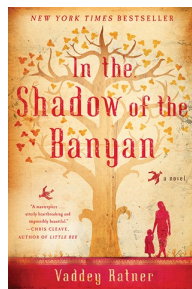
Mrs. Manley bought two math games: *"These resources will help us review and master our basic math facts in the Third Grade. These games will be a cool incentive for the students to practice more."*

Amy La Ponsie writes: *"Thank you very much for the generous donation to my classroom. The support helps and means more than you know. I plan to use the money to help my students in math or science instruction. Thank you again!"*

Danielle Buehrie writes: *"Thank you so much for the generous donation. I will use the money to buy my class things that will help us reach learning goals this year. We are very thankful to have such wonderful donors bless our classroom."*

BOOK GROUP

The Book Group meets on Wednesday, December 11, at 1:30 in the Skyrise Apartment to discuss *In the Shadow of the Banyan*, a novel by Vaddey Ratner, based on her experience escaping the Khymer Rouge as a small child. Our January book, *Detroit: An American Autopsy*, by Charles LeDuff, is part memoir and part investigative journalism. LeDuff explores what has happened to his home town. Please join us for a lively discussion. Call Jean Bright for directions (344-0958).



STUDY GROUP

The Study Group's next book is *Religion Without God*, by Ronald Dworkin, Monday, January 20, at 7:30 pm, in "The Den" at the Fountains. Newcomers are always welcome to discuss a wide variety of books chosen by the group on religious, philosophical, or scientific topics. For directions contact Tim Bartik (269-806-1904).

\$MONEY MATTERS\$

As we approach the end of the year, we review where we stand with the Feeding Our Flame (FOF) fund. You can realize 2013 tax deductions for any pledge payments received by December 31. Total FOF pledges were \$724,957 plus \$50,000 in matching funds. Our payments received to date are \$709,121. Estimated payments still to come by June 30 are about \$70,000. Our current loan balance at First National Bank is \$809,475.

We hope to reduce that below \$700,000 by next June 30 with your pledge payments. If you are behind on your FOF pledge, please try to catch up in the next few months. You may contact Treasurer Allan Hunt (hahunt@gmail.com) or Assistant Treasurer Barb Davis (jpdavis@hotmail.com) if you are having difficulty meeting your pledge.

TOUCHSTONES by Cybelle Shattuck

We all have touchstones, personal sources of strength that motivate and sustain us in our efforts to address complex issues like racism and climate change. Originally a term for a hard stone used to identify precious metals in ore, "touchstone" has become a metaphor for the reference points we use to determine what is of value in our lives. These core values, our heart connections to special people and sacred places, give us the courage to take action.



To me, touchstones have an additional quality; they restore me when I am worn down. When I walk in the woods or skip stones across the surface of a lake, when I watch a butterfly dance across a patch of prairie or marvel at the vista from the top of a mountain, my mental and emotional reserves are restored and I find new energy to persevere. This may be one reason I work so hard to protect my touchstones—I cannot live a good life without them.

In spring of 2014, the Green Sanctuary committee will add resources for spiritual reflection to the People's Church Nature Trail. We would like to include insights about Nature as Touchstone from the cumulative wisdom of People's People. Please take some time this winter to reflect on ways you find strength and restoration in nature and send me favorite quotes you would like to share. (scybelle@umich.edu)



GREEN SANCTUARY "Reusable Bottle" Youth Art Contest

To kick off the People's *Plastic-Water-Bottle-Free*, the Green Sanctuary committee is holding an art contest to creatively combine an artistic slogan with a logo or artwork that will encourage the use of reusable drinking containers. Details and materials will be provided at the Green Sanctuary kiosk in the foyer of People's. Entries will be due in January, but it is not too soon to be thinking of ideas.

SECOND SUNDAY LUNCH DISAPPEARS

(temporarily) There is no 2nd Sunday Lunch in December as there will be a reception later after the Holiday Concert at 7:00 pm, Sunday December 8th.

INVISIBLE MUGS

We are missing about 75 of our coffee mugs. If you saw them walk away, please contact Denise Valette.

INTERFAITH STRATEGIES for Advocacy and Action in the Community

The dedication of ISAAC members and others over several years has resulted in the Kalamazoo County Commission voting to appropriate \$250,000 to the Local Housing Assistance Fund, with a \$125,000 matching requirement annually, which will help low-income residents secure housing. An ISAAC Open House and Holiday Celebration will be held at their new offices at St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Lovell St. All are welcome. Tuesday December 10, 4:40-6:00 pm.



THIS I BELIEVE

Our Sunday Services have been enhanced by the 3-minute presentations from congregants who are asked to share something of their personal beliefs. Each speaker selects the next one. While not everyone wants to share their beliefs so publicly, those who do have shown the depth and breadth of the wide-ranging beliefs at People's Church. Personally, I think this openness to diversity is one of the core strengths of People's People.

Hannelore Eck, a member since September 1954, has allowed us to share her "This I Believe" moment with you.

THIS I BELIEVE A few days ago I happened to see a car with a bumper sticker that read something like this: "If you could ask God, what question would you ask?" My first-and I fear my only thought was, "Why did you make so many idiots?"

This was a mean-spirited reply. I don't know what and how the owner of the car worships, but clearly, since he needs to share his faith in such a way, surely he deserves some respect. If I take the message on the bumper sticker seriously, I must answer: *What do I believe?*

I can no longer use the name "God." It has far too many meanings, all of them loaded. More important, all names are limiting, since to limit is the function of a name. So I must say that I believe in a power that is nameless and yet goes by a thousand names; a power that is *invisible*, but is revealed everywhere; that lives in *silence*, but can be heard by all who listen; that is *more* distant than the farthest star, but to me is closer than my skin; that is *timeless* and intimately present.

I know it by the inexpressible joy that fills me when I think of it.

I don't believe that I can ask to have the laws of nature change to accommodate my wants, but I *do know* from experience that there is a grain of something in me-and in all living things-that, if I reach for it, gives me the strength to live.

From the Board President ...Continued from Page 2

The Board begins meeting twice monthly in December, to give us adequate time to address the needs of the church. As members of committees have told us, we need better clarity in our policies and procedures, and we are committed to helping each other create the clarity that best serves the needs of our members.

Recently Reverend Pam reminded us of our mission statement: "People's Church is a welcoming religious community drawing on wisdom and inspiration from many sources to discover and live out our highest values." She also encouraged us to be a congregation with high expectations. I was reminded of the work of Brené Brown who, in her book "Daring Greatly," encourages us to not forestall joy. We are a fabulous group of awesome people. We have much work ahead of us, but nothing beyond our capability or our reach. As we navigate these pathways together, let us remember to talk to each other, listen to each other, and find ways to support each other. In peace, and standing on the side of love, *Sue Caulfield*

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OUR APPRECIATION

Heart felt Thank-You's to **Kristi Montgomery** for so skillfully crafting the December Newsletter. Dana and Pam gave her some back-up help, but the project could not have been completed without Kristi's talent and know-how.

Also to **Kimberly Payne** for stepping up to be Coordinator for Sunday morning refreshments. You can honor Kimberly's new leadership role by signing up to bring refreshments. Fruit, crackers, and sweets are a good combo that likely allow those with allergies to find something that works for them.

To **Mike Glenn** and **Steve Weaver** for taking on the intricate task of improving critical aspects of our lighting system in the Commons.

To members of the **Aesthetics** committee for hanging holiday wreaths.

And certainly to all who helped with the 2013 **People's Church Holiday Bazaar**. **Rochelle Habeck Hunt** was the "Bazaar Czar" who brought at least 100 people together to make this event a great success – both in community building and in raising money to help People's keep their light brightly shining in Kalamazoo and surrounds.

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