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People's Church

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 85, Issue 11

July 2024

Sunday Services—10:45 a.m.

The Zoom link for People's Church services is: <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/5527667326> or
By phone: 1-646-876-9923, ID: 552 766 7326

Summer Services

This year the broad theme for summer services is "Living Our Values." People's People will speak on this theme in a variety of ways. Each service will include a ten-minute reflection from a speaker followed by group discussion. Summer services will be multiplatform, taking place both in the Commons and over Zoom. Services begin at 10:45.



Our summer speakers are as follows:

July 7: Tim Sparling

July 14: Rev. Rachel Lonberg

July 21: Denise and Connie

July 28: Book Service/People's Librarians

August 4: Ann Shepich

August 11: Gordon Bolar

August 18: Marty Newman

August 25: Karen Tinklenberg

September 1: George Hrbeck

Out Of Office & Church Closures



Rev. Rachel on Vacation and Study Leave July 15 – August 4

Rev. Rachel will be out of town on a combination of vacation and study leave from July 15 to August 4. During this time, she won't be in the church building, but you can reach her quickly by calling or texting 269-389-9721. During this time, she will be preparing worship services and other church offerings for the coming year, reconnecting with family and friends, and taking the train from Seattle to Chicago with her eldest child.

Melissa (Church Administrator) On Vacation July 8th-July 15th and will respond to any messages as soon as possible upon my return.

Diana (Church Bookkeeper) On Vacation July 24th-July 28th

Church Closed For Floor Cleaning July 29th-August 2nd!

Please refrain from using the building as the crew will be deep cleaning all of our carpeting and resealing our linoleum flooring. If you need to use the building this week, please contact Melissa in the office!



Dear ones,
Summer is typically a slow time at People's Church, but our summer is off to an exciting start this year. I want to tell you about a few important works-in-progress at our congregation right now.

We have found our new piano!

We have purchased a 1985 Kawai Semi-Concert Grand Piano- Model KG-5C. People who know more about pianos than I do assure me that this will be an excellent piano for us. It is much newer and in much better condition, technically and aesthetically, than our current piano. It is about a foot longer, which means it will be able to produce a bigger sound. We should have it in The Commons by the end of the summer. Plans for a musical celebration to mark the arrival of this new piano are being made.

This piano cost more than we had fundraised, so we are still seeking donations. A generous, anonymous member will match any donation made to the piano fund, so please give! Music leaders are also exploring the possibility of fundraising events in the near future.

Another exciting work-in-progress is **a partnership with a local Scouts BSA Troop**. (This is the organization formerly known as the Boy Scouts.) While the Boy Scouts have not always shared our values, this troop is actively inclusive of youth and adults of all genders, sexualities, and belief systems, including atheists. All Scouts BSA troops need a 'charter organization' to support them administratively and to provide space for their meetings. This Troop (Troop 292) sought us out because of our shared values. After reviewing documents and talking through challenges and opportunities, the board of trustees approved this partnership. We are doing this for one year, with the potential to renew this partnership annually. Most of the Scouts' activities will happen on weeknights when not many People's people are in the building. If you do happen to see some scouts in our building, please say, "welcome!" It is an exciting time to be at People's Church.

See you soon,
Rev. Rachel

Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly Update

In late June, the Unitarian Universalist Association (People's Church is one of about 1,100 member congregations of the UUA) held an annual meeting, the General Assembly. In addition to inspiring worship (some of which you will see at People's Church soon), several pieces of business happened. Bylaws were updated, including a major revision of Article II of the UUA Bylaws. The Seven Principles are no longer part of the UUA Bylaws (though that doesn't mean we can't still find them valuable individually and collectively). New language was adopted that describes the core of

Unitarian Universalism as six values – justice, equity, transformation, pluralism, interdependence, and generosity – with love at the center.

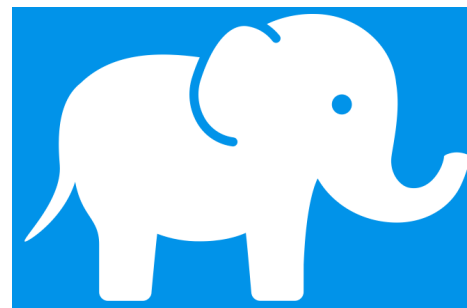


In addition, several other statements were passed articulating our commitment to centering love in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, acting in soli-

darity with Palestinians, addressing climate change, and calling for the release of hostages held by Hamas. The General Assembly also passed a Business Resolution called "Embracing Transgender, Nonbinary, Intersex and Gender Diverse People is a Fundamental Expression of UU Religious Values" This is a strong statement that will allow for stronger legal challenges to laws that attack trans folks. Unitarian Universalists in places with laws hostile to trans, nonbinary, intersex and gender-diverse people will be able to challenge those laws on the basis of religious freedom. We will see what the courts do with such an argument, but it is promising, as the states most hostile to trans folks are the states with the strongest protections for religious freedom. To learn more about the business of GA, please visit www.uuworld.org. There are several articles covering this business – and stay tuned for more from Rev. Rachel about all of this soon.

White Elephant Sale HUGE SUCCESS!

On Saturday June 15th, People's Church held our annual White Elephant sale. Thank you to everyone who donated wonderful treasures as well as to the folks who came shopping, put out a yard sign, helped with donations, set up, tear down, hauling unsold items to donation places and staffing tables during the event. This event takes many hands and would certainly not be possible without the wonderful generosity and teamwork of everyone! Final numbers are not yet available, but we sold an estimated \$3,600, which breaks a White Elephant sale record for the church!



Updated Picture Directory Coming Soon!

After the work of building a Picture Directory last year, this Summer I will be creating an updated version.



People change over time! If you'd like to submit an updated photo of yourself or your family for this year's directory, please send to me by NO LATER than August 1st. You can send via email to office@peopleschurch.net or via Google Photos to 'sundayinformation@gmail.com'. If you are unable to send the photo digitally, please feel free to bring it by the church office! If you are a church member and do NOT wish to have a photo of yourself included, please let me know by July 15th! Otherwise, I will

be using my best judgement to select the best recent photo I can from the church picture database for each church member who doesn't submit one.

Member Directory

As we move into summer, now is a great time to make sure you have updated your information with the church. Have you moved? Changed phone numbers, email addresses etc? Please let Melissa know at office@peopleschurch.net!

If you're a newcomer and would like to be added to our directory, please let me know! Our directory includes names, addresses, phone numbers and emails. You may choose to have as many or as few pieces of that information included. Any questions - reach out to Melissa!



Summer Religious Education

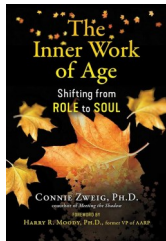
Summer Sunday activities for kids start June 16. Meet at 10:45 in Room 9 (Buddha room) for our opening, and then we'll be outside for games, crafts, experiments, nature walks, and more! These lean towards elementary age but pre-K through teens are welcome. Play clothes and sneakers, not fancies and flip flops, please.



Nursery is available for babies to preschoolers.

Contact Mary Kate Webster with questions: 269-501-3854 or tomandmarykate@gmail.com.

The Inner Work of Age



Book Study and Conversation: *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul* by Connie Zweig

Tuesday July 30, 1:30-3:00pm, on Zoom – **NOTE NEW DATE**

Zoom link: <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/5527667326>

Join others in the church to talk about aging and living well. We will use *The Inner Work of Age: Shifting from Role to Soul* as our source for conversation. This book, which is rooted in Jungian psychology, offers guidance for getting past inner obstacles and becoming an Elder filled with vitality and purpose. This book is available in paperback, as an e-book, and as an audiobook. (If the cost of the book is a barrier to your participation, please reach out to Rev. Rachel.)

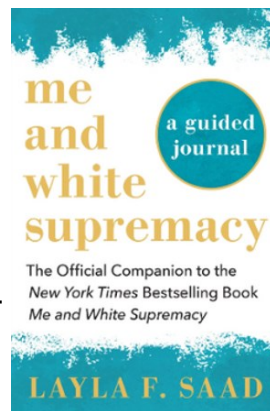
Me & White Supremacy Book Circle

Began on June 9 12:30-2pm, Room L2, and continues on second Sundays for seven months. The next meeting is on July 14.

We are starting a book circle to work through *Me & White Supremacy* by Layla Saad. This is a group for white people as well as People of Color who benefit from white privilege by being lighter skinned, white passing, or white adjacent.

In order to develop the trust necessary for this deep, vulnerable work, we are expecting people to commit to attend at least six sessions and we will have no more than 20 participants. We will collaborate on lunches. Child-care is available by request. The book is available at local stores; if buying it is a financial hardship,

reach out to Rev. Rachel and she will get a copy for you. If you have any questions about this, please contact Rev. Rachel.



Afternoon Book Club



The Afternoon Book Group will meet Monday, July 1 at 1:30 at Friendship Village to select the books we will read and review in the coming church year. Bring two or three book suggestions for us to choose from. We have been meeting on the first Monday of the month and will also confirm that for the coming year. Newcomers are welcome. Please contact Marj Lightner at marjlightner56@gmail.com or Martha Beverly at marthabeverly@gmail.com if you need more information.

Evening Book Club—Newcomers Welcome!

Reading, reading, reading this month to find books we want to review over the next church year. The planning meeting will be 2nd Thursday of August (8/8), 6-7:30 p.m. at Lois Loeffler's home.

This group leans toward quality fiction. Newcomers are welcome. For more information, feel free to contact Pat Nelson, patnelson348@gmail.com, 269-716-3623.



Library Corner

This month, following the tone of the smaller summer services, I'd like to speak to you in a more personal manner as I introduce the members of People's Library Committee and explain a bit about us. This month's column may be of no interest to those who are recent visitors to the church or to



Lois Loeffler (left), Jan Park (right)

those who never notice the library or this part of the newsletter. Please bear with me. Since I'm too shy to drop pebbles and express gratitude and joy for the women in the committee, I'm taking this chance to say how I feel.

I'm Lois Loeffler, the chair of the committee since a couple of years before Jan Park moved to Heritage and asked me to become the chair. We were glad that she agreed to continue to be part of the committee as long as she felt able. Until Kay Spade's recent death, she was also a valued member of the committee as was Cory Zann until her resignation last year. Our present members are Susan Stafford, Nancy Stern, and Marijo Steenstra. Among the committee's tasks is to determine which

books to add to the collection and which ones to withdraw. The fact that all of the women I've named above were avid readers helped immensely. Kay's wide reading interests as well as her experiences in the Study Group brought her wisdom to our decisions. She and Jan had a historical memory of this church as well as UU in general that was valuable. The interest that Susan and Cory had in reading non-fiction books of spirituality and meditation has been valuable. The medical background shared by Marijo and Susan has been very helpful in making purchase and withdrawal decisions of books pertaining to health, parenting, or psychological issues. Nancy's experience as a children's librarian has contributed to the selection of books that were brought to Diane Melvin's attention for possible replacement or withdrawal. The Library Committee prepares the RE books for placement in the RE section of the library but Diane makes the procurement choices. Another task the committee has assumed is the preparation of books for the church's White Elephant sale. Since the adult section of the church library does not include fiction titles, it's always fun to see what novels have been donated for the sale. Arranging the non-fiction books by broad subject categories was Cory's brainchild a few years ago and continues to be appreciated by the sale's customers. This takes a lot of work, as does the entire process of preparing for the White Elephant sale, but it's fun. At least it's fun for a retired YA (grades 6 – 12) librarian like me. It's also fun to work with this group of women who care about books and the church enough to put in time once a month to gather for a meeting which often extends past its official two hour time allotment and then to put in the extra work for the WE sale.

If you have comments or questions about the church library, please ask any of us. Or just say Hi. We like being here and feel rewarded when you check out books.



Gratitude

I have a daily gratitude practice where I try to name three things each day for which I am grateful. It is designed to help rewire my brain to look for the positives regardless of how large or small.

Sometimes life feels really hard but when I focus my attention on some of the many blessings of my life, it helps me to experience balance and perspective.

So much of life it seems, is grappling with holding both the pain, sorrow and grief along side the beauty, love and joy.

Included in my gratitude lately has been the exceptional RE team with whom I've had the privilege of working this year.

The RE Committee has led our RE program beautifully this year beginning with our chair, Brandon Brown. His calm, competent and consistent presence has been such a gift.

RE Committee members have organized the Specialty Classes, coordinated RE Greeters and Sunday point people, led RE Volunteer Appreciation efforts, managed evaluation surveys, organized RE class supplies and fidget baskets, managed childcare for all church events, fed countless people meals after church all year, led an elementary sleepover as well as a church wide game night and potluck.

At our monthly meetings we've discussed a chapter of *This Book is Anti-Racist* by Tiffany Jewell for the past three years. This group of people has been committed to learning and growing as well as serving this congregation through their leadership.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve along side this group and am thankful for each one of them and their countless contributions!

Blessed Be, Diane Melvin Religious Education Director



RE VOLUNTEERS ROCK!

Thank you to everyone who journeyed with our children and youth in religious education classes this year! We couldn't serve our families without the gift of your time, energy and love in working with our kids.

Preschool - Denise Valette, Joe Tourtois, David Wilson, Jen Docsa-Koehler, Justin Koehler, Ann Feldmeier

Kindergarten/1st Grade - Maggie Wilson, Cindy

Pietras, Teresa Cavanagh, Lauren Foley

2/3rd Grade - Mary Kate Webster, Dawn

Chamberlain, Chris Measzros

4-6th grade - Rachel Bair, Jeff Harms, Juli Ginn

7/8th grade OWL - Rowan

Jakoba, Birdie Stilson, Ben

Jones, Ann Shepich

9-12th grade - Don Miller,

Brandon Brown and Missy

Howse-Kurtz

5/6th Grade OWL - Shannon

Rench, Makenzie Martz

Special Helpers - Nancy

Mitchell, Annie Hampel,

Dolores Strom

Thank You Fairy RE Godmothers

We have been fortunate that a group of self-labeled "Fairy Godmothers" offered to help out behind the scenes in RE this year.

I cannot express enough gratitude for the the hours these ladies spent sorting and organizing donations of toys and supplies both in the classrooms as well as the RE supply room.

They cleaned toys and tables, they refreshed, organized and labeled supplies. It has been really awesome having our own magical RE fairies working behind the scenes in so many invaluable, unseen and yet vital ways.

Having things so well organized has made running our RE program easier for everyone involved.

Thank You Sharon, Mary and Marty!

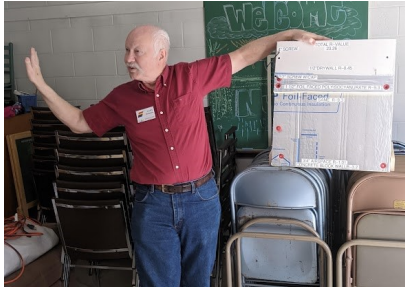


Status Report on Net-Zero Project from the Green Sanctuary Committee

For the last several years, based on the Net Zero Carbon initiative from the Green Sanctuary Committee, a small group of dedicated members of the Building & Grounds Team (Thank you Tom, Gary H, Gary L, Steve, Bob D., Bob F., Andy, Roger, George, Martin & Rick!) have been working on upgrading the energy efficiency of People's Church. Everyone has heard about the addition of the solar array on the roof, but that is far from the whole story.



The insulation in our walls has been upgraded, room by room as part of the renovation; air leaks have been fixed as they have been uncovered; light fixtures have been upgraded from incandescent to LED bulbs; new pumps and pipe insulation has been added to the hot water heating system, ventilation in the commons has been improved, and many other details addressed as they have been discovered. This is a progress report on those efforts, including an update on the output of our solar array.



Walls have been re-insulated, and wallboard replaced and painted all the way around to the Southern wing of the old building (rooms 1-8, and 10). This work was temporarily stopped when a serious problem was discovered in the nursery. But these upgrades have had a significant impact on our energy consumption, as well as sprucing up the old spaces. And they will continue as labor time and materials costs are available.

The results have been very significant: Our natural gas consumption over the last 12 months (April 2023 through March 2024), shows a 16% reduction compared to the 2017-19 baseline (pre-solar installation, pre-Covid closure) through these efforts!



Our electricity consumption in kilowatt hours, due both to the solar array addition in 2020 and the other efficiency improvements, has been reduced by 39% since the baseline!

The improved building performance has resulted in a "Cool Congregations" award from Interfaith Power and Light, a \$1000 prize in the planning category, also from Interfaith Power and Light, and a \$500 award from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. This wonderful performance has not been widely publicized among People's Church members and friends!



Based upon current budget levels, we are realizing an estimated net reduction of \$4,000 in annual utility costs. But the job is not yet done! The remaining walls need to be completed, we need to pay off the purchase price of the solar array, and many other details are still awaiting treatment. We also hope in the future to convert our HVAC systems to all electric heat pumps, and perhaps add to the solar capacity as part of our long-range Net Zero Carbon initiative.

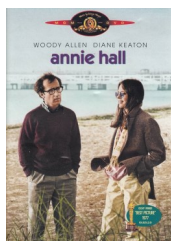
Art Wall Exhibit People's Church: "The Summer Collection" July and August, 2024

Reception Sunday July 14 at noon

MRC artWorks – a program of MRC Industries, Inc. – is a professional working art studio and retail gallery located on the historic Kalamazoo Mall in the heart of downtown Kalamazoo. MRC artWorks offers unique and affordable art created by in a way that promotes personal growth, dignity, and self-confidence. We strive to enrich the community with the diversity of art by promoting our artists' work through a variety of venues and partnerships. All artists receive a 75% commission from the sale of their work, which not only serves as their source of income, but also enhances and reinforces their self-esteem and self-worth. MRC artWorks provides a safe, positive, and creative environment that focuses on the individual's abilities rather than their disabilities.



MRC Industries serves individuals in Kalamazoo County with developmental or intellectual disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, emotional impairments, and mental illness to achieve their fullest potential through employment, skill building, and active community involvement.



Film Discussion

Discussion of "Annie Hall" is being rescheduled from June to July.

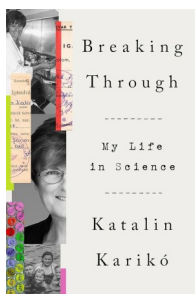
We meet on Zoom, after viewing the film individually; usually 3rd Wednesdays, 3-4:30 (adjusted for vacations). A DVD is available from KPL; also on various streaming services. Newcomers are welcome! To get on the email list for reminders and the zoom invite, contact Pat Nelson, patnelson348@gmail.com, 269-716-3623.

Invitation to Ian Webster's Eagle Ceremony

Ian Webster of Scouts BSA Troop 205 will be one of three Scouts receiving the Eagle Award on Monday, July 29, at 7:00 pm. They have been together since Cubs at age six and will have a ceremony in the Gathering Place at First Presbyterian Church, 321 W. South Street, downtown Kalamazoo. Ian would like to express his appreciation for the support from People's Church members. If you would like to attend the ceremony, reservations would be appreciated. Please send an email to Mary Kate Webster, to-mandmarykate@gmail.com.



Study Group



The Study Group will be meeting on Monday September 9 at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom, to discuss: "Breaking Through: My Life in Science" by Katalyn Kariko. Dr. Kariko won the 2023 Nobel Prize in Medicine for her research that led to the mRNA vaccine for COVID. This memoir depicts how she overcame the challenges she faced during her career – including being denied tenure and having her lab taken away – and what philosophical and psychological resources helped her overcome those challenges. The Study Group meets monthly to discuss a wide variety of books dealing with issues in philosophy, religion, science, history, and current affairs. New members are welcome! For more information, or to get the Zoom address for the meeting, contact

Tim Bartik at tim.bartik@gmail.com.

Day	Date	Event	Time	Place
Tuesday	July 2	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
		Board Meeting	6:30pm	Room 19
Thursday	July 4	CHURCH CLOSED		
Sunday	July 7	Summer Service:Tim Sparling	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Mon-Sun	Jul 8-15	Melissa (Administrator) Off		
Tuesday	July 9	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
Sunday	July 14	Summer Service: Rev. Rachel Lonberg	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
		Me & White Supremacy Book Circle	12:30pm	L2
		Artist Reception	12:30pm	Commons
July 15-Aug 5		Rev. Rachel Study Leave & Vacation		
Monday	July 15	Green Sanctuary	4:00pm	Zoom
Tuesday	July 16	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
		Library Committee	10:00pm	At Church
Wednesday	July 17	Film Discussion Group	3:00pm	Zoom
Sunday	July 21	Summer Service: Denise & Connie	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Monday	July 22	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE		
Tuesday	July 23	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
Wed-Sun	July 24-28	Diana (Bookkeeper) Off		
Sunday	July 28	Summer Service: Book Service/ People's Librarians	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Wednesday	July 31	Finance Committee	2:30pm	Zoom
Mon-Fri	July 29-Aug 2	CHURCH CLOSED FOR FLOOR CLEANING		

People's Church
News & Views
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Check us out on the web!
www.peopleschurch.net



People's Church Mission Statement

**"People's Church: A beloved community
embracing and serving our diverse world."**