

People's Church

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 86, Issue 8

May 2025

Sunday Services—10:45 a.m.

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

May 4: Music Service

Join Peoples' musicians for a service full of stirring music.



Inside this issue:

1758 North Tenth St.

Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Phone: 269-375-3262 office@peopleschurch.

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May II: "On Speaking Your Truth" — Kathryn Racette In these trying times--in the public forum, in government, in the smallest interpersonal interactions--it can seem as though our UU values are constantly under attack. How do we speak up when the moment calls for it? How do we convey our message in ways that are both effective and based in love? The speaker shares her journey to find the tools and the courage to take this on.

May 18: "A Metaphor that Moves Me" — Ed Smith

It has been a special opportunity for me to participate in Pastor Rachel's sermon writing group. I chose to focus on a metaphor that came to me in the form of a song. The metaphor has helped me clarify the basis for the strong faith I have had since my youth. I will share the metaphor, and my song, and something of the spiritual journey that has led me to this new point of clarity. I hope you can join me for the May 18 service.





May 25: "Heroes: A Reconsideration of How We Remember" — Gordon Bolar

As a participant in Rev. Rachel's Sermon Writing Seminar, I selected the Sunday before Memorial Day to talk about how we remember those who served our nation and gave the ultimate sacrifice. Please join me on May 25 as I share my life journey in light of the concept of those considered heroes and my discoveries along the way. (If you have a photo of someone you would like to be remembered and included in the service, especially military related, please send it to Elijah at office@peopleschurch.net or drop it off at the church.)

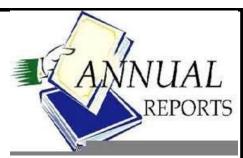


Dear Friends at People's Church - With gratitude to all who have welcomed me over the past four years, I have decided to retire. I joined the Finance Team as the bookkeeper under Allan Hunt's guidance and care for your church and continued with the team working with Tom Hackley and Pat VanSlambrouck. Barb Davis and Mary Carroll are a wealth of knowledge concerning the history and details of this important piece of caring for your church. I couldn't have done it without all of you!

I appreciate the generosity and care that you all provide to our community! With many thanks,
Diana Lundquist

Annual Committee Reports Due May 1st

It's that time of year again where we need to collect committee reports for the Annual Meeting. Reports should include names of committee members and chairs, the purpose of the committee, what the committee has done this year, and future goals. Reports are due no later than Thursday May I. Please send all reports to church administrator, Elijah Emrich at office@peopleschurch.net.





Pastoral Care during Rev. Rachel's Sabbatical

If you need care or support from the church, please reach out to the sabbatical pastoral care team at peoplescareteam@gmail.com or 269-375-3262 x. I. The team – Gerren Young, Sasha Ospina, Don Miller, and Rochelle Habeck, with support from Jill Terwilliger, will be in touch with you shortly.

Annual Congregational Meeting (and Potluck!)

May 18, potluck immediately following the service, congregational meeting begins at 12:45 on Zoom and in person

Bring a dish to share and do the work of our democracy! A potluck will immediately follow the service on May 18. At 12:45, the congregational meeting will begin. Agenda items include nominees for the board and nominating committee, the budget for the upcoming year, and any business that members of the congregation choose to present. Childcare will

be provided. Please note: final votes on all items will happen following the congregational meeting, by mail and online. You do not need to attend to vote, but you do need to attend (in person or online) to speak about these agenda items, offer amendments, or bring forward new business.



Board Updates and Upcoming Events

The board reviewed and discussed personnel Manual updates. The board also and considered the RE Taskforce Update addressing changing RE needs.

Board considered next Fiscal Year's budget based on March numbers to date. The board plans to address the final FY 26 budget at its May meeting.



And Now for This Year's Nominees!

The nominating committee developed a slate of candidates for the People's Church Board of Trus-tees and for the Nominating Committee for the upcoming church year! Please see below for the photos and bios of each candidate!

Board of Trustees Nominees



• Elizabeth Huff-Willis
I joined People's Church
about 12 years ago seeking a place
where I could heal from my past
religious traumas and find a safe
and welcoming place for my children. We found a loving, support-

ive community and many, many

friends, and I am so thankful to be a part of it all.

Professionally, I have been a physical therapist, journalist, English instructor in Japan, breastfeeding counselor, group fitness instructor, and first-aid medical volunteer. I currently volunteer on the Safety and Medical Team. I have served on the Religious Education committee and helped organize Specialty Classes, youth sleepovers, and special youth events.

Our church is an integral partner in advancing social justice in our community, and now more than ever we can be a crucial source of stability for those enduring the chaos of this current presidential administration. I believe it is our duty to protect those who cannot defend themselves against unjust policies and actions. I believe it is our duty to protect our mother Earth. I believe we must work collaboratively to make wise decisions to help those most in need. Thank you for this opportunity to serve on the board of trustees.

Tim Kieffer

I am honored to be nominated to serve on People's Board of Trustees. I began attending People's Church regularly in the fall of 2018, six months after I retired as an occupational therapist. I had been drifting spiritually for many years, but in a few short months felt that I

found a home, a place of solace and support, at People's Church.

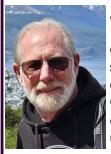
My parents were devout Lutherans, my father an ordained minister, who instilled in me, my sister and two younger brothers a love of music, which began as members of various children's choirs at my father's churches, piano lessons taught by my mother, and taking up the saxophone only because I could not buzz my lips to play a trumpet, the result of my sister fending me off during some early childhood combat. My parents also modeled a liberal social and political bent that led me to campaign for George McGovern before I was eligible to vote.

In 1978 I graduated with a liberal arts bachelor's degree from Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, PA. The next year I declared my identity as a gay man, shortly before the AIDS pandemic began to emerge. I am a survivor of AIDs but not unscarred. I continue to grieve the loss of my partner and many friends, and for the many who continue to suffer. But through it all I've learned that I can, and must, celebrate each day. People's Church gives me many reasons to celebrate

The month before joining People's Church I helped to sell pasties at the holiday bazaar -- a dynamic introduction to the People's community that has an affinity for art and food – also passions of mine. In the first few months of 2019 I participated in a series of community discussions about white supremacy culture. And then regular conversations in person and over Zoom with other People's people about interrupting racism, which led to my involvement in the Dismantling Racism Team. It has all led to a personal awakening and a reading list that will last a lifetime. Also that spring I joined a monthly Chalice Circle in which I still participate. I became a member of the Tenor Nation section of the choir. And I participated in a class entitled "Transgender Inclusion in Congregations," based on a curriculum created by the Trans-

forming Hearts Collective for congregations of the UUA.

I have found a spiritual home at People's Church and am dedicated to continue my involvement, to continue a thoughtful assessment of my spirituality, and to continue to grow in the ways I can contribute to this church and to our community.



Martin Sauter

I lived most of my life on the other side of the state running a small family business alongside my dad. I met Sharon, my partner, at degree in arts and media. Upon graduating I realized that I didn't like my employment options and my dad was fearful and sometimes hateful world.

in need of a partner so I switched careers. While working closely with family has its ups and downs, I did learn many valuable lessons, including how to operate a small business and how to manage people with different backgrounds. In Blissfield I was also actively raising my two children, serving on school boards and village council. I enjoyed the interactions and workings of a board. After Sharon and I retired we moved to Paw Paw to be closer to our children, in Kalamazoo and Portage, and Sharon's parents in

I have been at Peoples since 2020, by zoom for the first two years, and became a member in 2022. During this time, I have come to appreciate the people and the impact the church has on our community. I have attended both Catholic and Methodist churches over the years but never really got comfortable there. I think the RE programs are a real value to the young people in the congregation .The diversity of thought throughout Peoples makes for a blend that fits with my world view philosophy. I am excited to see where the churches growth takes us in the coming years. I currently work with building and grounds and also try to fill spots as needed within the church community.

Nominating Committee

George Hrbek My wife Mary and I have been UUs since 2001. We were both raised Catholic but I never really was a true believer and fell away from active participation during my college days. My years



in graduate school only reinforced my skepticism and rejection of rigid beliefs and associated behaviors.

We wanted our two sons to be part of a liberal religious community that was not dogmatic and expose them to a wide spectrum of people and their beliefs: spiritual and social. Unitarian Universalism has exceeded our expectations. Although we didn't realize Grand Valley, where I was pursuing a it at the time, it was life changing for us as well. It has widened our understanding and perspectives of the world and provides a much needed refuge from a

> Both Mary and I were raised in the Chicago area. My work has taken us to Massachusetts (near Boston) and finally to Los Alamos New Mexico (near Santa Fe).

While at the Unitarian Church in Los Alamos I was Vice President, then President and was always an active member of both the Kitchen Crew and Building and Grounds.

When I retired in 2020, we decided to move closer to our families who live in the Chicago and Southwest Michigan Areas. We are delighted to have moved to Portage and to have joined People's Church!

I think my experiences at the Unitarian Church will prove useful on the Nominating Committee.



Brianna Wurtsmith

What brought me to People's Church in 2022 was a longing for the community spirit that I'd witnessed among other churchgoers, but I figured organized religion was never going to work for me because I didn't believe

what they believed. Then I attended a wedding at a UU church, where I read a pamphlet from the back of a pew and thought "Now that's the kind of church I could get behind!" So I was very happy when we moved to Kalamazoo and I learned about the existence of People's Church. Ours is such a welcoming congregation, where people truly believe in the messages we hear each Sunday, and it's been a refreshing and uplifting experience to be a member. In that time, I've helped host board game nights, performed with the bell choir a few times, and will be helping with the bazaar as well. And if elected to serve on the Nominating Committee, I'll make it my business to get to know people so that I can be an effective Nominator!

Nature Therapy Opportunity!

Our rain garden is in its second season. Native gardens take 3 years to establish. So what does that mean? We will tend the garden more closely this and next year. Years following, the maintenance time will be much less.

Join in for some very informal education about native-to-Michigan plants as we work on the rain garden. Over this season we'll pull weeds, observe plant growth, learn about the Chelsea Chop. We will regularly take deep cleansing breaths and work on creating a border around the garden so our mowers have an easier time of it.

Drop in on any 3rd Saturday of the month (the 4th Saturday will be our rain date). 9:30-11:30 Bring your favorite garden tools and gloves and dig in!



SAVETHE DATE!

The People's Church White Elephant Sale will be Saturday June 21, 2025 - rain or shine!

Drop-offs of items will begin on Thursday June 5th. More details to come - stay tuned!



Rain Garden Update

We had a short work day in April, to begin readying the garden for spring. Boards surrounding the garden, that had been placed there to kill off the underlying grass, were removed. Dead plant stalks were cut back. The new growth is looking good, and we anticipate a productive growing season. This year we hope to install an informational sign, as well as a bench. We plan to designate one Saturday morning per month as a rain garden work day, so be on

New Book Group on Aging

In Later Years: Finding Meaning and Spirit in Aging by Bruce T. Marshall Tuesday, May 20, 1:30-3pm on Zoom

Link: https://uuma.zoom.us/j/5527667326

This book, by a Unitarian Universalist minister who is a chaplain at a retirement community, will provide a jumping off point for conversations about topics such as change, legacy and memory.

For this session, we will read Chapter 2 on Change.



Introduction to White Supremacy Culture

Have you heard the term "white supremacy culture" and wondered about it? Have you engaged with the concepts before and would like to delve into them further?

Join others on Friday, June 6 for a facilitated Zoom session from 6:00-7:30pm. This is the same link as for Sunday services: https://uuma.zoom.us/j/5527667326.

To prepare for discussion, please read the introduction of this article (pp. 1-6): https://socialwork.wayne.edu/events/4 - okun - white supremacy culture - still here.pdf

Film Discussion

"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood", the 2019 film directed by Quentin Tarantino will be our topic May 21, 4-5:30 on Zoom.

We continue to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Newcomers are welcome. To get on the email list for reminders and a Zoom invitation, contact Pat Nelson, patnelson 348@gmail.com, 269-716-3623.





Afternoon Book Club

This bookclub is currently full. To get on a waiting list, contact Martha Beverly, martha.beverly@gmail.com.

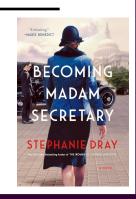
May's book is "This is How You Lose the Time War" by Max Gladstone.

Evening Book Club—Newcomers Welcome!

"Becoming Madame Secretary" by Stephanie Dray will be reviewed by Mary Montgomery, May 8, 6-745 p.m.

Newcomers are welcome.

We continue to meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the home of Lois Loeffler, 269-372-0038. Our list list books through June is on the church website under the "learning" tab. To get on the email list, contact Pat Nelson, patnelson348@gmail.com.

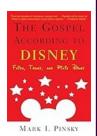


Library Corner

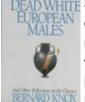
You can find these books on display or under their Dewey Decimal numbers on the shelves.

The Gospel According to Disney; Faith, Trust, and Pixie Dust, by Mark I. Pinsky — 791.43 Pi

Religion journalist Mark Pinsky explores the role that the animated features of Walt Disney played on the moral and spiritual development of generations of children. Pinsky explores thirty-one of the most popular Disney films.



The Oldest Dead White European Males and Other Reflections on the Classics, by Bernard Knox — 380.9 Kn



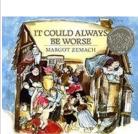
Should the ancient Greeks—"the oldest dead white European males"—be kept alive in our collective memory? Why study them at all if, by passing their destructive ideas to the Romans and eventually to the rest of Europe, they may ultimately be responsible for much of what's wrong with American society? Knox poses and answers such fundamental questions, helping us to remember the astonishing originality of the ancient Greeks and all that we have learned—and continue to learn—from them.

Ejaculate Responsibly; a Whole New Way to Think about Abortion, by Gabrielle Blair 363.96 Bl

In a series of 28 brief arguments, Blair deftly makes the case for moving the abortion debate away from controlling and legislating women's bodies and instead directs the focus on men's lack of accountability in preventing unwanted pregnancies.

Highly readable, accessible, funny, and unflinching, Blair builds her argument by walking readers through the basics of fertility (men are 50 times more fertile than women), the unfair burden placed on women when it comes to preventing pregnancy (90% of the birth control market is for women), the wrongheaded stigmas around birth control for men (condoms make sex less pleasurable, vasectomies are scary and emasculating), and the counterintuitive reality that men, who are fertile 100% of the time, take little to no responsibility for preventing pregnancy.

It Could Always Be Worse, by Margot Zemach — RE 398.27 Ze



Once upon a time a poor unfortunate man lived with his mother, his wife, and his six children in a one-room hut. Because they were so crowded, the children often fought and the man and his wife argued. When the poor man was unable to stand it any longer, he ran to the Rabbi for help.

As he follows the Rabbi's unlikely advice, the poor man's life goes from bad to worse, with increasingly uproarious results.

Questions/ comments are welcomed. Please contact Lois Loeffler, chair of the Library Committee, at loisloeffler@gmail.com.

Blessings & Gratitude

What a blessing it is to have so many children and youth who feel an integral connection with People's Church and love coming to church here! It is because of the dedication of a cadre of fabulous folks who contribute their time, energy and Love to our religious education program that we are thriving and growing, learning and loving. There are not adequate words to express the value

these folks bring to our children and youth by showing up to regularly guide, lead and accompany our kids in religious exploration and growth.

Our World Religions Program has been fantastic this year for Kindergarten through high school! The children and youth have been introduced to a wide variety of religions. Hopefully we are planting the seeds of understanding and compassion for those

	6				
Religions	How to be a Good person	Gods/ Goddesses	Rituals	Symbols	
Unitarian Jniversalism	center Love in all we say and do	all and/or none, The Power of Love	chalice lighting, covenanting	Flaming Chalice	
Hinduism	build good Karma	Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu +	prayer, yoga, chants	35	
Buddhism	follow the 8-Fold Way	None	meditation, mantras	Wheel of Life	
Taoism	strive for peace & balance	The Tao, the Way, the Cosmos	meditation, purification & music	3	
Pantheism	live in balance with earth	God as the Sacred Cosmos	honor cycles of nature	No.Oha Shell	
Paganism	what you send out returns x 3	Goddesses/ gods/Nature	solar and lunar cycle circles	Depth Moon with paravile	
Indigenous	live in harmony with nature & communit	h Great	seasonal and life cycle rituals	Medicine Wheel	
Yoruba	follow your destiny	Olorun + 600 Orishas	prayer, music & drumming	4	
Islam	submit to Allah	Allah	prayer, fasting, pilgrimage	C CONTRACTOR CONTRACTO	
Judaism	follow 10 Commandments		shabbat, prayer, rites of passage	众	

who hold different beliefs. Our middle and high school youth enjoyed a visit to the Indo American Cultural Center and Hindu Temple last month. On May I Ith we will engage in Pagan Beltane Ritual.

We couldn't do any of it without our RE teachers!

Blessed Be, Diane Melvin, Director of Religious

Education

RE Volunteer Appreciation Recognition Sunday May 18, 2025

Please come and express your gratitude for those who serve our children and families at People's!

Thank You RE Volunteers!

Preschool - Denise Valette, Jen Docsa-Koehler, Joe Tourtois, Ann Feldmeier, Justin Koehler; K/Ist - Marti Peter-Sparling, Teresa Cavanagh, Mary Hrbek, Diana Rankinen; 2nd/3rd - Mary Kate Webster, Maggie Wilson, George Hrbek; 4-6th - Rachel Bair, Juli Ginn, Cindy Pietras, Chris Measzros; 7-12th - Don Miller, Missy Howse-Kurtz, Ben Jones, Steve Cavanagh; K/I OWL - Laura Bultman, Shannon Rench, Maggie Wilson



Earth Day Intergenerational Service

Thank you to all who participated in our interactive Earth Day service which included ritual stations for Earth Celebration, Grief, Gratitude and Reciprocity. Our new young maple tree should grow well and live long with so many wonderful hands on blessings from participants. May Blessings Abound!

REGISTRATION OPENED ON MARCH 30TH: https://forms.gle/BJ2HmknunVNXYuNc9

What is Peace and Nature Camp?

Peace and Nature Camp is a one-week day camp at People's Church. It is open to rising 1st to rising 6th graders.

Camp runs Monday through Friday from 9am to 4pm with before and aftercare available.

- Session 1: June 23-27, 2025
- Session 2: August 18-22, 2025

Rising 1st to rising 6th graders will enjoy a week of outdoor activities: exploring our church grounds, taking nature walks, building forts in the woods, going on a day trip to the Kalamazoo Nature Center, and splashing on the slide-and-slide, as well as daily music, art, and mindfulness practice. All that AND have fun with friends! The two camp sessions will be nearly identical. Priority will be given in the second session for campers who cannot attend the first session. Campers may attend both sessions if space is available.

Costs

- One child: \$220 for the week *
- Additional siblings: \$180 each*
- \$25 per week for before-hours care (8-9am)*
- \$35 per week for after-hours care (4-5:30pm)*
- \$50 per week for both before/after hours care*



*Scholarships available!

Questions? Ask us! Email peoplespnc@gmail.com We hope you'll join us!

Special Collection: Community Homeworks

May 4th (rescheduled from April)

Community Homeworks provides critical home repairs to low-income homeowners in Kalamazoo



County that help our community members to be safe and warm, avoid HOMEWORKS also provides educational workshops on home maintenance and repair and a tool library to everyone in our community. You can learn more

about Community Homeworks at https://communityhomeworks.org/

Special Collection: Outfront Kalamazoo

May 18th

To be 'out front' means to be honest. To be visible. To lead. Since 1987, OutFront Kalamazoo has worked to advance social justice, build coalitions, change hearts and open minds so that all people in Southwest Michigan can live authentically and free from discrimination - regardless of their gender identity

or sexual orientation. OutFront Kalamazoo provides a safe and welcoming environment with a wide range of programs and services. We offer a place to be seen and heard and an opportunity to join with others who desire to live



unapologetically, You can learn more about Outfront Kalamazoo at https://www.outfrontkzoo.org/

Art Wall

In celebration of World Earth Day (April 22, 2025) and our UU core value of Interdependence, People's People are showing their work through visual art/imagery in this exhibit which honors the great web of life and our place in it.

We had an over abundance of submissions and had to reduce the numbers of works to fit them on the Art Wall. People's artists have used a wide range of media and techniques to present their wonderful creativity and love for our earth.

The artists are Elizabeth Closson, Tracy Cobb, David Curl, Glenda Demissianos, Bob Friedel, Tracy Klinesteker, Patsy Kreuzer, Becki Moffett-Moore, Catherine Niessink, Sally Padley, Ann Terwilliger, Karen Tinklenberg, Gay Walker, John Walker, Cory Zann.

Exhibit: March through May



Puzzle Exchange Now Ongoing

By popular demand, the puzzle exchange is now ongoing! Space has been made on the shelves in the church library. Puzzles can be taken, returned, added & enjoyed at any time!



After Service Discussion



David Isaacson will host a discussion/conversation of Sunday's sermon beginning at 12:15 in Room 9 (Buddha room). If enough people are interested this will be a usual practice after most Sunday services. Other people who would like to be discussion leaders are most welcome, as David won't be available some Sundays. These discussions are for the regular Church year, not Summer services.

Sunday Morning Coffee Helpers

Coffee on Sunday mornings after service is a beloved tradition here at People's Church but it doesn't happen by magic. We're looking for additional volunteers to help make this happen every week! Please sign up here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508054BA9AC22A13-45217221-coffee if you're interested in learning the ropes and joining the rotation of folks who make the coffee & clean up afterwards!



Sunday Morning Greeters

One of the key pieces of hospitality on Sunday mornings is greeting people as they come in the front door, making sure they feel welcome! Feel free to sign up here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508054ba9ac22a13-health#/

		Calendar		I age II	
Day	Date	Event	Time	Place	
Thursday	May I	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons	
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons	
Sunday	May 4	Sunday Service: "Music Service"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom	
		After Service Discussion	12:15pm	Room 9	
Tuesday	May 6	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church	
		RE Committee	6:30pm	Room 6/7	
Thursday	May 8	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons	
		Evening Book Club	6:00pm	Home of Lois L.	
		Board Meeting	6:30pm	Room 19	
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons	
Sunday	May I I	Room for Rest	9:45am	Room 9	
		Sunday Service: "On Speaking Your Truth "	10:45am	Commons & Zoom	
		After Service Discussion	12:15pm	Room 9	
Tuesday	May 13	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church	
Thursday	May 15	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons	
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons	
Saturday	May 17	Rain Garden Work Day	9:30am	At Church	
		Game Night & Potluck	6:00pm	Commons	
Sunday	May 18	Sunday Service: "A Metaphor that Moves Me"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom	
		Annual Meeting	12:45pm	Commons	
		After Service Discussion	12:15pm	Room 9	
Monday	May 19	Green Sanctuary	4:00pm	Zoom	
Tuesday	May 20	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church	
•	_	Library Committee	10:00pm	At Church	
		Book Group on Aging	1:30pm	Zoom	
Wednesday	May 21	Film Discussion Group	4:00pm	Zoom	
Thursday	May 22	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons	
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons	
Sunday	May 25	Sunday Service: "Heroes: A	•		
		Reconsideration of How We	10:45am	Commons & Zoom	
		Remember"			
		After Service Discussion	12:15pm	Room 9	
Monday	May 26	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE			
Tuesday	May 27	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church	
Wednesday	May 28	Finance Committee	2:30pm	Zoom	
Th	May 29	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons	
Thursday		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons	
The Full Calendar of Events can be viewed online at https://peopleschurch.net/events-2/					

embracing and serving our diverse world."