



A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 86, Issue 9

June 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

June I: "It Takes a Village" — Diane Melvin & friends It takes the whole village working together to support our children & youth at People's. Families are under enormous pressure today. How can our congregation best support and minister to them in these times? Come celebrate our RE teachers and graduating seniors.



Inside this issue:

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June 8: "Flower Celebration Service " - Bob Davis



In 1923, Czech Unitarians held the first flower service in Prague. Today, we continue the tradition of this anti-fascist holiday, celebrating human diversity and the legacy of Czech Unitarian minister Norbert Čapek. We will be celebrating in the style of contemporary Unitarians of Prague, Czechia. All in-person attendees are invited to bring a flower (or something with a flower on it – perhaps a photograph or a cupcake or a drawing?) – to share.

Summer Services

Summer services will once again be reflections from People's People. Each service will include a ten-minute reflection from a speaker followed by discussion in small groups. Summer services will be multiplatform, taking place both in the Commons and over Zoom. Services begin at 10:45. The full summer schedule will be shared in a Friday update email when it is completed.



Call For Card/Letter Writers



As we all know, a lot of things happen in life—good, bad and otherwise. We are looking for a group of volunteers who would like to reform our church Arms Around group to send cards/letters to church members when a big life event happens. If you are willing and able to be a part of this effort, please reach out to Elijah at office@peopleschurch.net

Our annual poetry service was held on March 30, 2025 and what a treat it was to hear People's people and friends share their poems on the theme, Poetry of Predicament. A special creative exercise for those in attendance was an invitation to contribute to a community poem during a timed "free write" by making a list of things they love. Whew - we love a lot of things! We collected all those contributions from which Elizabeth Bullmer assembled a gorgeous community poem incorporating lines from every one of the sixty-one submissions. We - the poetry service planning team - hope you love it!



- Don Miller, Leeanne Seaver, Elizabeth (Eli) Bullmer, and Donna McClurkan

People's People Love: Community Poem 2025

~written by congregants, assembled by Elizabeth Bullmer

I love chicken enchiladas & tamales; family; warm tea in my belly; fresh bread; clean sheets; my new comforter; soft light & crawling into bed at night; sleep; dreams that linger; quiet days at home; complete silence; warm laundry; being alone.

I love tomatoes from the garden & oranges in winter; BBQ chicken; family dinner; white cake & reunions; unpredictable weather; early morning at my bird feeder; anything with fur, scales or feathers; tree frogs; farmer's markets; fresh asparagus; reading a good book; going out for breakfast; gluten-free muffins & rhubarb pie.





I love generous people; patience; forgiveness & laugh lines; solitary moments; sitting quietly; holding hands; sharing; full custody; swordfish with black olives & onions; truffles; a new hobby. I love understanding; Persian food; voices in harmony; sweat & solidarity; listening to Dad tell a story; remembering those who walked before me; wind in my hair; eating great dessert; goat cheese; cream-filled pastries; curiosity; courage & honesty; fountain pens; a new word; memories.

I love cinnamon; dates & Key lime pie; ice cream on a warm day; French fries; lattes & pistachios; green gumdrops; snowdrops; Aha! moments & being alive; I love the cowlick in my sweetheart's hair; when my grown children grin; finding joy; listening; wonder; new beginnings & seeing a child win; cookies; my grandson's smile; a baby's laugh; watching children play; hugs; love stories; late night calls & the first conversation of the day.





I love simple beauty; meditating; spiral stairways; safe space; sunflowers & spearmint; smiling at strangers; taste of black licorice on my tongue; the first snow; shoveling; family pictures & crocuses; smell of fresh popcorn; puppy breath; Grandmother's biscuits; honey; laughing together; texture; dark chocolate; love itself & morning coffee.

I love gut-wrenching laughs; vulnerability; feeling physically strong; feeling free to share; my new apartment; long soaks in the tub.

I love common awareness & unplanned days; my beloved; tender touch; walks at Asylum Lake; myself for all my failings & friends who I trust; roasted root vegetables; Indian & Thai food; burn of spice on my tongue; feeling full of life; sunsets & crystals; sacrifice; justice for everyone.



I love a quiet evening; stillness of morning; dancing & dancing & dancing; running with wild abandon; searching for the Big Dipper; all the seasons; thunderstorms; baba ghanoush; black raspberries & Hunan Gardens. I love the gifts of the universe; opportunity; crunching lemon drops; creativity; connecting with nature; taking deep breaths; bonfires; holding community; the smell of fall leaves; lavender; daffodils & lilacs; trillium; tulips & goofy pansies; sound of waves on the beach; chickens talking to themselves; native plants; chicka-

dees.

I love adventure movies; sighing; gratitude; lying in the sun; live bands & comfortable shoes; being in the moment; new experience; beach sand; fishing; Netflix & The Moody Blues. I love working with my hands; spoken truths; good government; cooperation; sunshine on water & Lake Michigan; a completed task; physical labor; volunteering; appreciation; taking action together. I love napping & cuddling & rainy days; my old red wagon; escalators; bridges to nowhere; over-specific play-lists; humming; fuzz balls; fireworks; lip-syncing to Chappell Roan; magic & Jesus.



I love singing in a choir; new crafts; The Kingston Trio & Sting; jigsaw puzzles; cars & The Gypsy Kings; poetry; art; spirit animals; building things; the bursting of bubbles; trampolines; woodpeckers; seagulls & hearing Darryl sing; I love hellebore; paddle boarding; soft tee-shirts; baking; camping; making it through greenlights; squirrels & ferns unfurling in early spring.

I love the hour before dawn & day-long trips; distant train whistles; a cardinal's song; weeding; planting bulbs; dirt under my feet; smell of earth after rain; the Pacific air; swimming; swelling buds on a maple; fruit; the full moon; flannel & flickering fire. I love my Goldendoodle's endless joy; travel & discovery; Harry Connick, Jr. & British TV; watching cats

sleep; Depression glassware; forests; waterfalls & Ocean City.



I love angels; wet dog noses; animal tracks in snow; warm water; Easter baskets; good ideas & Pinot Grigio; Brandenburg Concertos; sharing with friends; Yeats:

Braham's German Requiem; Dua Lipa; tricycles; vibrations & squeaky gates. I love Biebl's Ave Maria; Christmas lights; Bach; watering plants; musicals;

knitting socks;

this beautiful, fragile planet & People's Church; sailing; cedar swamps & all kinds of rocks.

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 I2 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, supportive 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 Transforming 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 Grand Valley, where I was pursuing a degree in arts and media. Upon graduating I realized that I didn't like my employment options and my dad was 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 work-

ings 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 Oshtemo. 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 skepti-



cism and rejection of rigid beliefs and associated be-

haviors.

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 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 fearful and sometimes hateful world.

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 be-



lieved. 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!

New Book Group on Aging

In Later Years: Finding Meaning and Spirit in Aging by Bruce T. Marshall Tuesday, June 17, 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 3 on Identity.



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. I-6): https://socialwork.wayne.edu/events/4_-okun_-white_supremacy_culture_-_still_here.pdf Questions? Please contact Sam at fignewtonsmile@gmail.com.



Afternoon Book Club

This group continues at maximum participation. Contact Martha Beverly (marthabeverly@gmail.com) if you'd like to get on a waiting list. During the summer, a meeting will be scheduled to set the calendar for the upcoming year. This month, the group will discuss "James" by Percival Everett.

Evening Book Club—Newcomers Welcome!

6/12 (6-7:30 PM) we'll discuss a classic Pulitzer prize winner, Anne Tyler's "Breathing Lessons". Lois Loeffler will host; Pat Nelson will review. Looking forward, we'll take a break in July and gather in August at a date that to choose monthly selections and set the calendar for the coming church year If you are interested in participating, get in touch with Pat Nelson (patnelson348@gmail.com; 269-71/23/23) to review the second sec



716-3623) to get reminder emails. She can also tell you if a book you have in mind has previously been reviewed. Anyone interested in reviewing a title one month (optional) is asked to recommend 2-3 books for consideration. This group leans toward quality fiction.

Women's Retreat

In 2024 a few folks from People's Church attended the AAUU Women's Retreat at Camp Copneconic

in Fenton, MI. We had such a great time doing nature walks, art, yoga, high ropes, bonfires, and a folk song sing-along! Hopefully you can join us this year!

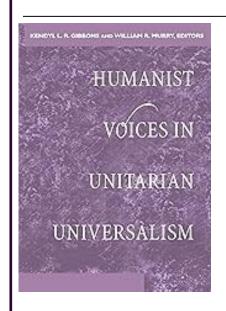


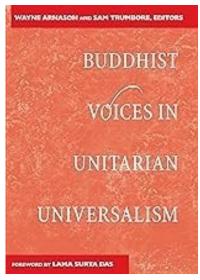
The theme for this year's retreat is Building a Community of Hope. We'll kick off on Friday evening with a pot-luck Community Café, book and jewelry exchanges, sale of woman-made products, our Welcoming Session and a bonfire with storytelling. Saturday will be packed with small group gatherings; social justice and heart-healing workshops, good food; fun craft workshops; outdoor

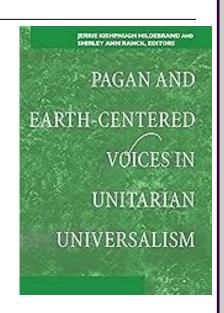
activities such as zip lining, archery and high ropes course, and plenty of joyful singing. Sunday morning we wrap up with our closing Community Celebration.

All registration materials are available at: https://uuaa.org/womuuns-community/. Women should register and pay by June 30 to receive early bird pricing.

Library Corner







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The books above are among the titles in the "...voices in Unitarian Universalism" series which was purchased from the UUA

Bookstore for our library.

Others in the series are:
Christian Voices in Unitarian Universalism
289.1 Ch
Jewish Voices in Unitarian Universalism
289.1 Je

Some of these pamphlets give more examples of the variety of beliefs within our faith.

Questions/ comments are welcomed.

Please contact Lois Loeffler, chair of the Library Committee, at loisloeffler@gmail.com.



It Takes a Village

It takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to manage a vibrant religious education program, it takes a village to maintain a healthy congregation. At People's Church we celebrate diversity and pluralism. It is because of the collection of diverse people with various theological beliefs, classes, ages, Mike Bultman, chair; Mary Kate Webster,

genders, and lived experience that makes our village stronger and more interesting.

I think that the diversity of ages in this congregation is such a blessing for everyone. It is especially such a gift for our children and youth to have the opportunity to interact with and get to know our elders. It is only when we all contribute what we can in our own ways that the collective whole is at its healthiest. Be on the lookout for opportunities to serve, connect,

deepen connections. Our village at People's is richer and more vibrant as more diverse demographics step up to the call and get involved. Parents frequently need a break when they come to church. If you are not actively parenting children at this time, please consider the ways you can answer the call to serve our diverse and dynamic ministry for children, youth and families at People's.

In our June 1st service, we will be sharing more about this as well as honoring our RE teachers and bridging seniors. Please come to church on June 1st to recognize our RE teachers and seniors. I hope to see you there!

Blessed Be, Diane Melvin, Director of Religious Education

THANK YOU RE COMMITTEE **MEMBERS!**

HUGE Gratitude to our RE Committee this year! We usually have nine members but were only able to find seven people to serve this year and so they did a yeoman's job!

Secretary; Birdie Stilson, Jen Docsa-Koehler, April Schmidt, Maggie Wilson, and Dan Bair

Congratulations Seniors!

Fiona Murray, LG Little Garner, Amelie Payne and Bella Johnson! We wish you so many blessings on the next chapter of your journey!



Fiona and LG at Mystic Lake in 2019



Our youth wrapped up their world religions visits and experiences with a Pagan Beltane ritual complete with fire & Maypole dance.

Upcoming White Elephant Sale

Our annual White Elephant sale is fast approaching. June 21 is the date. This is a great fund-raiser for our church. It's also a great opportunity for you to clean out the basement - or maybe start that downsizing project. The White Elephant volunteer team will help find new homes for things you no longer need or want.

Once again, we will let customers name their price for most items, although there will be minimum suggested prices for selected items of higher value. This worked very well last year!

The team is looking forward to accepting:

- items that are in gently loved or like-new condition
- toys and games complete without missing pieces
- small household appliances, lamps, etc. that are clean and in verified working condition
- furniture ... if it can fit in your car
- · household decor, including holiday decorations
- books
- kitchen items
- jewelry
- purses & tote bags
- small personal fitness items such as hand weights and bike racks



If you're wondering whether an item is in the right condition to donate, ask yourself "would I give this to a friend?" If yes, we'd love to add it to our White Elephant sale!

We regret not being able to accept clothing, exercise equipment, electronics like TVs and computers, or furniture larger than what will fit in your car.

A member of the White Elephant team will be on hand to accept your donations on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 4-7 and Sundays from 12-2 starting June 5th.

If those times don't work for you, or if you have any questions, contact our church admin, Elijah. Thank you for contributing to our White Elephant fund-raiser for People's Church by donating items and signing up to volunteer on the sheets in the foyer. We need people to help receive donations, distribute publicity flyers and help with set up, sales and clean up.

And mark your calendar to support our sale by shopping with us on June 21!

Sign ups are now open to volunteer to help with the upcoming White Elephant Sale. Check out the available spots here:

Drop Off Helpers: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508054BA9AC22A13-49738069-white#/

Sign up for as many as you are able!! It takes a lot of hands to make the event successful!

Art Wall

The Traveling Hen House Exhibition Artist: Brian Walters

Brian Walters is a Kalamazoo native who started painting with acrylics in 2003 at the age of 46. His work is best described as eclectic and quirky. It runs the gambit from being silly and fun to dark and serious.

"Art is very much a part of who I am."

This exhibit includes several themes which focus on: Social Justice, Airstream Trailers, Footwear Collection, Chickens in Famous Paintings, and more.

Art Wall Exhibit: Sunday June 8th after service



Meal Train for Jenna Losey

Jenna had an open abdominal surgery at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN to remove a large mass that



was compressing part of her liver and pushing out her rib cage causing great pain! The surgery went well, however, she has had a difficult post op. After spending 9 days in the hospital, she flew home to finish her recovery. Jenna is off of work and recovering at home alone. She would love support with meals and surmounting medical expenses as she recovers. If you are able to help, please reach out, sign up, or donate to her medical debt/cost of living fund here! https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/y55dwe Thank you! (Her email is lenna.b.losey@gmail.com)

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



Do you like to smile at people and say hello? Do you like to meet new people at church? Come join the greeters in making every person's first moment at church a warm one. 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. But we have a problem. No one is signing up!

Ideally, we would like to have two people available to greet each Sunday. This would give greeters an opportunity to better know their partner for the day and to provide two people to connect with visitors or personally show them where to find orders of service, coat racks, coffee, and help them feel at home at People's. Ideal times for greeting are

from 10:10 am to 10:50 am.

Please consider signing up below to help make People's the warm and inclusive community we all know and enjoy. Or talk to the greeter on Sunday to learn what they love about being a greeter. https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508054ba9ac22a13-health#/

Day	Date	Event	Time	Place
Sunday	June I	Sunday Service: "It Takes A Village"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
		Annual Meeting	12:45pm	Commons
Tuesday	June 3	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
		RE Committee	6:30pm	Room 6/7
Thursday	June 5	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons
		Board Meeting	6:30pm	Room 19
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons
Sunday	June 8	Sunday Service: "Flower Celebration Service"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
		After Service Discussion	12:15pm	Room 9
Tuesday	June 10	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
Thursday	June 12	Evening Book Club	6:00pm	Home of Lois L.
		Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons
Sunday	June 15	Summer Service	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Monday	June 16	Green Sanctuary	4:00pm	Zoom
Tuesday	June 17	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
		Library Committee	10:00pm	At Church
		Book Group on Aging	1:30pm	Zoom
Thursday	June 19	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons
Saturday	June 21	WHITE ELEPHANT SALE	9:00am-2:00pm	At Church
Sunday	June 22	Summer Service	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Monday	June 23	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE		
Mon-Fri	June 23-27	Peace & Nature Camp		
Tuesday	June 24	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
Wednesday	June 25	Finance Committee	2:30pm	Zoom
Thursday	June 26	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons
Sunday	June 29	Summer Service	10:45am	Commons & Zoom

The Full Calendar of Events can be viewed online at https://peopleschurch.net/events-2/

embracing and serving our diverse world."