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People's Church

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association

Volume 87, Issue 4

December 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: 1-646-876-9923, ID: 552 766 7326

December 7: "Be Joyful (though you have considered all the facts)" — Rev. Rachel Lonberg

Rev. Rachel's children recently observed, 'the days you are sad are the days we dance in the living room.' What does it mean to practice joy, now, given everything unfolding in the world? Inspired by the line from poet Wendell Berry that gives this service its title, Rev. Rachel will explore how simple, joyful practices might help us live lives faithful to our values and our deepest integrity.



December 14: "A Love So Wide" — Martha Bogner

Unitarian Universalism teaches us that no one is beyond love's reach... not even the parts of ourselves that annoy us. Loving those parts of us (and each other) can be challenging, yet it's as important now as ever. How might we practice that love, and what can we learn about it from the mountain-climbing-platformer video game *Celeste*?

Martha Bogner is a candidate for Unitarian Universalist ministry, and a 2024 graduate of Meadville Lombard Theological School.

December 21: "Solstice Celebration! A Service for All Ages" — Rev. Rachel Lonberg and Diane Melvin Director of Religious Education

Join us to celebrate the darkest day of the year and the return of the sun with music, story and crafts. We will also celebrate the purchase of the solar panels on the church roof.



Wednesday December 24, 5pm: "Christmas Eve Service"

Join us to remember and retell the story of the Nativity as we hope for the rebirth of love and peace in the present day. This service will feature music, poetry, storytelling and candlelight.

December 28: "Burning the Old Year: An All Ages Service" — Rev. Rachel Lonberg

In this service, we will mark the end of 2025 with rituals to let go of what we do not want to take with us into the coming year (by dramatically burning it up using magicians' flash paper!) and to set our intentions for the year ahead.



Miss a Sunday sermon? Check out the video at: <https://tinyurl.com/Peoplesyoutube>



Dear People's people,

It is easy to get discouraged right now. Overwhelm and fear are closer companions to me right now than they have been in a while. When it gets

hard, I try to remind myself of the small, courageous things that so many people are doing to try to hold fast to our values in this moment.

I think about the bags and boxes of food for hungry neighbors that have appeared at the church in recent weeks, crowding our entryway as they wait for the next time Rick's truck swings by. I see the toiletries and winter gear that not-so-magically appear in another part of the church building, the collection point for the refugee friends free store at Congregation of Moses. We are meeting the basic needs of our community in powerful ways.

I think of the folks in our community who have asked for help – financial support from the minister's discretionary fund, emotional support, spiritual support, tangible help like meals. It is brave and important to trust one's community enough to ask for care and support. And we, at least most of the time, are meeting folks' needs.

I think of how People's Church – and so many People's people – have acted with courage and integrity and love over the past year. The donors to our refugee support fund and dedicated volunteers made it so newly arrived refugee families were not abandoned when promised federal support and programs were cut last year. Your giving to the resistance and resilience fund has made such a tremendous difference in the lives of people in our community, mostly undocumented folks, asylees, and transgender folks. Their stories are not mine to tell, but know that your giving has kept people safe and housed and cared for when they had nowhere else to turn. Our building space is being so many outside groups who help us co-create the

world we want to live in. And there are the small actions that I see so many of you taking – speaking out for inclusion (including a recent time that a People's Church kid taught me to be more inclusive), interrupting cruelty in family and communities and workplaces, building community and resilience across difference, being generous. I am always grateful when I get to hear your stories about living in alignment with our values.

Knowing that I am not alone in this moment helps. That there are hundred of folks in our church trying to be 'People of Hope' right now helps – and knowing there are millions more beyond our congregation who are also working to build the Beloved Community helps too. We are not alone in our commitments. We are not alone in trying to meet this moment.

See you soon,
Rev. Rachel

Solar Panel Voting Complete - **Thank you!**

The voting period closed on Sunday, November 23rd, and we're pleased to share that our congregation has voted to purchase the solar panels currently installed on the church's roof.

A heartfelt thank you to all who participated in the process. Your engagement helps strengthen our commitment to living out our values in a complicated world.



What a Fabulous Bazaar!

Dear People's People,



Together, we orchestrated and hosted a tremendously successful Bazaar!

This year's Fine Art Sale and Holiday Bazaar

was our most successful in all the ways we could hope for and that matter to us all:

- Expanding attendance - our highest-attended Bazaar since pre-COVID years, maybe ever.
- Engaging more people than ever from our congregation – elders, youth, long-timers, newcomers, members and friends. You helped in all the ways needed: making more than 600 pasties; publicizing and promoting the event in so many ways; preparing a wide variety and a huge volume of your hand-made goods and tasty treats to laden our specialty tables, which constitute our earnings from this event; and volunteering for all the roles needed in the work of putting on the event – from Monday madness and set-up, to staffing all the specialty tables, pasty sales, raffle sales, cashiering, greeting, shuttle driving, emergency personnel presence, kitchen workers, cooks and runners, to the last task of the miraculous clean-up; and supporting the event with your purchases.
- Building community within the church through our work together and expanding our outreach to the wider community by opening our doors wide.
- Supporting the work of 32 tremendously creative artists from our local community, who always list our people, the warm and friendly tone of this event, and the great food as reasons this is one of their favorite shows.
- And now, for the bottom line, (drum roll...) making nearly \$20,000! This will be adjusted for ex-

penses, expected to be around \$2,500. Through our work together, netting over \$17,500 to support our church and our mission. This is a solid result that comes in well over the church budget's expectations. Outstanding work, all!

The Steering Committee for this event is made up of tremendous people, who bring their diverse talents and spirit of collaboration to make this event work. It is a big project that is done with love for this community. Deep appreciation for the members of this team who lead each of the following work areas: Pasties – Bob Friedel; Artists and Vendors - Libby Heine-Cogswell, Judy Whitman and

Rochelle Habek Hunt; Publicity - Rachel Harms, Rick Johnson and Elijah Emrich; People's Specialties – Lori Rupe; Café - Donna McClurkan and



Rachel Harms; Raffle - Lori Rupe and Laura Bultman; Monday Madness, Set-Up and Shuttle: Tim Keiffer, Dolores Strom and Gary Leadley; Cashiers and Finance: Dolores and Barb; Greeters - Rev. Rachel; Clean-Up - Margaret Wilson and Jen Docsa-Koehler; Communications and Coordination - Dolores, Brianna Wurtsmith and Eli. We could not have done this without Eli's help in just about every aspect of this whole production!

With sincere, heartfelt thanks to all and wishes for a restful and thankful season,

Dolores Strom

p.s. Don't forget to bring back your loaner yard signs and buy a few of the remaining craft items for sale in the foyer while they last!

Inquirers Series

These are classes for newcomers and anyone else who wants to know more about People's Church.

- **Saturday December 13, 1-3pm: How People's Church Works** – go deeper into how the church works – religious education, Sunday services, governance, and a building tour
- **Saturday January 10, 1-3pm: from Visitor to Member** – learn about the meaning of membership and opportunities to get involved right away, including justice and environmental programs, chalice circles small group ministry, and caring for one another in the congregation.

All of these classes are preceded by a potluck lunch – bring something to share!

Please sign up to attend here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/508054BA9AC22A13-59803997-membership#/>

Childcare is available with advanced notice.

If you are interested in church membership or more information but cannot attend these sessions, please reach out to Rev. Rachel at minister@peopleschurch.net or 269-389-9721. Attending these classes is not required for membership.



Special Collection: ERACCE

Sunday, December 7

ERACCE, Eliminating Racism & Creating/Celebrating Equity was founded in 2000. ERACCE exists to eliminate structural racism and create a network of equitable Antiracist institutions and communities. The mission of ERACCE is to eliminate systemic racism and build antiracist multicultural diversity within Michigan institutions by providing education, networking, technical assistance, and supportive resources to the region. Over the years, dozens of People's people have participated in ERACCE programs. For more information about ERACCE, please visit <https://www.eracce.org/>

ERACCE
Eliminating Racism &
Creating/Celebrating Equity

Second Saturday Potluck and programs

Saturday December 13, Room 19, noon-1pm

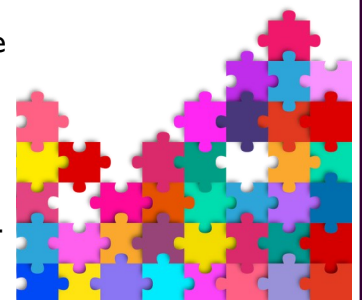
Come join a few People's people for lunch and conversation. Bring a dish to share. This meal is open to everyone.



Puzzle Exchange Overflowing!

Puzzle shelves are overflowing with neat puzzles, lots of 300 and 500 piece ones! Feel free to borrow a few to help entertain family members during the holiday season. Lots of hours of fun available. Space has been made on the shelves in the church library. Puzzles can be taken, returned, added & enjoyed at any time!

Make sure to check out the constantly changing supply of available puzzles on the Library shelves (next to the computer)





Rain Garden Update, 2025 Season

Under the direction of the Green Sanctuary Committee, we added a rain garden to People's property in September of 2023. We filled the garden with native plants and grasses, as these plants:

- develop deep root structures to filter contaminants from the pavement
- absorb water during heavy rain events
- feed pollinators and provide habitat for wildlife
- provide beauty and educational opportunities for humans
- show an example of stormwater management as the climate changes
- improve our soil by break up the dense clay that is present—it's at least 5 feet deep, which is why we have a pond most of the time.



This project also supports our UU values of Interdependence (“we honor the interdependent web of all existence and acknowledge our place in it”) and Transformation (“we adapt to the changing world”).



Native plant gardens generally take three years to fully develop their root systems and flower production. We just completed the second year, with volunteers meeting monthly during the growing season to maintain and improve the garden, which was a fun time. We also moved a little used bench from the Memorial Garden to the area.

In the early spring we had a couple unfortunate incidents of cars, looking for a parking place, backing into the garden (!!). So, we figured out a way to move the large boulders already at the site to provide a barrier between driveway and garden. (The) Green Sanctuary purchased solar lights to highlight the area after dark.

We created a walking path which also makes mowing easier. That project continues.

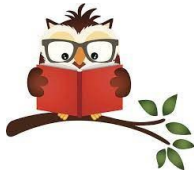
We discovered that two of the white pines closest to the driveway have a fatal disease, and plan to remove them next spring so they won't contaminate the other pines.

Beginning in late April 2026, volunteers will continue to meet, now on the second Saturday of each month (weather permitting). By moving the group to the second Saturday we will have the choice to stay at the church after gardening for a potluck lunch at noon!



Please consider joining in for a fun gardening time with like-minded people next spring. We will continue to help make the garden look its best, adding more flowering plants to our new “upland dry” section near the boulders. We will expand the garden to include plants in the area where the boulders used to be, using enthusiastic plants we will thin from the existing garden.

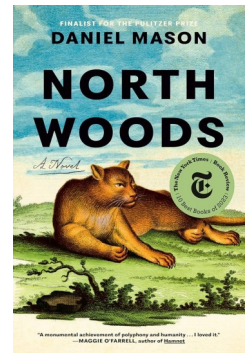




Evening Book Club—Newcomers Welcome!

"North Woods" by Daniel Mason will be reviewed by Nancy Stern at our next regular meeting, 12/11, 6 - 7:45. We will continue to meet every 2nd Thursday (barring emergencies) at the home of Lois Loeffler.

Newcomers are welcome. If you would like to get on the email list for updates and reminders, contact Pat Nelson, patnelson348@gmail.com, 269-716-3623. The remainder of this church year's schedule is posted on the church website, under the "Learning/Adult Programs" tab. This group leans toward quality fiction.

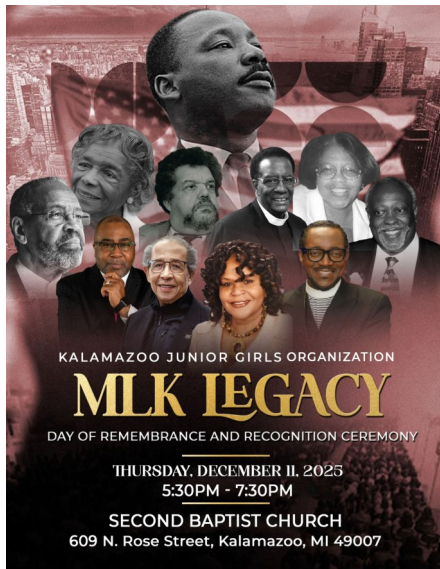


MLK Legacy: Day of Remembrance & Recognition Ceremony

Thursday December 11, 2025 5:30pm-7:30pm
Second Baptist Church—609 N Rose St. Kalamazoo

This event is in celebration of the installation of Legacy Plaques at Martin Luther King Jr. Park to honor Black leaders in Kalamazoo. Duane Roberts, who was a member of People's Church until his death in 1989, is among the honorees. Everyone in our community is invited to attend. (To learn more about Duane Roberts, you can visit this local history page of the Kalamazoo Public Library: <https://www.kpl.gov/local-history/kalamazoo-history/biographies/roberts-duane-l/>)

Or watch the service at People's Church dedicated to his life and legacy from January 2025: <https://peopleschurch.net/services/remembering-duane-roberts/>)



Art Wall: Quilts by Maryellen Hains

Artist Reception: Sunday December 14

Exhibit will be up through end of December

Artist Statement: In this show there are works from twenty plus years. I have been fortunate to travel widely over the years and many of my art works are inspired by the people, landscapes, history and myths of the cultures I visited. These quilts are part of several series including Amish, Guatemalan, Black and White, and Chintz. I tend to work in series because one idea leads to the next and by the time I am on my third piece, I am doing things I never could have thought of.



In Later Years: Finding Meaning and Spirit in Aging by Bruce T. Marshall

Tuesday, December 16, 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, provides a jumping off point for conversations about aging with intentionality and care. For this session, we will read the small section on 'Spirit' and Chapter 9 on 'Letting Go.' All are welcome. (The discussion of this book will continue through February. The group will find new aging related topics to discuss after that.)

In Later Years

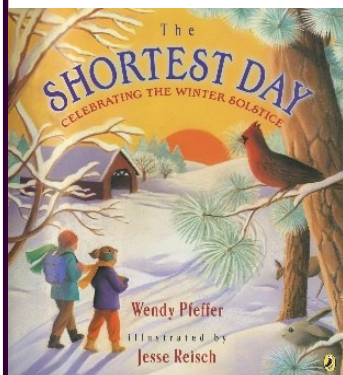


Finding Meaning and Spirit in Aging

BRUCE T. MARSHALL

Library Corner

Some of the most delightful books are those found in children's sections of libraries. The RE section of People's Library is no exception. Enjoy the children's and adult books below as we enter the solstice and holiday seasons.

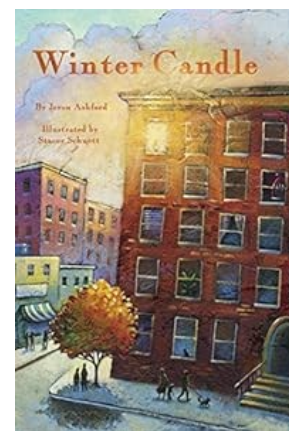


The Shortest Day: Celebrating the Winter Solstice, by Wendy Pfeffer — RE 394.26 Pf

The beginning of winter is marked by the solstice, the shortest day of the year. Long ago, people grew afraid when each day had fewer hours of sunshine than the day before. Over time, they realized that one day each year the sun started moving toward them again. This book explains what the winter solstice is and how it has been observed by various cultures throughout history. Many contemporary holiday traditions were borrowed from ancient solstice celebrations.

Winter Candle, by Jeron Ashford — J As

When each family at the diverse Juniper Court apartment complex needs something to light up the dark of winter, the stumpy, lumpy candle provides a glow brighter than the fanciest taper, revealing the true spirit of each holiday it illuminates.



Hundred
Dollar
Holiday



*The Case for
a More Joyful Christmas*

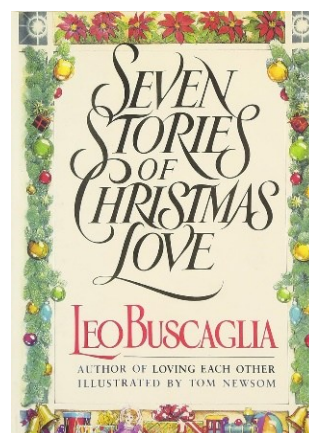
Bill McKibben
Author of The End of Nature

Hundred Dollar Holiday: The Case for a More Joyful Christmas, by Bill McKibben — 394.26 Mc

Too many people have come to dread the approach of the holidays, a season that should -- and can -- be the most relaxed, intimate, joyful, and spiritual time of the year. This book offers some suggestions on how to rethink Christmastime, so that our current obsession with present-buying becomes less important than the dozens of other possible traditions and celebrations.

Seven Stories of Christmas Love, by Leo Buscaglia — 808.83 Bu

Through true personal stories retelling Christmas memories, Leo Buscaglia demonstrates in this book that the values of caring and love are essential far past Christmas Day.



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

Calm in Scary Times

How do we invite a calm sense of peace into our hearts and bodies, when the news is so scary every single day?

One proven way is through mindfulness. We know the value of practicing nervous system regulation—for all ages. Whether to help a child recover from an emotional melt down or aid an adult in navigating anxiety, mindfulness practices can be invaluable.

Check out our new interactive bulletin board in the north hallway with opportunities to learn and practice various mindfulness techniques.

Our children and youth are having opportunities to learn about and practice mindfulness in their RE classes. In December our elementary classes are focusing on friendships, dealing with big emotions and creating circles of peace and kindness.



We are grateful to have so many children engaging with our RE program this year and are hopeful families are experiencing some benefits at home.

Our new Adventure, Wonder & Exploration (AWE) Labs are proving to be one of our most popular models of RE yet! Children are loving the choices and the activities!

Check out this 'Kindness Quilt' the children made. You can also look for it hanging in the hallway. It gives me hope for a better world!

Blessed Be, Diane Melvin, Religious Education Director

RE Schedule for December 2025

Nursery - Every Sunday 10:00-12:30

Preschool/Kindergarten

December 7 - Friendship

December 14 - Dealing with big Emotions

1st-6th Grades

December 7 - Friends

December 14 - Circles of Peace and Kindness

7/8th Grade OWL

December 7 - LGBTQIA Guest Panel

December 14 - Sexuality and Disability

9-12th Grade

December 7 - Youth Group Sunday

December 14 - Self-Compassion

December 21 - All Ages invited to our interactive Multi-Generational **Winter Solstice Service** (Nursery Care Provided)

December 28th - **No Religious Education classes** (Nursery Care Provided)



Chris Measzros leading sound and Yoga AWE Lab Station



GAME NIGHT & POTLUCK

SATURDAY DECEMBER 20TH 5-8PM

BRING A DISH TO PASS AND YOUR FAVORITE GAME TO SHARE!

CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THE LITTLES.



Game Night & Potluck

Saturday December 20th

5-8pm

Bring a dish to pass and your favorite game to share!

Childcare will be provided for the littles.

Legacy or Planned Giving

While the annual pledge drive and other forms of giving provide for the annual operation of the church, a Legacy gift is put into a fund to be used by the Board of Trustees to ensure the continuing stability of our church home and its historic and emerging programs. Those funds may be used for major improvements and repairs to the building and grounds, to add to the sustaining endowment funds, or to ensure the survival of the church in difficult times.

Read more here: <https://peopleschurch.net/news/legacy-giving/> or contact the church office!



Help Needed for Refugees & Asylum Seekers

Several People's people continue to provide much needed assistance to refugees & asylum seekers etc in our community. This work is critical due to essential funds & resettlement staff being cut. Friends Free Store for Refugees, located in the Congregation of Moses has been in operation for almost 4 years,



staffed by volunteers. Families shop for clothes, toys, fabric, personal care & basic household items. We continue provide sewing machines. Donations from our congregation continue to be greatly appreciated.

List of current outstanding needs: Blankets, Towels, Winter boots for all, Sm/med men's & teen boys coats, Kid's coats, snow pants & shoes, Socks, Gloves, Personal & household care products including shampoo, soaps & toilet paper. Items can be left on the table in the foyer or contact Colleen VanSlambrouck, 269-341-0573.

Also, there's a need for inexpensive used cars to get people to work & places buses don't go.

Update from the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees met in November to review current projects and upcoming events at People's Church. The Board believes it is important to regularly assess the church and its work as a whole to ensure that we are effectively and collectively moving toward our mission, vision and values, and has commissioned the formation of a committee to assess these things on multi-year cycles. The Board also reviewed our process for making social justice position statements to be more responsive to social movements as we continue to explore our church's role in social justice.



Join Us For Caroling!

Do you enjoy singing? Do you get pleasure out of bringing holiday cheer to others? If so, please join People's singers as we go Christmas caroling to church on Saturday December 20th at 2PM. We will meet at the church at that time and then decide on carpools. Questions? Contact David



Greenquist at (269) 569-5442 or at davidgreenquist@icloud.com or Rick Johnson at (269) 598-8317 or at paywala.com. Everyone is welcome regardless of age or singing ability.



Mindfulness for Adults: A Year-Long Discussion and Practice

A new group will be forming for adults that will focus on the practices and worldview of Mindfulness. The group is open to all adults, with or without experience. We will meet for 90 minutes beginning at **12:15 (after service) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of every month.** We expect the group to meet regularly through May.



The spirit of this group will be one of an ongoing commitment to mutual learning over time; this is not a drop-in meditation group. There has been so very much news about Mindfulness over the past number of years – what it is, how it's helpful, and claims of how it can save us and the world. Well, perhaps that last part is a bit overstated ... but it's close to being true ... if it becomes a committed practice on both formal and informal levels.

Come join us to discover what is true. Su Cutler and Carolyn Heineman, both experienced practitioners, will be facilitating this

group. Childcare will be available on request.

Please contact one of the facilitators to register if you haven't already done so. We'd love to have you be part of the conversation! Su Cutler: 269-353-3654, suacutler@gmail.com or Carolyn Heineman: 269-547-7113, carolynheineman@aol.com

As a note, the Meditation Class being run by Dave Wurtsmith has combined with this class so now we have one combined Mindfulness class on Sundays.

Day	Date	Event	Time	Place
Tuesday	Dec 2	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
		Board Meeting	6:30pm	Room 19
Thursday	Dec 4	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons
Sunday	Dec 7	Sunday Service: "Be Joyful (though you have considered all the facts)"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
		Meditation Class	12:30pm	Room 9
Tuesday	Dec 9	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
Thursday	Dec 11	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons
		RE Committee Meeting	6:00pm	Room 19
		Evening Book Club	6:00pm	Home of Lois L
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons
Saturday	Dec 13	Second Saturday @ Church	10:00am	At Church
		Second Saturday Potluck	12:00pm	At Church
		Inquirer's Class	1:00pm	Room 19
Sunday	Dec 14	Sunday Service: "A Love So Wide"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Monday	Dec 15	Art Wall Exhibit	12:15pm	Commons
		Green Sanctuary	4:00pm	Zoom
Tuesday	Dec 16	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
		Library Committee	10:00pm	At Church
		The Inner Work of Age	1:30pm	Zoom
Wednesday	Dec 17	Finance Committee	2:30pm	Zoom
Thursday	Dec 18	Bell Choir Rehearsal	6:00pm	Commons
		Choir Rehearsal	7:00pm	Commons
Saturday	Dec 20	RE Potluck & Game Night	5-8pm	Commons
Sunday	Dec 21	Sunday Service: "Solstice Celebration! A Service for All Ages"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Monday	Dec 22	NEWSLETTER DEADLINE		
Tuesday	Dec 23	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church
Wednesday	Dec 24	Christmas Eve Service	5:00pm	Commons & Zoom
Sunday	Dec 28	Sunday Service: "Burning the Old Year: An All Ages Service"	10:45am	Commons & Zoom
Tuesday	Dec 30	Building & Grounds	10:00am	At Church

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

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."**