



**PEOPLE'S CHURCH**  
— of Kalamazoo —

**171<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**May 17, 2026**



**1758 NORTH 10<sup>TH</sup> STREET**  
**KALAMAZOO, MI 49009**  
**269/375-3262**

**E-MAIL: [office@peopleschurch.net](mailto:office@peopleschurch.net)**  
**WEBSITE: <http://www.peopleschurch.net>**

# 171<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of People's Church

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2025-2026**

Laura Bultman, President

Elizabeth Huff Willis, Vice-President

Tim Kieffer, Secretary

Juli Ginn

Donna Kaye

Teresa Klan

Amy Meyer

Cindy Pietras

Martin Sauter

## **STAFF 2025-2026**

Rev. Rachel Lonberg, Minister

Diane Melvin, Director of Religious Education

Elijah Emrich, Office Administrator

Kristi Montgomery, Bookkeeper

Rowan Jakobah, Religious Education Assistant

Keenan Mosbah, Custodian

Savannah Ramsey, Music Director

Jennifer Drake, Accompanist

Tom Hackley, Treasurer

Pat Van Slambrouck, Assistant Treasurer

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# **Annual Meeting Agenda**

## **May 17, 2026, 12:45pm**

1. Opening
2. Call to Order
3. Introduction to Meeting Logistics and Voting
4. Acceptance of Agenda
5. Approval of Special Congregational Meeting, November 9, 2025 Minutes
6. President's Report
7. Report of the Nominating Committee
8. Presentation of Slate for Nominating Committee
9. Report on Investments and Stewardship
10. Proposed Budget
11. Voting Reminder and Adjournment

**Draft Minutes of the Congregational Meeting**  
**People's Church of Kalamazoo**  
**Date: November 9, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by President Laura Bultman on Sunday, November 9, 2025 at 11:03 a.m. Church Administrator Eli Emrich reported that 68 members were present.

The Board of Trustees invites all People's Church members to consider the question 'Shall the congregation spend up to \$38,000 to purchase the solar panels on the roof of the church building?'

Treasurer Tom Hackley presented the details of our purchase agreement with Helios Solar and answered questions brought forward regarding the lifespan of the solar panels and the cost for Helios maintaining the system (\$250/year). The majority of funds used to purchase the solar panels will come from the Palmer Fund; individual members are encouraged to make a donation to directly support this purchase.

The motion to present the question to the members for a vote was approved by the members present, in person and on Zoom.

The President made the announcement that paper ballots will be available to sign out at the end of today's service. Those members who do not pick up a paper ballot will be sent ballots via email to vote electronically. Voting will end in two weeks, on Sunday November 23 at noon, and the ballots will be counted soon after.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:29 a.m.

Tim Kieffer, Secretary of the Board of Trustees

**Minutes of the Congregational Meeting**  
**People's Church of Kalamazoo**  
**Date: Sunday, June 1, 2025**

The meeting was called to order by President Joe Hampel on Sunday, June 1, 2025 at 12:48 p.m.

Tom Hackley (Treasurer) lit the chalice and Brian Lewis (Board Vice President) offered opening words.

Eli Emrich reported that 71 members were present in person with 6 members present on Zoom. A quorum was present.

The agenda was approved as presented.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting held May 19, 2024 were approved as presented.

President Joe Hampel gave the President's Report included in the meeting packet. The reports of officers and committees are included in the meeting packet.

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Lori Rupe presented the slate for the Board of Trustees: Elizabeth Huff Willis, Tim Kieffer, and Martin Sauter. The slate was approved to be on the ballot that is sent to all members.

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Lori Rupe presented the slate for the Nominating Committee: George Hrbek and Brianna Wurtsmith. The slate was approved to be on the ballot that is sent to all members.

Tom Hackley reported on the state of the Endowment Funds and the Stewardship Campaign.

The Treasurer, Tom Hackley, presented the 2025-2026 Budget.

The budget was approved as presented to be included on the ballot that is sent to all members.

President Joe Hampel announced that ballots would be available electronically within a few minutes after the end of the meeting as well as paper ballots that can be signed out. Ballots will be mailed to all members who do not complete the ballot at the end of the meeting.

Vice-President Brian Lewis gave a closing reflection.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20pm.

Laura Bultman, Secretary

# **PRESIDENT’S REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH**

Dear Members and Friends of People’s Church,

This has been a hard year. With so much uncertainty and pain in our world, it has been difficult to navigate life and many times as a board we have looked at each other and asked “how do we face this with our values intact?”. Despite all of it, though, we kept showing up. And now here we are together as a church, facing these times and doing our best to care for ourselves and one another.

At the beginning of this year, the Board decided on three priorities: an assessment of the ministry as a whole, being a church of justice, and being intentional about our finances to secure a stable future for our church.

Our first goal, an assessment of the ministry, came from a section of Rev. Rachel’s contract that states that an assessment of the ministry should be done every three to five years. Last year, the board tackled part of that with a Wage Committee. This year, we intended to focus on the church as a whole both in how we operate internally and how we serve the community we are a part of. As the year went on, however, and as the society around us crumbled further, we moved away from this goal. As we saw it, this moment does not demand introspection as much as action. Now is the time to throw ourselves wholeheartedly into living through these times together, helping our neighbors and building the beloved community. Our community will still be here when we can un-batten the hatches.

Which brings us to our second goal of being a church of justice. The board wrestled with this over the past year with both an internal eye and an external vision. As a board, we considered how to create a church that served justice and how to allocate our time, money, and resources toward justice goals. Starting with assessment mapping of our own resources, we considered how those could be put to use in our community.

Finally, our last goal was finding a way to a stable financial future. Thanks to you, our generous congregation, we are on our way to meeting this goal. Following a special congregational meeting and vote, we purchased the solar panels currently installed on our roof. This not only shows our commitment to a greener future, but also will save us money on energy costs in the long run. We also considered the needs of our building in the coming years and how much money would be needed to address those needs. Rather than launching a separate capital campaign, the board voted to have a unified stewardship campaign for both operating and capital expenses. This required us to ask you, our beloved congregation, to consider your financial contributions to the church and, if possible, significantly increase those contributions. That challenge has been met. The congregation has stepped up and we are pleased to include money for our building fund in this year’s budget.

Thank you for your continued support of this church and its mission to be a beloved community embracing and serving our diverse world.

Laura Bultman  
President, Board of Trustees  
People’s Church of Kalamazoo

**Tellers' Report November 23, 2025**

**People's Church Special Congregational Meeting held November 9, 2025**

**Voting November 9, 2025 – November 23, 2025**

72 Voted Online  
34 Voted by mail  
106 Total Votes

**Election of the Board of Trustees**

Elizabeth Huff Willis..... 56 online + 19 by mail = 75  
Tim Kieffer..... 58 online + 19 by mail =77  
Martin Sauter..... 55 online + 19 by mail =74

**Election of the Nominating Committee**

George Hrbek ..... 57 online + 19 by mail =76  
Brianna Wurtsmith ..... 55 online + 18 by mail =73

**Church budget**

Shall the congregation spend up to \$38,000 to purchase the solar panels on the roof of the church building?

Yes.....60 online + 19 on paper =79  
No ..... 0 online + 0 by mail =0

Tellers: Teresa Klan, Donna Kaye, Jeffrey Klan

Parliamentarian: Barb Davis

Administrator: Elijah Emrich

**CANDIDATES FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
2026 – 2029**

Michelle Nickerson

Julie Schneeberger

Maggie Wilson

**CANDIDATES FOR  
THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
2026 – 2029**

Gary Heckman

Sue Salvat

## **Proposed Budget for the 2026-2027 Church Year**

At their May 5 meeting, the People's Church board of trustees approved the draft budget that will be under consideration by the congregation at the May 17 annual congregational meeting.

You can see the whole line-by-line proposal here:

A few things to note:

- This is a balanced budget! We are not drawing from our unrestricted reserve fund (the Palmer Fund) to balance this budget for the first time in many years. We are even able to set aside a few thousand dollars to begin saving for the building repairs and upgrades we anticipate in the coming decades. We have achieved this balanced budget through the success of our stewardship campaign and annual fundraisers. Thank you everyone for your continued generosity!
- This budget reflects some changes in the church's staffing over the coming year:
  - Diane Melvin, our director of religious education, has requested to reduce her position to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time beginning in September. Her reduced compensation reflects that. To maintain our wonderful religious education program, the religious education assistant position will be increased.
  - Eli Emrich, our church administrator is planning to have surgery this summer and will not be working for roughly six weeks as he recovers. Both our bookkeeper and the religious education assistant will be working increased hours to fill some of the administrator's essential duties.
- We are trying to budget more realistically for our building and grounds related expenses:
  - Because we now own our solar panels, we will be saving several thousand dollars a year in energy costs.
  - The costs of snowplowing have been increasing, especially when the winter is snowy. We don't know what the weather will do this year, but we set this budget line as the average of actual expenses over the last four years.

I included notes in the draft budget where finance committee members and board members had questions. I hope those notes are helpful to you in making sense of it all.

If you have any questions about this budget, please attend our congregational meeting info session at 7:30pm on Wednesday May 13 on Zoom (please insert our usual Zoom link here) or reach out to Rev. Rachel. (She might not have the answer to your questions, but she knows who will.)

With gratitude to everyone who participated in building and fine-tuning the budget – our treasurer, assistant treasurers, finance committee, bookkeeper, administrator, minister, and board of trustees – and everyone whose generosity with their time, talent, treasure, and trust makes what we do here possible. – Rev. Rachel

Account #	Account Name	Annual Budget 24-25	Annual Budget 25-26	26-27 Proposal	notes
<b>Income</b>					
4.011.100	Current Pledges	\$300,000	\$350,000	<b>\$395,000</b>	13% increase -- thank you!
4.011.101	Credit Card Fees	-\$3,000	-\$2,000	<b>-\$2,500</b>	reduce this loss - give money by check or bank transfer (not credit card)
4.011.102	Gain or Expense - Stock gift sales	\$0	-\$200	<b>\$0</b>	
4.011.200	Old Pledges	\$2,000	\$2,500	<b>\$2,500</b>	
4.011.300	New Pledges	\$2,500	\$2,500	<b>\$2,500</b>	
<b>Pledge Totals</b>		<b>\$301,500</b>	<b>\$352,800</b>	<b>\$397,500</b>	
	Memorial Services		\$1,000	<b>\$1,000</b>	
4.011.410	Non-pledged Contributions	\$10,000	\$7,500	<b>\$7,500</b>	
4.011.420	Sunday Collections	\$3,500	\$7,500	<b>\$8,000</b>	
<b>Contributions</b>		<b>\$13,500</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>	<b>\$16,500</b>	
4.011.601	Holiday Bazaar	\$10,000	\$12,750	<b>\$13,750</b>	
4.011.602	Silent/Service Auction	\$4,000	\$3,900	<b>\$4,000</b>	
4.011.603	White Elephant Sale	\$0	\$3,750	<b>\$3,750</b>	
4.011.607	Raffle Ticket Sales	\$0	\$1,750	<b>\$2,150</b>	
4.011.608	Misc Fund Raisers	\$1,200	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Fund Raisers</b>		<b>\$15,200</b>	<b>\$22,150</b>	<b>\$23,650</b>	
4.011.700	Building Use Fees	\$5,000	\$20,000	<b>\$14,000</b>	the church has lost rental income this year, through no fault of our own
<b>Building Use Fees</b>		<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>	
4.011.800	Interest Income	\$0	\$1,400	<b>\$2,000</b>	
4.011.803	Restricted - Comm Svc and Outreach F	\$2,503	\$2,640	<b>\$2,998</b>	Endowment allocation
4.011.804	Restricted - Perpetual Fund Trsf	\$12,903	\$13,590	<b>\$15,431</b>	Endowment allocation
4.011.900	Grants	\$3,000	\$3,000	<b>\$3,000</b>	
<b>Interest, Grants &amp; Transfers</b>		<b>\$18,406</b>	<b>\$20,630</b>	<b>\$23,429</b>	
<b>Total Operating Income</b>		<b>\$353,606</b>	<b>\$431,580</b>	<b>\$475,079</b>	
<b>Expense</b>					
5.011.000	Salary - Minister	\$31,525	\$41,741	<b>\$44,073</b>	the increase here is 3% of both salary and housing budget lines
5.011.001	Minister Housing Allowance	\$36,000	\$36,000	<b>\$36,000</b>	
5.011.002	Pension - Minister	\$7,293	\$7,774	<b>\$8,007</b>	
5.011.003	Other Bnf - Minister	\$7,562	\$7,231	<b>\$7,490</b>	
5.011.004	FLEX Plan - Minister	\$5,400	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	
5.011.005	Medical Insurance - Minister	\$21,750	\$21,405	<b>\$30,199</b>	
5.011.151	Professional Exp - Minister	\$2,700	\$2,700	<b>\$2,700</b>	
5.011.010	Salary - Administrator	\$47,509	\$50,637	<b>\$52,156</b>	
5.011.103	Medical Insurance - Administrator	\$6,500	\$6,243	<b>\$8,808</b>	
5.011.104	Group Insurance - Administrator	\$1,000	\$1,030	<b>\$1,061</b>	
5.011.102	Pension - Administrator	\$4,751	\$5,064	<b>\$5,216</b>	
5.011.152	Professional Exp -Administrator	\$0	\$500	<b>\$500</b>	

5.011.012	Salary - Custodian	\$13,241	\$19,699	<b>\$20,290</b>	
	Group Insurance - Custodian		\$750	<b>\$400</b>	custodian now receives long-term disability and life insurances from the church
	pension - custodian		\$750	<b>\$2,029</b>	custodian now receives employer retirement fund contribution
5.011.013	Salary - Choir/Music Director	\$12,000	\$12,793	<b>\$13,177</b>	
5.011.154	Professional Exp - Music Director	\$1,000	\$500	<b>\$500</b>	
5.011.018	Salary - Instrumentalist	\$6,000	\$6,396	<b>\$6,588</b>	
5.011.015	Salary - RE Director	\$51,275	\$56,773	<b>\$44,704</b>	reducing to 3/4 time on Sept. 1
5.011.016	Salary - RE Assistant	\$0	\$9,600	<b>\$18,746</b>	increasing to 1/2 time on Sept. 1, increased hours during administrator's medical leave
5.011.110	Pension - DRE	\$5,433	\$5,482	<b>\$4,470</b>	
5.011.111	Medical Insurance - DRE	\$11,500	\$13,278	<b>\$18,733</b>	
5.011.112	Group Insurance - DRE	\$1,100	\$1,086	<b>\$1,054</b>	
5.011.113	FLEX Plan - DRE	\$3,050	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	
	Professional Expense - RE Asst.			<b>\$500</b>	professional development training
5.011.155	Professional Exp - DRE	\$3,000	\$3,000	<b>\$2,500</b>	
5.011.020	Salary - childcare and nursery	\$10,066	\$7,181	<b>\$7,396</b>	
5.011.021	Salary - RE Summer Assistant	\$600	\$586	<b>\$604</b>	
5.011.022	Salary - Bookkeeper	\$16,223	\$17,687	<b>\$19,745</b>	6 month merit increase; increased hours during administrator's medical leave
5.011.157	Professional Exp - Bookkeeper	\$500	\$500	<b>\$500</b>	
5.011.100	Payroll Taxes	\$9,562	\$16,586	<b>\$13,755</b>	calculated from salaries
	<b>PERSONNEL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$316,540</b>	<b>\$352,972</b>	<b>\$371,902</b>	3% cost of living increase for all staff
5.012.020	Special Music	\$200	\$55	<b>\$50</b>	
5.012.030	Bell Choir	\$75	\$70	<b>\$100</b>	
5.012.040	Music - Church Choir	\$400	\$200	<b>\$175</b>	
5.012.050	Music - Organ	\$0	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	
5.012.060	Organ/Piano/Bells Maintenance	\$600	\$3,250	<b>\$1,000</b>	
5.012.070	Music Streaming	\$700	\$775	<b>\$375</b>	
	<b>Music Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,975</b>	<b>\$4,350</b>	<b>\$1,700</b>	
5.012.099	Audiovisual	\$0	\$0	<b>\$500</b>	AV special fund spent; now an annual budget expense
5.012.100	Sunday Services	\$400	\$456	<b>\$450</b>	
5.012.150	Honoraria	\$1,890	\$1,900	<b>\$1,900</b>	
	<b>Other Service expenses</b>	<b>\$2,290</b>	<b>\$2,356</b>	<b>\$2,850</b>	
	<b>CHURCH SERVICES</b>	<b>\$4,265</b>	<b>\$6,706</b>	<b>\$4,550</b>	
5.012.361	Office Supplies	\$2,500	\$1,250	<b>\$1,250</b>	
5.012.362	Technology/Computer expense	\$2,008	\$3,000	<b>\$1,500</b>	
5.012.363	Copier Expense	\$2,500	\$3,175	<b>\$3,200</b>	
5.012.365	Postage	\$750	\$950	<b>\$950</b>	
5.012.561	Telephone	\$1,200	\$1,375	<b>\$1,200</b>	
5.012.563	Internet	\$600	\$700	<b>\$1,200</b>	
5.014.725	Misc Expense	\$500	\$250	<b>\$250</b>	
	<b>Office Expense</b>	<b>\$10,058</b>	<b>\$10,700</b>	<b>\$9,550</b>	

5.012.201	Archives	\$150	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	inactive committee
	Aesthetics		\$300	<b>\$300</b>	
	Safety & Preparedness		\$500	<b>\$500</b>	
5.012.220	Library	\$350	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	funded by an earmarked donation
<b>Other Support Expense</b>		<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$800</b>	<b>\$800</b>	
<b>CHURCH OPERATIONS</b>		<b>\$10,558</b>	<b>\$11,500</b>	<b>\$10,350</b>	
5.013.006	Building & Grounds	\$12,000	\$12,000	<b>\$9,000</b>	4 yr. avg. = \$9052
5.013.009	Elevator	\$2,000	\$2,500	<b>\$2,500</b>	in recent years, this has ranged from \$1957 to \$6173
5.013.025	Snow Removal	\$7,000	\$11,500	<b>\$14,500</b>	4 year avg. (range \$9k-\$21k)
<b>Building and Grounds</b>		<b>\$21,000</b>	<b>\$26,000</b>	<b>\$26,000</b>	
5.013.031	Electric	\$9,000	\$6,800	<b>\$7,000</b>	
5.013.032	Gas	\$6,000	\$5,500	<b>\$5,800</b>	
5.013.033	Water	\$700	\$925	<b>\$925</b>	
5.013.034	Electricity - Helios Solar	\$0	\$3,931	<b>\$250</b>	we pay Helios only for a maintenance contract -- our solar energy is free!
<b>Utilities</b>		<b>\$15,700</b>	<b>\$17,156</b>	<b>\$13,975</b>	
5.013.040	Custodial Services	\$4,500	\$4,500	<b>\$4,500</b>	annual deep cleaning of floors
5.013.041	Trash Removal and Recycling	\$1,500	\$1,625	<b>\$1,800</b>	
5.013.045	Custodial Supplies	\$1,300	\$1,500	<b>\$1,500</b>	
<b>Custodial Expense</b>		<b>\$7,300</b>	<b>\$7,625</b>	<b>\$7,800</b>	
<b>PLANT OPERATIONS</b>		<b>\$44,000</b>	<b>\$50,781</b>	<b>\$47,775</b>	
5.012.350	Kitchen Supplies	\$250	\$245	<b>\$100</b>	
5.013.221	Pastoral Care	\$50	\$0	<b>\$250</b>	committee re-formed
5.013.240	Membership - Visitors and new members	\$800	\$325	<b>\$300</b>	
	Sabbatical Pastoral Care		\$624	<b>\$0</b>	n/a
<b>CONGREGATIONAL SERVICES</b>		<b>\$1,100</b>	<b>\$1,194</b>	<b>\$650</b>	
5.013.312	Art Wall	\$200	\$150	<b>\$150</b>	
5.013.323	Young Adult Ministry	\$300	\$330	<b>\$200</b>	
5.013.328	Green Sanctuary	\$1,000	\$500	<b>\$500</b>	
5.013.330	Social Justice committee	\$400	\$100	<b>\$100</b>	inactive committee
5.013.331	Community Service Outreach	\$2,503	\$2,640	<b>\$2,998</b>	= 5% endowment allocation
5.013.333	Dismantling Racism (formerly ARAOMC)	\$1,125	\$200	<b>\$100</b>	inactive committee
5.013.348	Publicity	\$250		<b>\$0</b>	inactive committee
<b>OUTREACH &amp; COMMUNITY RELATIONS</b>		<b>\$5,778</b>	<b>\$3,920</b>	<b>\$4,048</b>	
5.014.152	Youth Education	\$5,500	\$6,000	<b>\$5,850</b>	
	Adult Education			<b>\$0</b>	
<b>EDUCATION</b>		<b>\$5,500</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>	<b>\$5,850</b>	
5.012.210	Denominational Support	\$10,604	\$10,000	<b>\$10,000</b>	The UUA requests \$26,225
5.014.600	Board Discretionary	\$500	\$500	<b>\$300</b>	
5.014.608	Stewardship	\$350	\$200	<b>\$200</b>	
5.014.708	Insurance Premiums	\$9,000	\$11,216	<b>\$11,250</b>	
<b>TO THE BUILDING FUND</b>				<b>\$4,204</b>	<b>NEW- 20 year capital campaign</b>
5.014.721	Payroll Service	\$3,000	\$3,785	<b>\$4,000</b>	

5.014.722	Bank Fees	\$75	\$0	<b>\$0</b>	
	<b>BOARD &amp; FINANCE</b>	<b>\$23,529</b>	<b>\$25,701</b>	<b>\$29,954</b>	
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>		<b>\$411,270</b>	<b>\$458,774</b>	<b>\$475,079</b>	
<b>Difference - income less expense</b>		<b>-\$57,664</b>	<b>-\$27,194</b>	<b>\$0</b>	