

December 2024

THE VOICE Presence

Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist

4980 Gordon Ave. NW Cedar Rapids, IA 52405

www.peoplesuu.org

Minister Musings

After the election last month, I participated in a worldwide online gathering that began with this Mary Oliver Poem, entitled "[Of The Empire](#)":

We will be known as a culture that feared death and adored power, that tried to vanquish insecurity for the few and cared little for the penury of the many. We will be known as a culture that taught and rewarded the amassing of things, that spoke little if at all about the quality of life for people (other people), for dogs, for rivers. All the world, in our eyes, they will say, was a commodity. And they will say that this structure was held together politically, which it was, and they will say also that our politics was no more than an apparatus to accommodate the feelings of the heart, and that the heart, in those days, was small, and hard, and full of meanness.



I had to sit in the presence of this possibility: our politics reflect and accommodate the feelings of small, hard, mean hearts. I wondered, "How might I change my heart so that I might change unjust structures?"

During our 30 minutes together, the online community sat in silence – attending to our breath – so that our hearts might be opened, softened, and filled with kindness. Even through the Zoom mode, it was comforting to be in the presence of other human beings who were similarly concerned about living in a hate-filled, fear-mongering world of authoritarianism and oppression. We connected, together, to a Liberating Love that holds us all.

During this month of December, as we Unitarian Universalists explore the theme of "**The Practices of Presence**," I invite you to ponder the practices in your life that might help you *live* the Liberating Love which is at the center of our [Shared UU Values](#). Is it engaging with poetry? Sitting in silence? Singing? Volunteering with an organization you trust? Creating beauty? Being outdoors with the more-than-human world? Let me know what presence is softening *your* heart these days.

Growing in Faith,

Rev. Cairn

Sunday Worship

Sunday, December 1st, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

“Advent: The Waiting Game” led by Rev. Rosie Rimrodt

As we think about Presence this month, we focus on the need for Presence at the start of Advent.

Sunday, December 8th, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

“The Holly Daze To-Not-Do Lists” led by Rev. Carin Bringelson

Too often at this time of year, we find ourselves juggling too much "busyness." Today we will acknowledge and honor our full range of feelings about the holiday season. How can we be more present with ourselves so that we might be more present for the people in our lives?

Sunday, December 15th, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

“Peoples Church: The Musical Part 2” led by Emily Hoselton

We've done this once before, and people enjoyed it, so we're doing it again! Many people have mixed opinions about holiday music, but there are some that hold special places in our hearts. For this service, we're going to worship using the ancient practice of singing. So, rest your voices, sip some soothing tea, and come prepared to belt it out.

Sunday, December 22nd, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

“Presence of Divine Darkness” led by Rev. Carin Bringelson

The Winter Solstice in the northern hemisphere submerges us once again into seasonal darkness. Today we will honor the presence of divine darkness.

Tuesday, December 24th, 2024 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

“Candles, Carols, and Cookies: Christmas Eve for All Ages”

This afternoon, an all-ages worship service celebrating the Christian holiday of Christmas will include stories, music, and poetry. Come prepared to sing and enjoy candlelight. The donations received during this service will go to the Minister's Discretionary Fund which is used for needs that arise in the lives of individuals and families within the congregation. All are invited to bring a plate of cookies to share after worship.

Sunday, December 29th, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

“Who Are The Truth Bearers?”

Is it true that a lie becomes true if it is repeated often enough? Are we now living in a post-truth world? Are we left with fear and trepidation to guide us as we head into the new year? Let's take stock of the situation and our role in what's to come.

Sign up [here](#) to be a Sunday greeter!

Board President

During our August retreat, Rev. Carin introduced the Board to a new topic: **Shared Ministry**.

Ever since, we've been discussing *what* it is, *how* it might look at Peoples Church, and *why* it matters as we build this beloved faith community together.

Recently, to better understand the concept myself, I turned to Google. There, I found a well-spring of ideas from people all over the world—each sharing a unique perspective of how we can, as a community, share the call to ministry in our everyday lives.

Here, I share with you two areas where I suggest we focus:

- First, setting an intention to collaborate with purpose to advance our shared mission and values, and
- Second, practicing inclusion by affirming every individual's unique contribution to our community.

Picture this: Rather than operate in isolation—as separate bubbles all kind of floating around and bumping into one another occasionally—**Shared Ministry** unites us through mission to operate like a Venn diagram. One where Worship, Faith Formation, Social Justice, Finance, Facilities, Membership (and all our other wonderful teams at Peoples) are strengthened by what we have in common.

Shared Ministry is also about participation. Like me, there's a reason you're here at Peoples Church and it's not because we want to sit back and let a few people make all the decisions for us. It is central to our free and responsible search for truth and meaning to remain actively engaged.

Shared Ministry means answering the call to action as a congregation. While our minister helps us by offering insights, ideas, and connections within our faith tradition, Rev. Carin isn't ultimately responsible for choosing the things that we do as a congregation. That is our charge and Shared Ministry is the name we give to that community responsibility.

So why am I even writing about this? The Board has been working to ask and answer important questions about Peoples Priorities—and how these will guide the way we build our faith community in the years to come.

What matters to me as your president is that the priorities emerge from a diversity of interests. Even if something on the list isn't *my* highest priority, it is my job as a member of this community to advocate for what matters to all of you.

So I invite you to lean into a moment of *presence*, and consider ways we can blur the lines between our siloed bubbles, move closer to one another in the work we do, so that every day we inch closer to a purposeful and collaborative faith community.

Together, Robyn



For December's theme of "Practice(s) of Presence,"
Our Hymn of the Month is #55, "Dark of Winter."

Read about the hymn here:

<https://farfringe.com/2016/11/27/stlt55-dark-of-winter/>

Listen to the hymn here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2zajJJPSco>

Finance Team Summary

The Finance Team met on 11/14/24 to review financial reports and begin financial strategic planning.

Cash flow for October was positive:

- October income \$24,479
- October expenses \$15,068

Faith Formation

Reminders

- No Faith Formation classes for Sunday December 1st, 22nd, and 29th.
- People's Youth are sponsoring a Mitten Tree! Donations of hats, scarves, gloves, and mittens will be going to our neighbors at Hoover Elementary's first- and second-grade classrooms. The tree is located outside the sanctuary, please feel free to take a "reminder tag" and place all donations in the box next to the tree. If the youth collect 50 items by December 15th, Celeste is going to throw a bowling party for Faith Formation. Help them reach their goal and keep kids cozy this winter!
- As you are shopping for holiday deals, please consider donating to the Faith Formation play space! Faith Formation has created a [wish list of items](#) to create a much needed play area for our kids in the K-5th Grade classroom (and some fun items for the youth room, too). Want to contribute, but would prefer not to purchase on Amazon? No problem! Just let Celeste know and she will remove your donated item from the list to avoid double purchasing. Thank you for supporting a fun learning environment for People's children, and happy shopping!



**Faith
Formation
Wish List**

Faith Formation

Looking Ahead

- Calling all talent! Faith Formation kids and families are invited to participate in the Peoples Church Holiday Showcase on December 15th! Holiday themed music performances, storytelling, skits, puppet shows, poetry recitals, jokes and more—all are welcome! Not comfortable being "on stage" but still want to get involved? Talk with Celeste about some behind the scenes opportunities. There's room for everyone's talents! Please let Celeste know by December 8th about your plans to participate.



- Save the date! It's time to Deck The Halls at Peoples Church. On December 8th, the youth and kids will be working together on a service project by decorating the church for the holidays. Details to come, but please mark your calendars as we request a caregiver(s) of kids in the PreK-5th grade class to stay with their kiddos that day. Many hands make light work and some assistance from extra adults will be needed.

Deck the Halls

The text "Deck the Halls" is written in a large, stylized, red and yellow font with a white outline. It is centered over a green wreath with a red bow at the bottom.

December's First Sunday Plate Collection



Peoples Church is joyously sharing our First Sunday Plate Collection with the [Iowa Access Abortion Fund](#) – which was developed by members of Peoples Church in 1978 in order to assist people with the expenses associ-

ated with obtaining full reproductive health care. The Fund is dedicated to the belief that the freedom to choose legal abortion should be available to everyone.

Because abortion is now illegal in Iowa after 6-8 weeks of pregnancy, our financial donations are vitally important. The IAAF has partnered with the Chicago Abortion Fund to provide comprehensive support to Iowa and Quad Cities area residents in need of abortion care. Obviously, people are having to travel out of state to receive the abortion care they need, so we thank you in advance for your generosity!

Also. The Iowa Abortion Access Fund has provided us with the Plan B medication that can be used to prevent pregnancy. This pill is designed to be taken within three (3) days of having unprotected sex. It can be taken up to five (5) days but sooner is better. Please talk to our Faith Formation Director or minister if you would like to have this medication available. It can also be purchased at a pharmacy.

UUA's Common Read

We here at Peoples Church, along with Unitarian Universalists around the country, are invited into conversation with transgender and nonbinary people—and their partners, parents, children, siblings, and chosen family members—whose interviews and portraits fill the Skinner House book, [*Authentic Selves: Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary People and Their Families*](#).

The subjects of *Authentic Selves* share their own stories, speaking from different stages of life, different regions of the country, different faith traditions, and different places on the rainbow spectrum of gender identity. Their book invites readers into their lives' revelations, challenges, joys, and networks of support.

Sharing our stories with one another can be a deep and faithful experience. Let the storytellers of *Authentic Selves* teach, affirm, and inspire you. Then, join [this year's UU Common Read](#) to share your own stories in community and form a deeper understanding of how your own gender identity has shaped your life.

Actions to take:

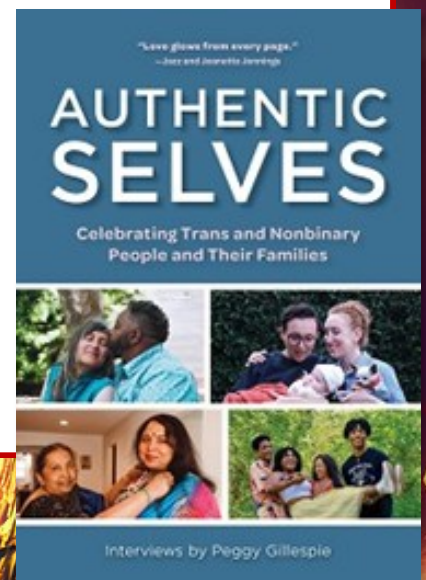
[Watch the video segments](#) produced for this UU Common Read.

[Purchase a copy of the book](#) or borrow one from the Peoples Church

Library. Plan on participating in the small group discussion(s) in the winter/spring.

Questions? Email the Social Justice Team at:

pcuusocialjustice@gmail.com.



Inclement Weather Reminder

If the weather is too dangerous for traveling, please stay safe. The worship team will decide whether or not to move to “Zoom Only Sunday” and update the **church’s website by 7:30 a.m. on Sundays**. Learn more by reading the details of the Inclement Weather Policy and Procedures.



Pecans have arrived!

Available for pickup: For those who participated in the Van Vechten Guild’s annual fundraiser, the pecans have arrived. While supplies last, call or text Jan Federer at 319-213-6205 to place an order. Fancy halves are \$13/1lb bag; chocolate covered pecans are \$15/12 oz bag.



Thank You Peoples People

Join us in thanking the following people who help Peoples Church in these unique ways:

- Thank you, **Laura McGraw** and **Kathy Juba**, for serving on the hiring teams which resulted in the hiring of our three newest staff members! Between them and Rev. Carin, over 48 applications were reviewed for our open positions.
- Thank you to the **Stewardship Team** and **the visiting stewards** who helped make the recent Feed the Seeds annual budget drive such a success! We so appreciate Brenda Meshak (chair), Bob Butikofer, Charlie Cizio, Bryan Davis, Sue Davis, Doug Ogle, Gary McGraw, Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck, Rich Patterson, and Judy Price.
- Thank you to the youth gardeners, **Teru Ogle and Ace Ogle!** The pollinator garden and memorial garden are nearly ready for winter, thanks to your great work.

Do you have someone to thank? Let Rev. Carin know!

Chili Cookoff Winners!

The 19th Annual Chilli Cook-off was a hit! Thank you to Bill Hart for helping out when we blew the fuse to the Andre Room. Thank you to Teru Ogle for being our runner in getting things set up. Thank you to Sheryl Ochs and the Welcoming Committee consisting of Jill Jones, Kathy Juba, Lisa Hannon, and Jan Federer for their help in the kitchen. Thank you to Deborah Booth and the CUUPS group consisting of Danny Booth and Emily Hoselton for purchasing the trophies and hosting the event. Thank you to Matt Wilde for taking pictures and promoting the event on social media. And a BIG Thank You to the 12 families who brought chilli and the 46 members who were our tasters and voted.

Congratulations to our winners!

First Place: Wilcox family for their Three Pepper Chili

Second Place: Wilde family for their Which Chicken Chili

Third Place: Anderson family for their Red Chicken Chili

Food Pantry

Our food pantry needs restocking! Things that are running low or missing:

- Aseptic milk(s)
- Canned veggies (corn, sweet potatoes, peas, carrots, tomatoes, etc.— no green beans)
- Peanut butter
- Tuna
- Soups
- Rice and noodle bowls
- Boxed mashed potatoes
- Pasta
- Grains





December Events

- 1 Sunday
Worship 11:00am—12:00pm
- 4 Wednesday
Choir Practice 6:00pm
- 8 Sunday
Faith Formation 9:45—10:45am
Worship 11:00am—12:00pm
Congregational Meeting—12:00pm
- 9 Monday
Van Vechten Guild Speaker & Brown Bag—12:00pm
- 10 Tuesday
Archives Committee—10:00am
- 11 Wednesday
Social Justice Team Meeting—1:00pm Tuesday
Choir Practice—6:00pm
- 12 Thursday
Membership Committee—5:30pm
Finance Meeting—7:30pm
- 15 Sunday
Faith Formation 9:45—10:45am
Choir Practice—9:45am
Worship—11:00am
CUUPS—12:30pm
- 18 Wednesday
Paraministers Meeting—2:00pm
PCUU Monthly Board Meeting—6:00pm
Choir Practice—6:00pm
- 19 Thursday
Worship Arts Team—5:30pm
- 22 Sunday
Worship 11:00am—12:00pm
- 24 Tuesday 4:00pm—5:30pm
Christmas Eve Worship
- 29 Sunday
Worship 11:00am—12:00pm



PEOPLES CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT

LEADING COMPASSIONATE LIVES
THROUGH SPIRITUAL GROWTH
AND JUST ACTION.



Good Neighbors: December 2024

Kris Davis (319) 361 - 0280
daviskris49@gmail.com

Paraministers

Rose Gabe 12/2—12/15
Rosie Rimrodt 12/16—12/29
Paulette Montague 12/30

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS:

office@peoplesuu.org or
(319) 362-9827

Our Staff

Rev. Carin Bringelson Minister

(319) 362-9827

Please email Rev. Carin to
schedule an appointment

Celeste Downs

Director of Faith Formation

David Kind
Congregational
Administrator
(319) 362-9827

Office Hours

Tuesday 9:00am—3:00pm
Wednesday 9:00am—3:00pm
Thursday 9:00am—5:00pm

Matthew Wilde

Social Media and Internet
Outreach Technician

Judy Mitschelen
Pianist

Walter Robidoux
Custodian

Emilee Miller
Nursery Worker

Our Board of Trustees

President

Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck

Bob Butikofer
Sue Davis
Steve Hershner
Marcy Mattison
Lu Wilcox

Ex Officio

Rev. Carin Bringelson
Gary McGraw, Treasurer