

February 2025

# THE VOICE



Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist  
4980 Gordon Ave. NW Cedar Rapids, IA 52405

# Minister Musings

I still remember the feel of the hard cinder block wall beneath my bum as I sat on the edge of the campus courtyard where the ice cream social was taking place. As a junior in college, I was an exchange student, and this was my first official event for the school year.

Everyone already seemed to know each other, so I just sat quietly (in my very loud outfit – I still remember the colorful plaid I was wearing) eating my vanilla ice cream cone. I felt both very obvious and very alone.

Eventually a couple of other students came to introduce themselves. I was beyond grateful that their circle of friends opened wide enough to allow me in. Throughout the semester I sought them out to reconnect, counting them always as my “first friends” on campus.

Given the current political climate and our theme of the month – [Living Love through the Practice of Inclusion](#) – the hard cement wall I was perched on all those years ago serves as a timely reminder. The wall symbolizes the pain of exclusion – and reminds me that we have all been the outsiders at some point in our lives.

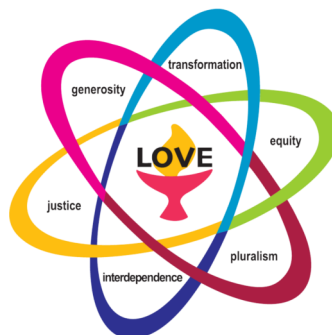
That wall also makes me wonder: how might “we” practice opening the PCUU circle even wider? Who might survive, thrive, and flourish through Peoples Church – which can be a place and a people of sanctuary?

May all of our [Shared UU Values](#) help us engage in the spiritual practice of Inclusion ever more faithfully.

Growing in Faith,

*Rev. Carin*

Rev. Carin



# Sunday Worship

**Sunday, February 2, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.**

**“Joyous Resistance,” led by pulpit guest, Rev. Diana Smith**

Join us to learn about positive empathy and catching joy, and celebrate how we can cultivate stories of joy that help us resist oppression and authoritarianism.

Rev. Diana Smith, the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Society in Coralville, IA will be guest preaching.

**Sunday, February 9, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.**

**“Dead Ends and Speed Bumps” led by Rev. Carin Bringelson**

When it comes to pluralism, Unitarian Universalists value the spiritual paths that lead us as individuals into a collective community. What happens when our spiritual journeys encounter dead ends and speed bumps? How might we include the whole of our religious experiences that brought us to the current moment?

Today we will also be celebrating Scout Sunday.

**Sunday, February 16, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.**

**“Authentic Inclusion” led by PCUU member, Deborah Booth**

"We need more people like you." It seems like a harmless sentence. But for someone "different," it's an insult. We'll explore better words to use so that Peoples Church can truly become an authentically inclusive community.

**Sunday, February 23, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.**

**“Boundaries are a Blessing: Are ALL Welcome?,” led by Rev. Carin Bringelson**

As a non-creedal faith movement, Unitarian Universalists use sacred promises to ensure that people feel included within congregations. What happens when human behavior turns toxic? How do exclusion and inclusion work in concert to nurture healthy communities? The Choir will be singing.



# Faith Formation

- You can help the Faith Formation program during its leadership transition in these two ways:
  - Spread the word that PCUU is seeking applicants for the [Director of Faith Formation](#)
  - Fill out the [Faith Formation Survey](#) to participate in multigenerational community building once a month.
- UU Kids PreK-5:** During the month of February the kids will be exploring inclusivity, and this Sunday will start by listening to a folk tale about how to be inclusive and playing games that promote teamwork - even when it gets hard! If you would like to join us as an adult assistant please text Lu at (573) 356-5722.
- UU Youth Middle and High School:** On this CREATE Sunday, the youth will be making rice pillows to keep us cozy during these last weeks of winter. Maybe Punxsutawney Phil will give us some good news that morning and we won't be needing them for long! If we have time, extra pillows will be made for church members or we will craft candles to honor Imbolc/Feast of St. Brigid.

UU YOUTH FEBRUARY

**FEB 02** CREATE RICE PILLOWS

**FEB 09** LEARN LGBTQ+ HISTORY

**FEB 16** FUN WINTER GAMES

**FEB 23** SERVICE PREPARE FOR SALE

**FEB 28** GAME NIGHT 7PM CONCESSIONS SALES AND BINGO FOR IOWA SAFE SCHOOLS

## UU KIDS FEBRUARY

FOX AND STORK FABLE, GAMES TO INCLUDE EVERYONE- EVEN IF IT'S HARD!

SUN 02

MILK AND HONEY FOLKTALE, INCLUSION MAKES US STRONGER!

SUN 09

WINTER GAMES! INDOOR OR OUTDOOR GAMES WITH THE YOUTH

SUN 16

LOVE YOURSELF! AFFIRMING STORY AND ACTIVITY

SUN 23

LIVE OUR VALUES EVERYDAY!

# Board President

Greetings Beloved Community,

I'm pleased to report that your Board of Trustees has been hard at work progressing the Priorities for Peoples initiative. You may recall that we decided to divide the Priorities into two broad categories: Ministries and Facilities. Since our December Congregational Meeting, we have:

- Recruited volunteers to serve on a new Buildings and Grounds (B&G) team. PCUU has been operating without a B&G team for some time, so we're excited to take this important step in establishing a group who will oversee our physical assets.
- Created a B&G [job description](#) to help our team begin their work.
- We've now updated all Board of Trustees meeting minutes on the website.

We look forward to working on the Ministries priorities in the months ahead, so stay tuned for opportunities to participate in creating the future of Peoples Church.

Warmly,

Robyn Miessler-Kubanek



**WE ARE  
HIRING !**

[Director of Faith Formation](#)

[Nursery Attendant](#)

## **Finance Summary**

The Finance Team met on 1/13/25 to review financial reports and plans.

Cash flow for both December and the 2024 year was positive:

- December income \$35,382
- December expenses \$20,765
- 2024 income \$275,659
- 2024 expenses \$232,126

Net Income for 2024 will be transferred to the Building Accessibility Projects Fund.

Thank you to everyone for your caring and generous support of Peoples Church UU!





**Peoples Church UU**  
Care Team

## **Sometimes When It Rains It Pours!**

Peoples Church wants to offer a metaphorical umbrella when the storms of life leave congregants drenched in anguish, overwhelm, or dread.

That “umbrella” is now called the [Care Team](#) – a group that combines the kindnesses previously offered by the Paraministers and Good Neighbors. (*Thank you* to all those who have served in those capacities in the past!)

The newly-designed [Care Team](#) is open to anyone at Peoples Church who would like to offer support and assistance as needed (and when volunteers are able) in the following areas:

Card Writing

Visiting

Phone Calling

Providing Meals

Providing Rides

Helping with Household Tasks

Heavy Lifting

Sign up to serve with the [Care Team](#) by simply [filling out this short form](#).

Questions? Email the Care Team Coordinators at: [pcuucareteam@gmail.com](mailto:pcuucareteam@gmail.com)

# Cares of the Congregation

## Meal Train for the Pattersons

Marion Patterson is having back surgery in late February. Peoples people are invited to join the [Meal Train for Marion and Rich Patterson](#) to help the family during her recovery. Marion adds: "You do NOT need to bring full meals – just whatever strikes your fancy. Also, we are interested in 300-500 piece puzzles, book suggestions, and ideas for TV viewing. (Looking for ideas to help pass the time.) I would also appreciate a [lymph drainage](#) gift certificate through [Hands in Harmony](#)." The Pattersons also kindly remind us that they do NOT need any more flowers or plants. ;)



## Cards for the Brighams

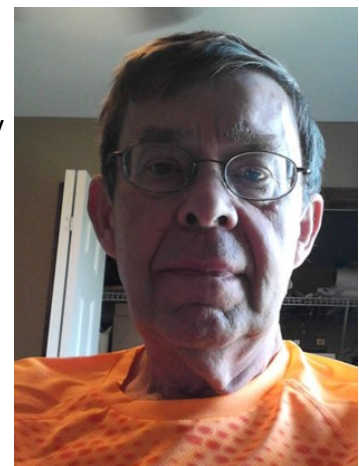
The Rev. Dr. Jeremy Brigham (a former minister of Peoples Church) is now living in a skilled nursing facility to receive the therapies and support that he needs. He remains intellectually curious even as his physical body slowly loses abilities. Rev. Jeremy and his wife Selma would welcome your ongoing thoughts and prayers as well as any written cards.

You can send cards of support to:

Jeremy Brigham

455 16th Ave SE Apt 221

Cedar Rapids, IA 52401-2620





# Social Justice



- **In February, our Second Sunday Plate Collection benefits Iowa Safe Schools:** Provides support, victim services, resources and events for LGBTQ+ and allied youth in Iowa schools. Provides education and support to school personnel. Programs include the GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) Network which empowers students to create safe spaces in their school and community.

- From the Desk of Senator Bennett:

"If you've been following me during my time in the legislature, you know that I try to avoid alarming people without cause, and you also know of my commitment to making sure that Iowa is a place where everyone can thrive. A place where everyone has a fair shot.

Sadly, many sources have reported that legislation supported by Governor Reynolds, which would remove Gender Identity from the Iowa Civil Rights Act, will soon move in the State House. This means it would become legal to discriminate against a person based on gender identity in housing, public accommodations, and many other areas of life. Basically, being able to go about daily life and do the things everyone else takes for granted.

Never, in Iowa's history, has the state government acted to \*take away\* rights from Iowans. I'm very disappointed that Republicans continue to persecute a small number of people in our state, rather than working for the greater good.

Please take action by emailing Rep. Steve Holt, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee at [steven.holt@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:steven.holt@legis.iowa.gov), Speaker Pat Grassley at [pat.grassley@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:pat.grassley@legis.iowa.gov), and calling Gov. Kim Reynolds to oppose this move: 515-281-5211..."

- Bethel Ame Church presents the Allen Lincoln Douglass Banquet 2025 on February 15, 2025 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. which will be held at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1285 3rd Ave SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52403. [Click Here to RSVP](#)



# Social Justice Cont'd



*wartmann*  
**LECTURE SERIES**

## *the spiritual work of trans justice & safety*

**Saturday, February 22**  
**10am - 3:30pm**  
worship to follow at 4:30pm

*register at [tinyurl.com/wartmann25](https://tinyurl.com/wartmann25)*



  
*Transforming Hearts Collective*  
& Zr. Alex Kapitan






Come expand your understanding of what it means to be trans and nonbinary, learn how to tell fact from fiction, and find out how to help create safety for trans peoples and their families in this moment. No matter who you are or how much or how little you know about gender diversity, this interactive and informative workshop will expand your mind, open your heart, and give all of us the tools we need to deepen our welcome and care for people of all genders in our community.

[Click here to register](https://tinyurl.com/wartmann25)

# Social Justice Cont'd

In a world of ongoing crises—global conflicts, political upheavals, and threats to equity—it's natural to feel overwhelmed. How can we stay engaged without losing ourselves in the process?

Activist and author [Deepa Iyer](#) offers a thoughtful framework to help you align with your values, embrace your unique role in social change, and build meaningful connections to sustain both your efforts and well-being.

 <p>Deepa Iyer Author of <i>Social Change Now!</i></p> <p><b>UUWorld</b></p> <h2>TIPS TO ANCHOR YOURSELF FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND AVOID BURNOUT</h2>  <p>UUWORLD.ORG</p>	 <p>Deepa Iyer Author of <i>Social Change Now!</i></p> <p>01</p> <h2>CLARIFY YOUR VALUES AND ROLES</h2> <p>Focus on the values that ground you. Identify your role — Caregiver, Disrupter, Visionary — and embrace it. You don't have to do it all.</p> <p><b>UUWorld</b> </p> <p>UUWORLD.ORG</p>
 <p>Deepa Iyer Author of <i>Social Change Now!</i></p> <p>02</p> <h2>CONNECT WITH YOUR ECOSYSTEM</h2> <p>Build strong connections within your ecosystem. Mutual aid groups, faith communities, and local movements thrive on shared values.</p> <p><b>UUWorld</b> </p> <p>UUWORLD.ORG</p>	 <p>Deepa Iyer Author of <i>Social Change Now!</i></p> <p>03</p> <h2>RECOGNIZE BOUNDARIES AND BARRIERS</h2> <p>Know your limits. Set boundaries and reflect on what sustains you to avoid burnout and keep contributing effectively.</p> <p><b>UUWorld</b> </p> <p>UUWORLD.ORG</p>

# Music of the Month

In honor of African American History Month, February's Hymn of the Month is #149, "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

[Lift Every Voice and Sing](#)



[Click here to read more about this Black National Anthem](#)

Our exclusively curated song from Lea Morris for February's theme is "Just As You Are."

[Just As You Are](#)



# Staffing Updates

We bid a fond farewell to our Director of Faith Formation, whose last day was January 31st. Thank you, **Celeste Downs**, for your can-do spirit and your advocacy for our children and youth! We look forward to our paths crossing with yours again in this small Unitarian Universalist world.



Please join in welcoming our new Choir Accompanist, **Andrew Stoneking!** A native of Albert Lea, MN, Andrew received a B.A. in music with an emphasis in K-12 vocal music education from Luther College. As a music educator, Andrew directed five curricular ensembles, an annual musical, madrigal, and cabaret events. He was also the founding director of the vocal jazz ensemble, *Jazzafress*. Andrew is an active member of the Iowa Choral Directors Association and is a sought-after accompanist, adjudicator, and performer throughout the area. When not working or performing, Andrew enjoys spending time at home with his wife Emily and sons Evan and Blake.



## Reminder

### 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 on our website.



# February

2 Faith Formation at 9:45 a.m.

Worship Service at 11:00 a.m.

Nominating Committee at 12:15 p.m.

5 Choir Practice at 6:00 p.m.

9 Faith Formation

Worship Service at 11:00 a.m.

10 Van Vechten Guild Speaker and Brown Bag at 12:00 p.m.

11 Archives Committee at 10:00 a.m.

12 Shared Ministry Team at 10:00 a.m.

Choir Practice at 6:00 p.m.

16 Faith Formation at 9:45 a.m.

Worship at 11:00 a.m.

CUUPS at 12:20 p.m.

18 Membership Team at 5:30 p.m.

19 Social Justice Team Meeting at 1:00 p.m.

PCUU Monthly Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Choir Practice at 6:00 p.m.

## **20 Content Due for The Voice**

Worship Arts Team at 5:30 p.m.

22 Journey Circle at 10:30 a.m.

23 Choir Practice at 9:45 a.m.

Faith Formation at 9:45 a.m.

Worship Service at 11:00 a.m.

27 Stewardship Team Meeting at 3:00 p.m.

28 Game Night at 7:00 p.m.

# Snapshot

# *Authentic Selves* Forum



"Love glows from every page."  
—Jazz and Jeanette Jennings

## AUTHENTIC SELVES

Celebrating Trans and Nonbinary  
People and Their Families



Interviews by Peggy Gillespie



# Snapshot of Rituals of Release and Renewal





# CARING COMMUNITY

PEOPLES CHURCH

## MISSION STATEMENT

LEADING COMPASSIONATE LIVES  
THROUGH SPIRITUAL GROWTH



### QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS:

[office@peoplesuu.org](mailto:office@peoplesuu.org) or

(319) 362-9827

### Our Staff

**Rev. Carin Bringelson**  
Minister

(319) 362-9827  
Please email Rev. Carin to  
schedule an appointment

David Kind  
Congregational  
Administrator  
(319) 362-9827

Office Hours  
Tuesday 9:00am—3:00pm  
Wednesday 9:00am—3:00pm  
Thursday 10:00am—6:00pm

Matthew Wilde  
Social Media and Internet  
Outreach Technician

Judy Mitschelen  
Pianist

Andrew Stoneking  
Choir Accompanist

Walter Robidoux  
Custodian

### Our Board of Trustees

#### President

Robyn Miessler-Kubanek

Bob Butikofer  
Sue Davis  
Steve Hershner  
Marcy Mattison  
Lu Wilcox

#### Ex Officio

Rev. Carin Bringelson  
Gary McGraw, Treasurer

