

# PEOPLES CHURCH

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

Annual Report  
May 2025



# Contents

Board of Trustees .....	2
Staff .....	2
Annual Meeting Agenda .....	3
<b>BOARD &amp; STAFF REPORTS</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Minister .....	5
Board of Trustees, President .....	7
Congregational Administrator .....	8
Director of Faith Formation .....	9
Technology and Social Media Outreach.....	12
Treasurer & Finance Team .....	13
<b>MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Archives.....	15
Banned Book Library .....	16
Building & Grounds .....	16
Care Team.....	17
CUUPS .....	19
Greeters .....	20
Membership.....	20
Peoples Church Choir.....	21
Shared Ministry Team .....	22
Social Justice .....	23
Special Musicians.....	24
Stewardship.....	25
Van Vechten Guild.....	25
Worship Arts .....	27

## Board of Trustees

Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck, President

Sue Davis, Vice President

Marcy Mattison, Secretary

Steve Hershner

Lu Wilcox

Ex Officio:

Rev. Carin Bringelson, Minister

Gary McGraw, Treasurer

## Staff

Rev. Carin Bringelson

David Kind

*(Open Position)*

Matt Wilde,

Judy Mitschelen

Andrew Stoneking

Angela Maschmann

Minister

Congregational Administrator

Director of Faith Formation

IT Outreach Technician

Worship Accompanist

Choir Accompanist

Custodian

# Annual Meeting Agenda

The Peoples Church Board of Trustees has called a Congregational Meeting for May 18, 2025, in the Sanctuary immediately following Sunday service. This meeting is open to all members and friends. However, only members in good standing may vote on agenda items. If you have a question about your status as a voting member, please contact the church office.

## MEETING PURPOSE:

Recognize the efforts of all who have contributed to the church in the past year, and to confirm new leadership for the upcoming year.

## MEETING BUSINESS:

- ✓ Call the meeting to order
- ✓ Approve Minutes from December 2024 Congregational Meeting
- ✓ Minister's Update
- ✓ President's Update
- ✓ Stewardship Campaign Update
- ✓ Lay Leadership Election
  - Introduction of the Candidates
  - **VOTE ITEM:** New Board Trustees
    - Linda Levy
    - Josh Wagner
    - Emily Hoselton
  - **VOTE ITEM:** Board of Trustees President
    - Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck
  - **VOTE ITEM:** Nominating Committee Members
- ✓ Commissioning New Lay Leaders
- ✓ Ritual of thanks
- ✓ Other Business for the good of the church
- ✓ Extinguish the Chalice
- ✓ Adjourn

# **BOARD & STAFF REPORTS**

# Minister

Dear Peoples People,

I continue to be thrilled to serve as your minister. In these tumultuous political times, it is good that Peoples Church exists – so that we may travel these rocky roads together.

In general, members and friends of this congregation continue to engage in healthy practices that benefit the overall well-being of the congregational system. I witness congregants trusting one another and sharing generously when and how they can. I'm especially pleased when I hear of people discerning their Sacred Yeses and Sacred Nos.

As our 2nd year together wraps up, here are a few reflections on my priority areas (as agreed upon with the Board):

- ✓ Preaching / Worship Arts:
  - In conjunction with the Worship Associates we have offered a variety of worship experiences, including a post-election vesper, to-NOT-do Holy Gaze list, and fire communion.
  - We experimented with the following this year – and plan to continue these practices:
    - Hymn of the Month
    - Welcome and Announcements being offered by the Board members
    - Two pulpit swaps with our UU sibling congregation in Coralville / Rev. Diana Smith
- ✓ Pastoral Care:
  - With help from dedicated lay leaders, we implemented a new Care Team, placing the work of Paraministers and Good Neighbors under one umbrella.
  - Providing confidential spiritual care to Peoples people requires me to hold many people in my heart at once. It reminds me of the saying: You never know what someone might be going through, so be kind.
- ✓ Personnel: Staffing changes this year included...
  - Celebrating Christine Kullander's retirement and welcoming David Kind – in the Congregational Administrator role.
  - Replacing long-time custodian Walter Robidoux with Angela Maschmann.
  - Hiring both Emilee Miller (after saying farewell to long-time Nursery Attendant, Jordan Wiley) and Celeste Downs in Faith Formation – and shortly thereafter receiving their resignations.
  - Welcoming Andrew Stoneking as the Choir Accompanist in February.

- Supporting the Faith Formation program as it's been without a permanent staff person since February. I will speak to this during the Annual Meeting on May 18th.
- ✓ Promoting Congregational Life:
  - The Membership Team and Social Justice Team are both major factors in the initiative I promote within the life of this congregation.
  - This year there were several forums as well as a Journey Circle that met monthly. We will be having a Spring Clean with Voices of Christ on May 17th.

Additionally, this year:

- ✓ I achieved Full Fellowship, thanks to the help of the Shared Ministry Team.
- ✓ I worked with President Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck and Vice-President Sue Davis, as well as the rest of the steady, thoughtful Board.
- ✓ I connected with interfaith partners in the Cedar Rapids area, especially via
  - Gamaliel's Transforming Congregations through Sacred Conversations
  - Open and Affirming congregation's clergy group

If you've read this far, you deserve some stories about our wider UU connections. Ask me about "Indiana car" and "Illinois pen pals".

I hope you are as enlivened by our shared ministry as I am. May we continue to connect with each other around our shared UU values.

Thank you for being you!

Growing in Faith,

*Rev. Carin*

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Carin Bringelson

# Board of Trustees, President

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the incredible progress we've made together. It's been a year of laying solid foundations and setting the stage for exciting developments ahead. Below are highlights from two key areas: the Priorities for Peoples Initiative and our Governance and Policy efforts.

## Priorities for Peoples Initiative

This year, we focused on understanding and refining the aspirations for our church that you expressed to the Board in spring of 2024. This groundwork has been crucial to achieving our goal of reflecting the needs and objectives of our community and led to organizing the information into two main areas: Ministries and Facilities. One significant step we've taken already has been to form a Building & Grounds Team. Soon, this team will develop a comprehensive plan to care for our physical spaces—indoors and out. In addition, the Board wholeheartedly endorses the Sacred Conversations initiative. This discernment process promises a loving, community guided approach to advancing our Ministries priorities of increased participation, programming, and engagement within our community. It's an exciting opportunity for all of us to connect more deeply, share our experiences, and grow together.

## Governance and Policy

In addition, our Governance and Policy efforts have been equally important. The Board has been actively engaged in asking critical questions about our policies to identify areas for improvement. I anticipate giving this area more focus in the coming year now that the Priorities initiative is well underway. While our policy governance system provides a strong framework on which to organize our congregation's activities, every congregation must find the best way to adjust and adapt the system to suit their unique needs. We seek to create a governance structure that supports our mission and values while being responsive to the evolving needs of our church.

## Thanks!

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to Peoples people for your participation in the shared ministry of envisioning our church's future and building the beloved community. Remember that we have the strength and resilience to overcome challenges and grow together as long as we continue to extend grace and love to each other. And with our collective dedication, we are poised for a future filled with interdependence, equity, transformation, pluralism, generosity, and justice. Together.

Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck, PCUU President





# Congregational Administrator

In October 2024, Christine Kullander retired and I was hired as your Congregational Administrator. And you welcomed me so warmly! When people ask what it's like to work for Peoples Church, my answer is always the same: "They are *exceptionally* decent people and it's a *real* privilege to support an organization whose values are so closely tied to my own." Below, I summarize my day-to-day responsibilities (bullets) and highlight major achievements from my first six months (checkmarks).

## Administration

- Audit, update, and modify Realm, PCUU's membership database, to maintain accurate contact information for members, staff, and new visitors
- Query and produce congregational pledge reports to support the Stewardship Team's annual planning, strategy, and campaign
- Triage with PCUU treasurer and third-party bookkeeper to pay invoices, special musicians, reimburse qualifying member expenses, as well as code and track staff credit card expenses
- Facilitate vendor registration for public-facing events and coordinate Sunday morning forums and workshops
- ✓ Registered Peoples Church with TechSoup and Goodstack, services that offer steep discounts on IT services and hardware to qualifying non-profits
- ✓ Recertified Peoples Church with UUA (required every other year)
- ✓ Completed cost-saving initiative involving IT equipment and surveillance cameras that saves Peoples Church \$5,238.72 each year

## Building & Grounds

- Orders office and cleaning supplies, troubleshoots Ricoh printer, changes lightbulbs, waters piano humidifier, hires contractors for small projects, monitors building use, and manages property rental relationships
- ✓ Together with Kathy Juba, interviewed and hired new custodian, Angela Maschmann, who will provide Building & Grounds with a thorough list of maintenance needs within her first 3 months

## Communications

- Point of contact and customer service for all incoming phone calls, email inquiries, service providers, and visitors
- Update and organize bulletin boards
- Produce physical and digital formats of each week's Order of Service and create PowerPoint slides for each week's Sunday Worship service.
- Update and maintain church calendar
- eWeekly: Collaborate with minister, board of trustees, team leaders, community partners, and congregation members to produce weekly digital communications
- The Voice: Produce monthly newsletter focused on spiritual themes, social justice issues, UUA news, and congregational initiatives
- Write, revise, and edit on behalf of team leads
- Design wide-ranging graphics for church events using Adobe Creative Suite
- Develop creative collateral to support the Stewardship Team's annual campaign
- Prepare Annual Report and web content for December and May Congregational Meetings
- ✓ From scratch, created first ever pre-worship video to share details about events and each month's spiritual theme
- ✓ With Marcy Mattison, launched 'Beautiful Question' engagement project featuring content from the Soul Matters curriculum which will also be used to scaffold the launch of Peoples' Sacred Conversations initiative
- ✓ With Judy Price and Marcy Mattison, developed Communications Refresh strategy and roll-out launching in June 2025

# Director of Faith Formation

Faith Formation provides spiritual leadership and religious education for the children and youth of Peoples Church. Faith Formation classes for children ages preschool through 12th grade meet most Sundays from 9:45am-10:45am from the Sunday after Labor Day to mid-May. The Faith Formation Council meets approximately once a month to discuss the status of programming and plan for future classes and events.

## **Activities of Note:**

The Faith Formation year started with the hiring of a new director, Celeste Downs, and the formation of the council which had been inactive since approximately 2020 due to the pandemic. We also hired a new nursery attendant, Emilee Miller, at the beginning of the year. Unfortunately, Emilee needed to leave her position in December and Celeste needed to leave her position in January, so two parent volunteers, Lu Wilcox and Megan Jones, have stepped in as acting directors and the nursery has been only available for DIY families since that time.

The Soul Matters curriculum for the elementary aged children was utilized the most this year with some revisions and additions from the Faith Formation Director, acting directors, and volunteers. Seasonal parties were enjoyed throughout the year along with a family bowling outing in January, an Easter Egg Hunt in April and a group hike in May. We had a regular turnout of elementary aged children and volunteers each Sunday.

Due to difficulties in documentation continuity, we do not have exact numbers of children and youth seen through the Faith Formation year. However, we estimate five middle and high school youth and fifteen elementary-aged children were served over the course of the year.

At the end of the 2023-24 year, Megan conducted a listening session with youth, elementary aged children and their parents to learn more about strengths, changes, and areas of growth they would like to see in Faith Formation programming. As a result of these sessions, the council opted to implement a youth-led and supported youth program that emphasized LEARNING, SERVICE, CREATING AND FUN. Each Sunday of the month had a designated theme from these categories, with youth members directly providing input on their interests and ideas to mold class activities. All sessions were tied to UU values and principles, reflecting how we live our faith every day. We had a strong group of 3-5 youth and volunteers attending each Sunday.

Also because of the feedback given by elementary aged children and parents during the listening sessions last year, the Faith Formation Council worked hard to create a play space and sensory room in the Faith Formation classrooms this year. With the financial support of the church and the hours of

work put in by volunteers, the play space and sensory rooms were installed in March with spring cleaning and reorganization in the main classroom. Teachers report that since this change in the physical space, children are more focused and intentional in their actions during learning activities. The play space also provides the opportunity for “extension activities” or “choice time” so children can engage in activities that is in line with their learning style. The sensory room has allowed a much-needed respite for neurodiverse children and youth who may need to stay connected with the teachers but require a sensory break from the larger group.

We are also extremely proud of all service done by Faith Formation participants this year, particularly middle and high school youth. They engaged in the following for the betterment of the church and the broader community: fall and spring yard clean up on church grounds, planning and implementing the Halloween party for the elementary kids, creating a Mitten Tree which collected 140+ items to donate to a local elementary school, co-hosting Game Night (with the Membership Team) and raising over \$375 for Iowa Safe Schools through Bingo and concessions sales, installing the play space, volunteering at the Indian Creek Nature Center’s annual Maple Syrup Festival’s pancake breakfast fundraiser, and filling and hiding Easter Eggs for the annual hunt.

The youth have also continued to enjoy their involvement with the Youth Coop, a group of youth and youth ministers from six churches in Cedar Rapids. The Youth Coop meets the second and fourth Sundays of the month in the afternoons, rotating churches and other locations for their meetings. They have engaged in learning opportunities, service projects and fun activities. Members of the Youth Coop will also have the opportunity to attend summer sessions and a learning trip to St. Louis.

While classes will not be in session over the summer months, the Council is currently planning on at least four activities to keep families engaged and congregants connected: the 3rd Annual Congregational Campout June 22-22, heading up the PCUU entry in the CR Pride Parade on July 12, a family “hang out” and forest bathing at Wikiup Nature Center in July, and a pool party at Cherry Hill Aquatic Center in August.

The Council is also planning on a special congregation-wide art project over the summer months called the Quilting Project. Interested congregants of all ages are invited to make a “square” (provided by Faith Formation) to contribute to a community quilt that will be hung in Faith Formation classrooms. Multimedia art is encouraged, no sewing required. Two volunteers have stepped up to help with the cutting and assembly of the quilt.

With the reorganization of some of the classrooms this spring, volunteers also plan to continue this cleaning and reorganization process with other classrooms during the summer months.

While the help of volunteers is always important, it should be noted that the support of families, parents, youth, children and church members was vital this year. We have been without a director for four months and the program has not floundered, in fact, it is growing, adapting and thriving. Faith Formation is the future of our church community, and we are stronger because of you, thank you.

### **Continuing Needs:**

The most obvious and immediate need is to hire a new Director of Faith Formation and nursery attendant(s). Rev. Carin and a volunteer are actively working towards this goal.

### **Other Comments:**

Megan Jones will again hold informal listening sessions at the end of the Faith Formation year with children, youth, and parents about their dreams for the future of programing.

The Faith Formation Council has a long-term goal of more multigenerational experiences and classes on Sunday mornings and beyond. 9:45am is the first hour of church! We welcome new volunteers and visitors every Sunday. The Council will be working this summer to form “teacher teams” so volunteers will only be responsible for teaching/assisting once or twice a month on a rotation, with a long list of substitutes to fill in. The Council also hopes to rely less on parent volunteers, giving children and youth the opportunity to form relationships with other church members and allow fellowship for parents during class.

# Technology and Social Media Outreach

## **Job Description:**

Social Media Outreach for Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist entails posting content to the Church's Social Media Channels which currently encompass Facebook/Instagram and YouTube. This includes posting about upcoming events, links to Services on YouTube, Descriptions of Services on YouTube, posts about social justice matters or opportunities for Just Action, Job Openings at PCUU, Videos/Pictures of events and activities of the Church and Congregation.

## **Activities of Note:**

So far this year I have been trying to increase the audience for People's Social Media accounts and drive more regular engagement to posts and other content. I try to go to events and get pictures and videos to post so we can show our church community in action. Visual Content seems to elicit the most engagement overall.

## **Statistics:**

As of April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025:

- Instagram: 154 followers, 89 views, 14 interactions, and 20 shared posts.
- Facebook: 676 followers, 6,648 views (past 90 days),
  - Audience is 74.8% women / 25.5% men
  - Engagement type: 97 shares, 11 comments, 4 replies

## **Continuing Needs:**

I have been in this position for less than a year and I would be open to hearing from other groups and members of the Church about what they would like to see more of on Social Media. I think it would be helpful to explore how to broaden our reach beyond the core audience we have established.

# Treasurer & Finance Team

## Job Description:

The Finance Committee is responsible for the financial activities of the church, including:

- ✓ Weekly accounting and deposit of Sunday collection and other income.
- ✓ Monthly review of bookkeeper reports, monitoring income and expenses and the church balance sheet, including endowment activity, providing monthly reports to the Board of Trustees (BoT).
- ✓ Oversee investments with the Veridian Credit Union and monitor UU Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF) and the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation (GCRCF).
- ✓ Provide advice to BoT and the Minister on financial matters.
- ✓ Develop church policies and practices for financial operations.
- ✓ Development of annual budget, including support to the Stewardship Council.

## Activities of Note:

In 2024-2025 the church continued in its process of achieving long-term financial stability.

- ✓ We finished 2024 with a surplus of \$43,503. This was due to strong pledge payments from our members, endowment income and less than planned expenses due to staff vacancies. This surplus was allocated to accessibility capital project funds.
- ✓ We have maintained adequate cash reserves, while funding building repairs and other smaller initiatives.
- ✓ Our Endowments contribute a significant portion of our operating income, totaling about \$44,000.
- ✓ Averaged over the course of the year, our solar panels generate enough energy to cover 100% of our electrical usage, resulting in monthly electrical bills of about \$22 for grid connection fees and taxes.
- ✓ We have continued to operate the committee based on the congregation's policy-based governance and our committee policy document.

## Continuing Needs:

We need additional people to help with the weekly deposit, join the committee, or participate in Stewardship Campaign. Besides providing an important service to Peoples, serving on the Finance Committee provides an opportunity to learn about the functioning of non-profit organizations, which is useful experience, both personally and professionally.

# **MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS**

# Archives

---

Chair: Joye Winey

2024/2025 Active Members: Bill Hart, Clarice Krippner, Jan Federer

---

## **Job Description:**

- ✓ Collecting, preserving, and sharing the history of Peoples Church from 1869 through 2025 and beyond.
- ✓ To be a resource for the Congregation and broader community.

## **Activities of Note:**

- ✓ Gathering, sorting, and filing the ongoing materials being donated by members.
- ✓ Organizing materials and artifacts brought from our former church.
- ✓ We spent much of this year a) Organizing marriage licenses of those who were married by our past and present ministers and b) Organizing orders of service, past and present.

## **Ongoing Work:**

- ✓ Continuing organizing and labeling photos
- ✓ Making decisions for keeping the materials that tell the story of our church and its people
- ✓ Organizing our filing system
- ✓ Developing a policy for materials we receive, and the right to refuse or dispose in an appropriate manner.

## **Continuing Needs:**

- ✓ Tech expertise and equipment for the safe electronic storage of materials.
- ✓ Continued donations of historical documents and artifact pertinent to Peoples church and its members, identified with people, place and time.
- ✓ We especially need original copies of obituaries, newspaper articles and other printed information.
- ✓ Our history reveals how we have evolved in belief and practice and how we have attempted to assert a positive influence on the world around us.
- ✓ In order for us to know who we are today, we need to understand who we have been.



# Banned Book Library

---

Chair: Bryan Davis

2024/2025 Active Members:

---

The Banned Books Library was launched by Peoples Church in May 2024. A number of people were instrumental in making the Banned Books Library possible, beginning with Lee Buhr of Marion Iowa who heard we were thinking of this project and volunteered to provide stock for a fundraiser book sale held at Swamp Fox Books, also located in Marion.

Aiding in the planning were Bryan and Kris Davis, Megan Jones, Fenn Jones, Milo Jones, and CJ Flynn. An official Free Little Library was established for the church with the kids in the youth program decorating it most colorfully and Rich Patterson assisting in setting the post where the library now resides near the Gordon Avenue entrance. With Jackie Wedeking's PR expertise the grand opening attracted tv coverage resulting in much favorable coverage for the church and promotion of our UU values in the community.

## Building & Grounds

---

Chair: Bob Butikofer

2024/2025 Active Members: Erin Ogle, Bill Hart, Tom Hess, Bob Butikofer (Board Rep), Steve Hershner (Pending)

New Chair: Erin Ogle

---

### Job Description:

Manage the building & grounds of Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist (just as the committee's name implies):

- ✓ Monitor and maintain the safety and general condition of the building & grounds
- ✓ Review, prioritize, and ensure completion of maintenance needs of the church
- ✓ Review, prioritize, and implement capital improvements to improve the church property

### Activities of Note:

After years of recognizing the need for a Building and Grounds Team, the team has recently been formed by the Board of Trustees. We have started identifying the maintenance needs of the church and prioritizing resolution of these needs based on criticality of need, labor input requirements, and

funding availability. Likewise, we will pursue capital improvement projects based generally on these same criteria. Based on the 2024 congregational listening posts, building accessibility currently appears to be the highest priority for capital improvement.

### **Continuing Needs:**

We ask church members to report maintenance needs of the church as well as opportunities for capital improvements to the committee. At the same time, we'd ask you to understand that these identified needs and wishes will be added to the appropriate "list" and addressed on a prioritized basis. In other words, despite best intentions, we won't be able to do everything at once!

As both maintenance and capital improvement projects are pursued, we must all recognize that the availability of labor (for projects that we can complete internally - often with your assistance) and availability of funding will be the limiting factors on our ability to move these forward. Our, as well as your, time and dollars will be needed to support these activities.

We thank you in advance!

## **Care Team**

---

Co-Chairs: Kathy Juba, Rose Gabe

2024/2025 Active Members:

At least 13 (2024) → 30 (2025)

---

### **Job Description:**

The Care Team is a combination of what has traditionally been Good Neighbors and the Paraministers. In our new incarnation, members of our Team and those in the congregation who have signed up to help, offer assistance to members and friends of the congregation in the following ways:

- ✓ Sending cards to those experiencing significant life events
- ✓ Visiting people at their homes or in a medical facility with ministerial guidance and support
- ✓ Phoning or texting those who could use a human connection
- ✓ Providing meals in instances of birth, death, illness, or injury
- ✓ Giving rides for medical appointments, necessary errands or for family support during illness or injury
- ✓ Providing assistance with light household tasks
- ✓ Helping with moving heavier household items a short distance

## **Activities of Note:**

This year, a major accomplishment was combining what has historically been two teams into one. We also led a very successful campaign to refresh the list of potential helpers which now stands at 30 possible volunteers across the seven areas of needs. This is in addition to five people who on a rotating basis call the hospitals to check if a member of our community is there and would like a contact.

For tasks completed in the past year, the dominant activity was giving rides to church for church services and activities. Rides were also given for medical appointments, meals were prepared for one individual and one church event, and household tasks were completed for two different individuals.

## **Continuing Needs:**

- ✓ People to inform us when they or someone they know would benefit from assistance in one of the areas listed above.
- ✓ Additional people to sign up to be helpers in the areas listed above. Please note, signing up does not require a person to volunteer if called. The volunteer always maintains the right to take on the task or not.
- ✓ A person who enjoys helping others to be one of the coordinators.

## **Other Comments:**

- ✓ To ask for assistance: Please email our Care Team Coordinators at [pcuuucareteam@gmail.com](mailto:pcuuucareteam@gmail.com).
- ✓ To volunteer to help in one or more of the seven areas, click on the link in the Voice or eWeekly or go to the Peoples Church website and click on “Care Team” in the banner across the top of the page.

# CUUPS

---

Chair: Deborah Booth

2024/2025 Active Members:

---

The Peoples Pagans Covenant of Unitarian Universalist PaganS (CUUPS) group held a few holiday (Sabbat) rituals at the church and a few full moon (Esbat) rituals at the New Bo City Market this past year. Turnout ranged from eight to 12 participants at each event. We also held monthly social meetings on the third Sunday of each month to discuss upcoming events and Earth-based spiritual practices.

The Peoples Pagans partnered with the church Welcoming Committee this year to host the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Chili Cook-off. It was moved from its date on the last Sunday in October to be held on the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving. The event was not held as a fundraiser this year, but more of a social event. Deborah Booth purchased and donated the third, second and first-place trophies again this year on behalf of the Peoples Pagans. Our winners for this year were:

- Third place went to Anderson family for their Red Chicken Chili
- Second place went to the Wilde family for their White Chicken Chili
- First place went to the Wilcox family for their Three Pepper Chili

## **Lessons learned this year from the event:**

- The fuse boxes need to be labeled better for when a fuse is blown in the Andre Room (Thank you to Bill Hart for helping get that fixed.)
- Chili entries cannot be brought in roasters – nothing bigger than a crockpot – so that we don't blow a fuse.
- Event host(s) need to bring a vegan or vegetarian dish to ensure a vegan entry is available.
- All food events held at the church now must follow strict catering guidelines and this needs to be communicated to event leaders ahead of time.
- Kitchen and catering guidelines need to be written down and provided to event leaders and all participants, so the rules are known before an event is held.

## **Thank you to:**

- Teru Ogle for being our runner in getting things set up
- Sheryl Ochs and the Welcoming Committee for their help in the kitchen
- Danny Booth and Emily Hoselton for helping with set up and clean up
- Matt Wilde for taking pictures and promoting the event on social media
- The 12 families who brought chili and the 46 members who were our tasters and voted

## Greeters

---

Chair: Kathy Juba

2024/2025 Active Members: Bob Butikofer, Scott Davis, Rose Gabe, Bev Hannon, Steve Hershner, Emily Hoselton, Marcy Mattison, Kathleen Mavity, Karen Pierce, Judy Price, Lu Wilcox and family, Joye Winey

---

### **Job Description:**

Each Sunday, greeters provide a welcoming experience for worship service for each person attending. In addition, they maintain all supplies, funds, and records in a secure manner.

### **Continuing Needs:**

We always can use additional greeters. People can indicate their interest by notifying the church office or by contacting Kathy Juba at [kathywilson@imonmail.com](mailto:kathywilson@imonmail.com) or 319-361-2890. Interested people preferably need to complete a training before greeting the first time, but overachievers have been known to fill in when needed.

## Membership

---

Chair: Megan Murphy Salyer

2024/2025 Active Members: Small, but mighty

---

### **Job Description:**

To get, keep, and deepen membership at Peoples Church.

### **Activities of Note:**

- ✓ 2024 Exploring Membership series
- ✓ 2025 Exploring Membership series planned for April with plans to check-in with 2024 cohort.

### **Community Building and New Ways to Engage:**

- ✓ Two successful game nights (one in which we collaborated with Faith Formation)
- ✓ Ice Cream Social
- ✓ Flatbread Festival

- ✓ Conversation cards on tables
- ✓ Collaborated with CUUPS to support the Chili Cook-Off

### **Continuing Needs:**

Our small, but mighty team plans to continue to deepen connections and build community with more social activities. We are thankful for all the participants and volunteers that make our gatherings enjoyable for everyone. We welcome new ideas and will continue to check-in with people to see how else we can support members on their growth at Peoples Church.

## **Peoples Church Choir**

---

Co-Chairs: Karen Pierce, Kathleen Mavity

2024/2025 Active Members: Amy Heeren, Bev Buhr, Bryan Davis, Cate Sheller, Emily Hoselton, Jim Federer, Judy Price, Kelsey Anthony, Kris Davis, Linda Levy. Accompanist: Andrew Stoneking

---

### **Job Description:**

Peoples Church Choir are individuals who come together in community to sing and create music supporting the six core values of Unitarian Universalism.

### **Activities of Note:**

We started our second year without a pianist. We managed to do many a cappella pieces and relied on technology to help us find our pitches. We paused activity in January until we were able to hire Andrew Stoneking as our pianist starting in February. We performed September 8th and 29th, October 20th, November 17th, February 23rd, and March 23rd. (December's performance was canceled due to weather.) We will finish up the '24-'25 year singing on April 27th and May 18th. We practice together four times a month: three Wednesday evenings and the Sunday we perform, prior to the service.

### **Continuing Needs:**

- ✓ Singers/musicians
- ✓ Financial support for new music pieces

## Other Comments:

Going forward, we want to maintain (and preferably build) our music program. In that effort, we will evaluate this past year and obtain input from participants. Thank you to the singers/musicians for their time, commitment, and artistry. It has been a pleasure to meet and build relationships with everyone in the group.

## Shared Ministry Team

---

Chair: Kathleen Mavity

2024/2025 Active Members: Kathy Juba, Kathleen Mavity, Susan Petersmith working in concert with Rev. Carin Bringelson

---

## Job Description of the Group:

Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist is committed to a shared ministry. We strive for a culture in which the Minister and individual congregants feel they each play a vital role in:

- ✓ Creating a vibrant, dynamic, beloved community;
- ✓ Contributing to the work of Peoples Church;
- ✓ Envisioning what's next for Peoples as we grow into our future;
- ✓ Furthering the Mission of the Church (as of December 2023) to “[lead] compassionate lives through spiritual growth and just action.”

## Activities of Note:

- ✓ Worked with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the UUA to help Rev. Carin receive her full fellowship as a Unitarian Universalist minister. Woohoo for all!
- ✓ Continues to explore how white supremacy culture may be playing out at Peoples Church, and what we can do to turn that around.
- ✓ Is playing a role in introducing a powerful new program to Peoples Church: Transforming Congregations and Communities Through Sacred Conversations (which will probably be called simply “Sacred Conversations”). This program was developed by Gamaliel, a non-partisan, nationwide network of faith-based communities. Its mission is to empower ordinary people to effectively participate in the political, environmental, social, and economic decisions affecting their lives. Stay tuned for lots more information to come.

## Continuing Needs:

Each of the current members of the Shared Ministry Team will eventually rotate off the team, so we encourage congregants to consider whether they'd like to be considered to fill future vacancies. Please note that we currently have three white, cisgender, mid-life women on the team, and so would especially welcome new members who could provide some diversity!

## Other Comments:

- ✓ The intention is for the Shared Ministry Team to serve as a resource to all Peoples members wanting to have a more active say in how the Church fulfills its ministry.
- ✓ To this end, you are encouraged to come to one of the SMT members when you hear yourself saying something like:
  - “Someone should...”
  - “What about...?”
  - “I wish we would / could...”
  - “Wouldn't it be great if...?”
- ✓ These comments will be taken back to the full SMT and Rev. Carin, where we will discuss ways the congregation can turn them from ideas to reality.

## Social Justice

---

Chair: Marcia Swift

2024/2025 Active Members: Jan Federer, Rose Gabe, Kathy Juba, Clarice Krippner, Laura McGraw

---

## Job Description of the Group:

The Social Justice Council identifies social justice issues and actions for participation by members of the congregation each year. The Council then coordinates the social justice actions and activities to be undertaken by the congregation. The Council works to involve all members of the congregation, including youth in social justice experiences. The Council participates in and supports the social justice actions of other community groups and organizations.



## Activities of Note:

- ✓ Juneteenth and CRPride participation (2024)
- ✓ Participation in Bethel AME Anniversary celebration and Allen-Lincoln-Douglass Banquet.
- ✓ Forums: *Reclaiming Two Spirits, Authentic Selves* (UUA Common Read), Abortion Access in Iowa.
- ✓ Election postcard writing campaign.
- ✓ Donated band instruments to the Meskwaki Settlement School.
- ✓ Successful First/Second Sunday Plate Collections to Meskwaki Settlement School, Iowa Abortion Access Fund, Iowa Safe Schools and currently, Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice.
- ✓ Funding support for Ecumenical Center, Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, and Banned Book Library.

## Continuing Needs:

In 2025 we plan to develop unisex signage for our church bathrooms and a permanent LGBTQ+ signage for the Gordon Ave exterior. Participation in Juneteenth with an accompanying Sunday Service on June 8. Participation in CRPride. The committee will be seeking volunteers for Juneteenth and CRPride. Additional members for the Social Justice Team are always welcome.

## Special Musicians

---

Chair: Bryan Davis

2024/2025 Active Members:

---

The long tradition of special music in worship services continues. Drawing on a pool of musicians characterized by different musical styles, the special music ministry brings variety and color to worship services at peoples. We are also continuing our unique relationship with Lea Morris whose unique folk/soul style of music enlivens the Voice and Weekly every month.

# Stewardship

---

Chair: Brenda Meshak

2024/2025 Active Members: Judy Price,  
Charles Cizio, Bryan Davis, Bob Butikofer

---

## **Job Description of the Group:**

The Stewardship Committee's main responsibility is planning and managing the annual financial commitment campaign which accounts for more than three quarters of the church's operating budget.

## **Activities of Note:**

The campaign for fiscal year 2025 was Feed the Seeds. We exceeded our goal of \$205,000 but due to the deaths of two members the pledge total dropped to \$188,505, or 92% of the goal.

## **Continuing Needs:**

New committee members are needed for fresh ideas on communicating the importance of financial stewardship. Making pledging easier and more relevant, especially to new members.

## **Other Comments:**

The committee would like to thank Bob Butikofer for his many years of hard work and contributions to Stewardship.

# Van Vechten Guild

---

Chair: Melissa Rucker

2024/2025 Active Members: 12-18

---

## **Job Description of the Group:**

The focus of the Van Vechten Guild is to provide church support, member support and support for the greater community. The Guild is a pledging unit to Peoples and makes other contributions to the church as needed. Officers are: Chair-Melissa Rucker, Vice Chair-Jan Federer, Secretary-Karen Hartlip and Treasurer-Kathy Juba. The Van Vechten Guild currently contains thirty-three members. Meeting attendance is generally 12-18 members.

## **Activities of Note:**

- ✓ Within the last year, the Guild hosted the following speakers:
- ✓ Beth Parker on Legacy/Death Doula
- ✓ African Women Gardeners & Crafters
- ✓ Laura Tirado on Feed Iowa First
- ✓ AEA Panel re: Recent Political & Student Changes which included Leigh McEwen's written input as well as VVG member input from Joye Winey, Kathy Juba, Rose Gabe, Sue Jorgenson, & Melissa Rucker
- ✓ Lisa Gavin on Legal Aid
- ✓ Joe Horany on Solid Waste is projected to speak in May of 2025

Each speaker's agency receives a \$100 stipend. (This did not apply to the AEA Panel.)

- ✓ We held a potluck in September and will again in June. A cookie & jewelry exchange was held in December. A sale of pecans occurs annually in December as a VVG fundraiser.
- ✓ VVG members support Church events by providing food, flowers & volunteers to assist during receptions (i.e. for Christine's Retirement in November) & funerals.
- ✓ VVG members purchased a new microwave and (non-plastic) utensils for the McGraw kitchen.

Members are currently involved in seasonal decorating of the Church interior and exterior. Special thanks to Ann Woodward for providing fresh planters (spring, summer & winter) by the Gordon Street entrance! The large planter by the north door is also decorated. VVG members continue to provide upkeep in the weeding & watering of the gardens on the east and south side of the Church (for the memorial/meditation and the pollinator gardens). The Youth collaborated with VVG members in assisting with decorating for Xmas and the clean-up of the gardens in the fall & spring.

## **Continuing Needs:**

A meeting place at Peoples Church for our monthly meetings is greatly appreciated. Advertising of meetings (dates and topics) in the Church newsletter is also needed.

## **Other Comments:**

We invite anyone to attend our meetings which are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month at noon, excepting July, August and January. Friends and non-members of Peoples are also welcome. Dues are \$15 each year. Given the received dues, we pay the stipend to the speakers and support a fund to purchase memorial flowers when no garden flowers are available.

# Worship Arts

---

Chair: Cate Sheller

2024/2025 Active Members: Deb Booth, Emily Hoselton, Rev. Rosie Rimrodt

---

## Regular Activities

Worship Artists assisted with worship each week and helped plan regular Sunday services and a few special events throughout the year. We also planned and led worship services approximately once per month throughout the year. We met monthly with our minister to plan and reflect. We continued to follow monthly worship themes from Soul Matters and brainstormed our own themes for the summer months. The Summer 2024 theme was Play; the Summer 2025 theme will be Creativity.

We experimented with different forms of worship, such as all music services and multi-activity services. We also made a few adjustments to regular service activities, including:

- Turning over welcome and announcement responsibilities to Board of Trustees members
- Adding the elements of stones and sacred water to our silent meditation with candles
- Adding a hymn of the month
- Adding a “traveling tune” to sing the children through the transition after Time for All Ages

## Personnel

This year we welcomed three new Worship Artists: Danny Anderson, Shelby Benion, and Josh Wagner. We also welcomed two returning members: Kathleen Mavity and Lu Wilcox. And we bid a fond and grateful farewell to: Bryan Davis, Jim Federer, Robyn Miessler-Kubaneck, Paulette Montague and Angie Pierce-Jennings. Continuing to serve, besides those named above: Deb Booth, Emily Hoselton, Rev. Rosie Rimrodt and Cate Sheller