May 2025

# THE VOICE Imagination



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

# Minister Musings

As I reflect on our theme for May (<u>Practice of Imagination</u>), I realize that I tend to be rather pragmatic.

It takes intentionality and practice for me to relax enough to imagine new ways of being with myself, with my beloveds, and with the people (both human and more-than-human) I meet. The <u>characteristics</u> I learned while growing up in a culture of white supremacy ("Urgency! One right way! More is better!") have all too often limited my imagination about what's possible.

For months now I've been practicing imagining what it might feel like for PCUU members and friends to more deeply connect with one another. Through one-on-one **Sacred Conversations**, Peoples people will get to do exactly that: share their experiences that inspire and motivate them. In the process, we might just learn what we imagine for our church and the city at large. (See the article later in the newsletter.)

Listening to each other's hearts and dreams will take time and intention – in other words, practice. Ultimately, it will allow us to imagine together what a Liberating Love calls us to do and be in these times of authoritarianism and Christian Nationalism.

As we listen and imagine, I trust we will tap into our <u>Shared UU Values</u> as a congregation. May they guide us as we dream of the world we want to live in – and then start making our dreams come true, together.

Growing in Faith,

Rev. Carin

Rev. Carin

# Sunday Worship

### Sunday, May 4, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

# "Using Our Power for Good" led by Cate Sheller, PCUU Member

In a time of turmoil, many of us may feel powerless. But we all possess a superpower: imagination. We can use our power to shape our world, mentally and spiritually. Let us explore together how we can use our power to build the world we want.

### Sunday, May 11, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

### "Imagining Multigenerational Community" led by Rev. Carin Bringelson and Megan Jones

Let's celebrate the recent successes of the Faith Formation program – and explore the role that imagination played in the process. How might we build upon the existing joy and connections to imagine what's next for our congregation's lifespan faith development? What if Belonging, Ease, and Meaning were our guides?

# Sunday, May 18, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

# "Flower Ceremony" led by Rev. Carin Bringelson

For decades, the <u>Flower Ceremony</u> and its powerful history have provided meaning to hundreds of UU congregations. This ritual celebrates beauty, diversity, and community – an appropriate way welcome PCUU's new members. For this morning's service, **please bring a cut flower to give away to a fellow congregant**. (Don't worry if you can't bring one – there will be enough to go around!) Following service, the Board will convene our annual congregational meeting at which all members will vote. The Annual Meeting will take place shortly after worship service, both in the sanctuary and on Zoom. All book-signed members are eligible to vote.

# Sunday, May 25, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

# "Imagining Purpose: Devising Our Own Narrative" led by Shelbi Benion, PCUU Member

It can be difficult to function in a world where there seems to be no concrete paths for our purpose as individuals. Rather than searching for something to tell us directly, let's explore the ways we can use actions guided by UU values to find that Divine purpose for ourselves.

# **Board President**

Happy May! The Board of Trustees will both wrap up and begin our church year at the upcoming Annual Meeting. At that time, serving members depart with thanks while new individuals join to create a different group of dedicated leaders.

As we end and begin another cycle of leadership, I have been reflecting on the transformative spiritual journey of new church leaders – a journey that, with the help of the <u>Five I's of Leadership Development</u>, might look something like this:



- ✓ Identify: What does a church leader look like in your mind? Can you picture yourself in that role? Recognizing potential leaders means cultivating each other's creative potential and imagining new possibilities for ourselves and our church.
- Invite: What would it mean to invite yourself or others into a different role in the church? Where might that invitation lead? Inviting individuals to step into leadership means fostering openness to mystery and the unknown, no matter how many times we've done it.
- ✓ Involve: How might immersion in our faith community's spiritual journey change us? Do we feel ready for that change? Involving ourselves in leadership means feeding the yearning to grow both personally and spiritually.
- ✓ Instruct: What do we feel the need to know or learn to be a leader? How does that learning happen? Leadership development within a church means gaining practical skills while also nurturing the imaginative capacity to see new potential futures.
- ✓ Inspire: Who or what inspires us to step forward? What feeds our inspiration? Inspiring each other to lead means helping each other to recognize, connect with, and participate in a purpose larger than ourselves.

So where are YOU in this spiritual and imaginative journey? Have you been invited yet? Because you're invited! Officially! I invite everyone to think about where you are on this journey, both right now and in the weeks/months/years ahead.

It's no small thing to step into a leadership role, especially in a church of our size. It can be daunting, scary, time-consuming, and frustrating.

And it can also be joyful, meaningful, gratifying, and fulfilling. I can't fully express the satisfaction, purpose, meaning, and depth these opportunities have given to me, which is why I come back to it again and again. It's something that supports my belief that we really can change ourselves and the world, as long as we do it together.

# **Faith Formation**

- Keep your eye out for details about all the fun summer hangouts we're planning.
- Make sure to check the Social Justice section for details about our Pride Parade plans.
- Be sure to check out the Social Justice section to learn about Faith Formation's participation Cedar Rapids Pride.



- 5/11: Workshop with Dr. Hannah Sutton-Adams, St. Paul's UMC from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- 5/25: End of the School Year Party!

FAITH FORMATION IN MAY IS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY. LET'S CELEBRATE A YEAR OF GROWTH AND LEARNING TOGETHER!

STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SUMMER HANGOUTS AND PROJECTS!





Youth Co-op will attend a workshop being led by Dr. Hannah Sutton-Adams, a researcher of religious trauma and a board certified chaplain. This workshop includes a basic introduction to the subject of religious trauma, reflection activities, trauma exercises, and conversation space to help participants consider how they can be a good ally to those who have experienced religious trauma.

When: May 11, 3 to 5pm
Where: St. Pauls UMC, Youth Room
What to Bring: Your curiosity and questions

# **Social Justice**

 This month for our 2nd Sunday offering, funds will benefit lowa Migrant Movement for Justice which is a statewide membership-based advocacy and immigration legal service organization driven and led by immigrant and refugee voices and united with allies.



- Rev. Carin Bringelson will be part of a panel speaking on "Allyship" for CR Pride taking place on Saturday, May 10, 2025 at 12:30 p.m. at the downtown public library.
- Speaking of Pride, Faith Formation is seeking at least 10 volunteers to march in this year's parade. The theme is Mardi Gras. Please mark your calendars for July 12th at Newbo. The timing of the event has yet to be announced. There will be a physical sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or you can email Emily Hoselton at <a href="mailto:ehoselton33@gmail.com">ehoselton33@gmail.com</a> using the subject line "Pride Parade Sign-Up." We're also planning on ordering prints to make matching shirts. Even if you aren't going to march, you can order shirts. You can either give us your size and we'll order the shirts, or simply order the prints and bring your own shirts in



the colors black, green, or purple. The prints are \$4 each and the shirts are \$6 each in the color black. We will be having a t-shirt printing party on Sunday, June 29th before and after service downstairs. The **deadline to sign up is Sunday, May 18th**, and you can pay with cash in person or use the Pride Parade T-Shirt option on the Vanco Mobile App.

• The Social Justice team is pleased to announce we've updated the signage in Peoples Church bathrooms to be as gender-inclusive and affirming as possible.



• We've also added the Pride Flag to our sign outside the building.





# Imaging Helping to Create Worship Services

Worship Artists get to...

- Dig into the monthly themes more deeply
- Bring their grounded presence to Sunday morning services
- Practice inclusion and belonging in real time
- Perform public speaking within an accepting environment
- Share their reflections with the PCUU community



To learn more about the Worship Arts Team and <u>co-creating worship</u>, contact Rev. Carin at <u>minister@peoplesuu.org</u>.

"Worship leadership deepens my faith, my sense of community, and my sense of responsibility to community."

# Finance Update

The **Finance Team** met on 4/15/25 to review financial reports and continue financial planning.

- Cash flow for the first quarter (Jan/Feb/Mar) of 2025 was positive:
  - First Quarter Income: \$97,414
  - First Quarter Expenses: \$81,958



# Sacred Listening — Coming Soon!

Peoples Church is about to embark on a new adventure. We, along with several other local congregations, will be taking part in a process sponsored by the Gamaliel organization. Transforming Congregations is an 18-month framework for engaging faith communities in a sacred listening process. The initiative uses intentional conversations (i.e., one-to-ones), discernment, and visioning to design new ministries and practices and/or to strengthen existing ones. Grounding this process is the belief that healthy and thriving congregations are critical vehicles for transforming our communities into the "beloved community."

We will be looking for congregants to get involved as both "listeners" and "story-tellers". Our Steering team consists of Laura McGraw (Chair), David Meissler-Kubinek, Susan Petersmith, Kathleen Mavity, and Rev. Carin. Please contact Laura with any questions and stay tuned for more information.



We are sad to share that Russell Caristia died on April 20, 2025. Russ had been a member of Peoples Church UU for three years and was a consistent participant of in-person worship. A private memorial with his family will be held in the coming weeks. Please keep his family members and friends in your hearts and minds. Cards of condolence can be mailed to:

Elaine Donovan and family 1637 B Ave NW Cedar Rapids, IA 52405-3715

# **Explore PCUU Membership**



Membership into, and within, Peoples Church Unitarian Universalist is a journey! As part of our Exploring Membership series, join us for these dates to learn about each other, our UU faith movement, and our congregation.

- On your own schedule, review videos and resources
   www.peoplesuu.org/Exploring-Membership
- Thursday, May 8, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

  Gather via Zoom to explore your questions.
- Sunday, May 18, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.
   Share how you envision yourself engaging with Peoples Church and get ready for the New Member Ceremony happening during worship.

**Questions?** Email Membership Team contact, Megan Murphy Salyer, at <a href="mailto:lilmurph@gmail.com">lilmurph@gmail.com</a>



Peoples Choir invites you to join our Wednesday night rehearsals at 6:00 p.m. on May 7th, May 14th, as well as before worship on May 18th at 9:45 a.m.

# Music of the Month

May's Hymn of the Month is #301, "Touch the Earth, Reach the Sky!"



Our exclusively curated song from Lea Morris for May is a song called "Ordinary Magic."



# PEOPLES CHURCH UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST

# 2025 Congregational Meeting

# May 18th at 12:00 p.m.

Congregational Meeting Agenda (Upcoming May 2025)

Minutes from Congregational Meeting (December 2024)

Electronic Proxy Voting Form (Upcoming May 2025)

**Annual Report** 



Other Midwest UU churches are currently seeing new scams, and now, we are too! As a reminder:

- ✓ No One at PCUU will ever email, text, or call you asking for you to buy gift cards, or send money, directly to them!
- ✓ Please, if you have a PDF, an excel form, or a printed copy of our directory, do not share this! This is another way our private information is obtained.
- ✓ Always double check email addresses and text names/numbers before giving any private information away by these means. Scammers will change these by only 1 character/digit making it easy for us to miss the fact that it is not a legitimate communication.
- ✓ If you have any doubts about communications from PCUU or staff, please call us immediately at 319-362-9827.
- Do not be embarrassed if you are scammed! The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) February 2024 data shows that consumers reported losing more than \$10 billion to fraud in 2023, marking the first time that fraud losses have reached that benchmark. This marks a 14% increase over reported losses in 2022. [The amount is likely higher due to the number of people who do not report having been a victim.] If you are a victim, contact the FTC at https:// www.occ.treas.gov/topics/consumers-and-communities/ consumer-protection/fraud-resources/index-fraudresources.html. The USPS has valuable information: https://faq.usps.com/s/article/Scams-SchemeAlerts

Faith formation: Hiking at 9:30 a.m. 4 Worship at 11:00 a,m. Choir Practice at 6:00 p.m. 7 Exploring Membership (Part 2) at 6:00 p.m. 8 Last Day of Faith Formation at 9:45 a.m. 11 Worship at 11:00 a.m. CUUPS at 12:20 p.m. Van Vechten Brown Bag & Speaker at 12:00 p.m. 12 Archives Team at 10:00 a.m. 13 Finance Team at 7:00 p.m. Shared Ministry Team at 10:00 a.m. 14 PCUU Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m. Choir Practice at 6:00 p.m. Worship Arts Team at 5:30 p.m. 15 Spring Clean & Food Exchange at 3:00 p.m. 17 Choir Practice at 9:45 a.m. 18 Exploring Membership (Part 3) at 9:30 a.m. Worship at 11:00 am. Congregational Meeting at 12:00 p.m. Content due for The Voice 20 Social Justice Team at 1:00 p.m. 21 Stewardship Team at 2:30 p.m. 22 Journey Circle at 11:00 a.m. 24 Worship at 11:00 a.m. 25

# May



# **PEOPLES CHURCH**

# MISSION STATEMENT

"Leading compassionate lives through spiritual growth and just action."

# Our Staff

### Minister

Rev. Carin Bringelson minister@peoplesuu.org

### **Congregational Administrator**

David Kind office@peoplesuu.org

### Office Hours

Tuesday—Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### Social Media / IT Outreach Technician

Matthew Wilde <a href="mailto:pcuutech@peoplesuu.org">pcuutech@peoplesuu.org</a>

### Worship Accompanist

Judy Mitschelen

### **Choir Accompanist**

**Andrew Stoneking** 

### Custodian

Angela Maschmann



### QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS:

office@peoplesuu.org or

(319) 362-9827

# Our Board of Trustees

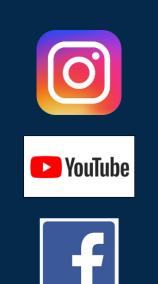
### President

Robyn Miessler-Kubanek

Bob Butikofer Sue Davis Steve Hershner Marcy Mattison Lu Wilcox

### Ex Officio

Rev. Carin Bringelson Gary McGraw, Treasurer



# STAFFING UPDATE:

Please join in welcoming our new Custodian, Angela Maschmann. A native of Marengo, Iowa, Angela has a passion for running her own cleaning business — Maid 2 Klean. In her free time,



Angela loves to sew, garden, cook, and ride motorcycles.