

A group of five children are seen from behind, sitting on a floor and painting a large, vibrant mural. The mural is composed of various colors like red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, with some areas resembling leaves or abstract shapes. The children are wearing casual clothing like t-shirts and shorts, and their feet are visible at the bottom of the frame. The overall scene is one of creative activity and community art.

July 2025

THE VOICE

Creativity

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

Minister Musings

I've been working on my quilt blocks. Have you? (I'm talking about the Quilt Project that the Faith Formation program is coordinating. See page 5 for details on how you can participate before the August 1st deadline!)

I'd forgotten how much I enjoy the process of dreaming, designing, cutting, sewing, and embroidering. And then, eventually, stepping back to appreciate the final product.

When it comes to this summer's theme of **Creativity**, however, it's not the final product that I'm most concerned about. Rather, it's the *process* of creating something that lifts my spirits.

The Creative Process reminds me that I'm filled with ideas, likely to make mistakes (and adjustments), and able to bring a loving intention into each moment. It reminds me to put Love at the center: loving myself, loving the young ones who will live beyond my years, loving the community that creates beauty together.

Inspired by our [Shared UU Values](#), I've put Love and chalices on the quilt blocks that I'm making. What will you put on yours?

And more importantly, what's the Creative Process inviting you to remember these days?

Growing in Faith,

Rev. Carin

Rev. Carin



PS: I recently heard that "The best way to protect ourselves and continue to be bold advocates for our UU religious values is to **be proudly religious in public**, leaning into our Constitutional protections and our Living Tradition."

By having [Sacred Listening](#) sessions with one another, we'll learn from each other about the creative ways we embrace our Unitarian Universalist faith in public spaces. See page 8 for more information about this vital initiative to deepen relationships and organize our community.



Sunday Worship

Sunday, July 6, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

“Picnic in the Park with members and friends of PCUU”

All are invited to bring food to share at this annual PCUU picnic. Rev. Carin will host a pre-picnic Zoom at 10:45am. (The link for the Zoom service will be sent on Saturday the 5th.)

For details, see the picnic flyer in this newsletter on page 9

Sunday, July 13, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

“Creativity is Key to Flourishing” led by Leslie Wright, Director of Prairiewoods Spirituality Center

We are wired for creativity. It helps us to solve problems, be resilient and flourish in an ever-evolving universe. Let's explore that idea and how to cultivate a healthy creativity in our everyday lives.

Sunday, July 20, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

“When I Was Your Age” led by Lu Wilcox, PCUU member

The way we teach has changed. The way we engage with each other has changed. The way we express ourselves creatively has not changed - but our awareness of it has.

Sunday, July 27, 2025 @ 11:00 a.m.

“Creative Connections” led by Kathleen Mavity, PCUU member

Last month, several congregants completed their experience of Peoples' first Journey Circle. In this confidential setting, we were able to speak from the heart, listen deeply, and explore the monthly theme in new ways. Additional Journey Circles will be available in the fall, so come hear about the rewards and challenges (not to mention the delicious snacks) that made this an eye-opening experience. You may just discover a powerful new energy source to help deal with the daily stress of life in these United States.

Faith Formation

"You know it's up to us to make it all up. So what you making up? I can make it up that you could be loved no matter what." – Jason Mraz, Everything is Sound

This summer we will be exploring the theme of creativity. One of my favorite topics!

Creativity affects every aspect of our lives. It isn't just about creating art. It is about how we engage with the world around us, how we bring new ideas into existence, and how we solve problems. Whether you're designing a garden, writing a new business plan, or figuring out how to get your kids to eat vegetables, you are engaging in the creative process. When you have difficulty communicating with someone and figure out a point of common ground which opens up a dialogue, that is also a beautiful and important form of creativity.

But in our fast-paced world, creativity is often pushed to the margins. We may feel that we don't have the time or energy to create, that there are more important things to do. But creativity cannot thrive when we are overworked, stressed, or constantly busy. It requires spaciousness. It requires rest. It needs you to take time to just *be*.

The act of creation is deeply connected to our ability to slow down, to be present, and to care for ourselves. When we rest—when we give ourselves the gift of free time and self-care—we open up space for inspiration to come. We create the conditions for creativity to flourish. And the inspiration allows us to change our lives, the lives of our families, and ultimately the whole world.

Think of it like a garden. If we constantly till the soil, planting seeds without giving them time to grow, nothing will come to fruition. But if we nurture the soil, if we give it time and space, the seeds will take root, and something beautiful will emerge.

Taking time for rest and self-care is not a selfish act. Rest itself is an act of resistance in a society that tells us that our value is linked to what we produce. As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that each and every person, and that means you, has inherent worth and dignity. It doesn't matter what they do or don't produce.

So, my invitation to you is to take time this summer to rest, relax, and dream. I can't wait to see what you create!

Bridget Laflin, MDiv

She/Her

Interim Director of Faith Formation

Cell: (206) 384-6001



Sunday, July 27, 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Spend Sunday Morning at Wikiup Hill Learning Center before worship hanging out and playing in nature with friends! No need to register or sign-up. We will provide snacks!



PCUU SUMMER 2025

QUILT PROJECT

**SPONSORED BY
FAITH FORMATION**

Our tapestry of faith binds us together. Join us by contributing to our community quilt project.

Create art on a
provided quilt
square!

**QUILT SQUARES DUE
AUGUST 1ST**

Return completed squares to Faith Formation Director's mailbox.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Blank white square provided.
- Quilt will be hung in FF play space.
- Multimedia art encouraged, no sewing required.

Contact Megan with questions and/or if craft supplies are needed.
Megan.teamjones@gmail.com

YOUTH CO-OP CALENDAR



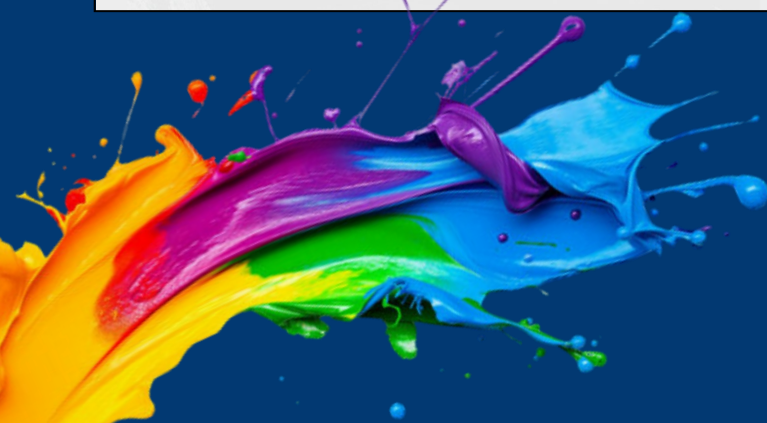
July:

- ✓ 7/13: Photo Scavenger hunt (2-4pm)
Meet up with your Youth Co-Op Friends at NewBo City Market for a photo scavenger hunt. Like last year's, but with a twist!
- ✓ 7/16: Bites and Brainstorming (5:30pm)
Meet up at the Culvers on Hiawatha and brainstorm ideas and plans for Youth Co-Op activities for the upcoming year. Do you want to try something new or try something again? Come on out and let us know!
- ✓ 7/27: Movie Night (TBD)
Let's watch a movie! Join us for outdoor movie night at St. Paul's United Methodist Church (1340 3rd Ave SE, Cedar Rapids). In case of rain, we will move indoors for a pillow fort movie night.

Sat. July 12, 10:00 AM

**CEDAR RAPIDS PRIDE PARADE and
BOOTH!**

March with Peoples Church UU at the Cedar Rapids Pride Parade! Come show your love and support for our LGBTQIA+ community and have a good time with your friends. Gather at 10:00 AM to march in the parade, or sign up for a time to staff PCUU's booth between 11:00AM and 5:30PM. Please contact Emily regarding the parade and Marcia regarding the booth.



Communications Refresh

Starts in August

Dear Peoples' People—

Next month, we're refreshing our approach to communications so that staying informed *feels* easier, not overwhelming. We're streamlining our two main communication tools—the **eWeekly** and **The Voice**—to reduce duplication, improve clarity, and make it simpler to find what matters to you most. Here's an overview of what's changing.

eWeekly

Beginning in August, the eWeekly will no longer be a long, scrolling newsletter. Instead, we're shifting to bite-size blog posts you can read on any device. Each Thursday, you'll receive a brief summary email linking to that week's blog activity. This means shorter emails, easier navigation, and content you can explore by category and at your own pace. Posts will be grouped into six key themes:

- ✓ **Announcements:** Board updates, issues of The Voice, and news about church life and operations
- ✓ **Worship:** Upcoming services and monthly themes—whether you attend online or in person
- ✓ **Faith Formation:** Opportunities and reminders for spiritual growth across all ages
- ✓ **Social Justice:** Updates on our justice efforts and ways to get involved
- ✓ **Events:** All the fun stuff—potlucks, game nights, and more
- ✓ **UUA:** Resources and news from our wider Unitarian Universalist community

The Voice

With our [Peoples News](#) taking on timely updates, *The Voice* will narrow its focus. Going forward, it will serve as a space to inspire spiritual reflection, deeper storytelling, and sharing voices from our congregation. For example, you'll see:

- ✓ Rev. Carin's Minister Musings and a snapshot of next month's services
- ✓ Words of wisdom from our Director of Faith Formation, Bridget Laflin
- ✓ Updates on initiatives like our Sacred Listening Campaign
- ✓ Thought-provoking content about our monthly theme, sourced from the Soul Matters curriculum

Warmly,





STILL WE RISE

Today's world can feel like a relentless furnace. Our Stewardship theme this year invites you to remember that despite the challenges we face — the pervasive disagreement, disconnection, and division — we are stronger **together** and continue to **rise up** against social injustice.

Our goal is **\$210,000** to support the church's operating budget next year. You will be receiving a letter discussing the campaign, a financial commitment form and a blue self-addressed stamped envelope the first week of July. Also included in the mailing will be a new giving guide. Or, feel free to follow the links below.

[Click here to read our **Letter of Invitation** for financial commitment](#)

[Click here to read our **Giving Guide**](#)

[Click here to submit your **Financial Commitment Form**](#)



We're excited that our Sacred Listening Initiative is now underway! Our team of dedicated listeners is in the process of contacting congregants to engage in one-on-one curious, meaningful conversations.

These conversations are designed to promote connections and identify our mutual self-interests. It is one step toward building a beloved community that reflects our shared passions.

Our goal is to complete this phase of the process by the end of August. We will then embark on the discernment phase of the initiative. More information will be forthcoming as we move on with this process.

We hope that you will say YES when contact and be a part of building an even better future for Peoples Church.

Yours, Sacred Listening Team

Chair, Laura McGraw

PEOPLES CHURCH

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST



ANNUAL PICNIC
July 6, 2025 @ 11:00a.m.

Daniels Park
Splash Pad Pavillion
940 Oakland Rd. NE

Please bring a dish to share, your own table setting, and your own beverage. Please, no alcohol. We'll eat around 11:30 a.m.

Join the 2025 CR Pride Parade!

An all-new walking-style interactive celebration where everyone is encouraged to dress up, bring their best Pride spirit, and walk together in unity. Please sign-up in advance.

July 12, 2025
11:00am



All are welcome and
encouraged to participate!

More Information and Registration




General Assembly — Recap #2



During General Assembly in June, the Supreme Court issued a ruling that allows states to ban gender-affirming care for transgender youth—a ruling that threatens lives and causes real, lasting harm. Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, responded with these words:

“

“The Supreme Court’s decision today will harm transgender youth by allowing states to deny them the kind of care they need for their physical and mental well-being....Unitarian Universalists embrace transgender, nonbinary, intersex, and gender diverse people...We also believe that **denying healthcare to the trans community is a moral violation.**

 →

- Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt
UUA President

UUA.ORG

“

We send our love and care to all the trans youth and their families who are directly affected by this ruling, **we will keep fighting for you.** We will continue to work with and on behalf of the trans and nonbinary community to ensure that their dignity as human beings and rights are protected across this country.”



- Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt
UUA President

UUA.ORG

“As a part of our faith tradition, Unitarian Universalists embrace transgender, nonbinary, intersex, and gender diverse people. This is a central expression of our faith.” Last year at General Assembly, Unitarian Universalists overwhelmingly passed a resolution naming that affirmation and protection of trans, nonbinary, intersex, and gender diverse people are fundamental religious commitments. That resolution now guides the UUA’s ongoing work for justice.

Read the full UUA statement: <https://www.uua.org/pressroom/press-releases/uua-reaction-skrimetti-case>

Second Sunday Plate Collection

Peoples Church is joyously sharing our Second Sunday Plate Collection this quarter with [Iowa Environmental Council](#) (IEC).

IEC's mission is a just, healthy environment and sustainable future for all Iowans. IEC envisions a state that is a leader in addressing climate change and creating resilient communities that embody Iowans' shared values of respect for all people and the environment. Through education, advocacy, and coalition-building, IEC raises awareness, generates action, and creates large-scale change. IEC works on federal, state, and local public policy issues to ensure a just, healthy environment and sustainable future for all Iowans.



Give to this Second Sunday Plate recipient online at: <https://peoplesuu.org/donate/>



Finance Update

Reported by Judy Price

The **Finance Team** met on 6/17/25 to review financial reports and continue financial planning.

Cash flow for May was positive:

- ✓ Income: \$16,015
- ✓ Expenses: \$15,209

Endowment Distributions Fill The Cup

By Rich Patterson

Numbers in the current Peoples Church budget reveal these awesome things:

- ✓ The budget is amazingly sparse for all the good work done.
- ✓ People pledge generously annually, but the total pledge income doesn't cover expenses.
- ✓ Endowment distributions enable the budget to balance. We'd be in a world of hurt without them.

As the Church's needs increase, income from the endowment will be ever more important to enable expanding services to people.

Members long past made generous contributions to endowed funds held by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation. People like Polly and John Ely, Ron McGraw, and Virginia Sigmund Myers contributed to legacy endowments and continue to give even after their deaths. Living members, like Teddy Shuttleworth, Dick Woodward, and the Pattersons, created and/or contributed to endowments that also generate annual income for PCUU.

Please consider helping Peoples Church ensure perpetual financial stability by creating an endowed fund or by donating to an existing one. Want to chat about it? Contact Rich Patterson, Rev. Carin, or PCUU Treasurer Gary McGraw.

You Can Help Create Worship Services

The Worship Arts Team invites YOU to join the team.

As a Worship Artist, you would get to...

- ✓ Offer your grounded presence during Sunday morning services
- ✓ Practice public speaking with authenticity and accessibility in mind
- ✓ Dig into the monthly [themes](#)
- ✓ Share your reflections within the acceptance of the PCUU community

Contact Worship Arts Chair Shelbi Benion at shelbibenion@gmail.com or Rev. Carin at minister@peoplesuu.org – by the end of July – to learn more about the Worship Arts Team and [co-creating worship](#).



Dear Peoples Church Beloveds,

I'm happy to share the news with you that last month I graduated with a Master of Arts in Religion from Meadville Lombard Theological School. I was honored to receive the Roberta Nelson prize in Religious Education. For my master's project I designed "Spiritual Programming for Creativity and Connection: A Retreat Inspired by Brigid, Goddess and Saint of Ireland."

As for what's next, I plan to facilitate spiritual programming and lead pilgrimages both near and afar. Planning is in the works for a pilgrimage to Ireland!

I sincerely appreciate the encouragement and kind words you have warmly offered to me all along the journey as I've pursued my theological education these past few years. Thank you all so much.

Blessings to you all,
Angie Pierce Jennings





Circle of Life



We are sad to share the news that friend of Peoples Church Kevin Junzmann died unexpectedly on June 12, 2025. Kevin regularly attended worship service with PCUU member Jerry Morris.

Cards of condolence can be sent to:

Jerry Morris

2027 Wilson Ave SW

Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

You can read his full obituary at:

<https://www.thegazette.com/obituaries/kevin-kunzmann/>



Just a reminder that a memorial service for long-time member Susan Elliott-Bryan will be held at Peoples Church on Sunday, July 6th at 3:00 p.m. with a reception to follow.

Cards of condolence can be sent to:

Family of Susan Elliott-Bryan

1801 Blake Blvd SE

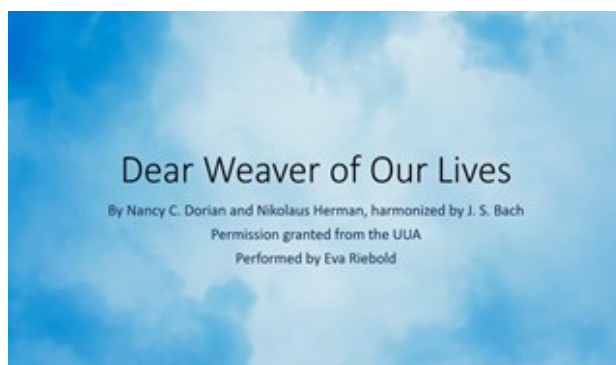
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403-2229

Susan died at home on May 29, 2025. In memory of Susan, donations can be made to the charitable organization of your choice.



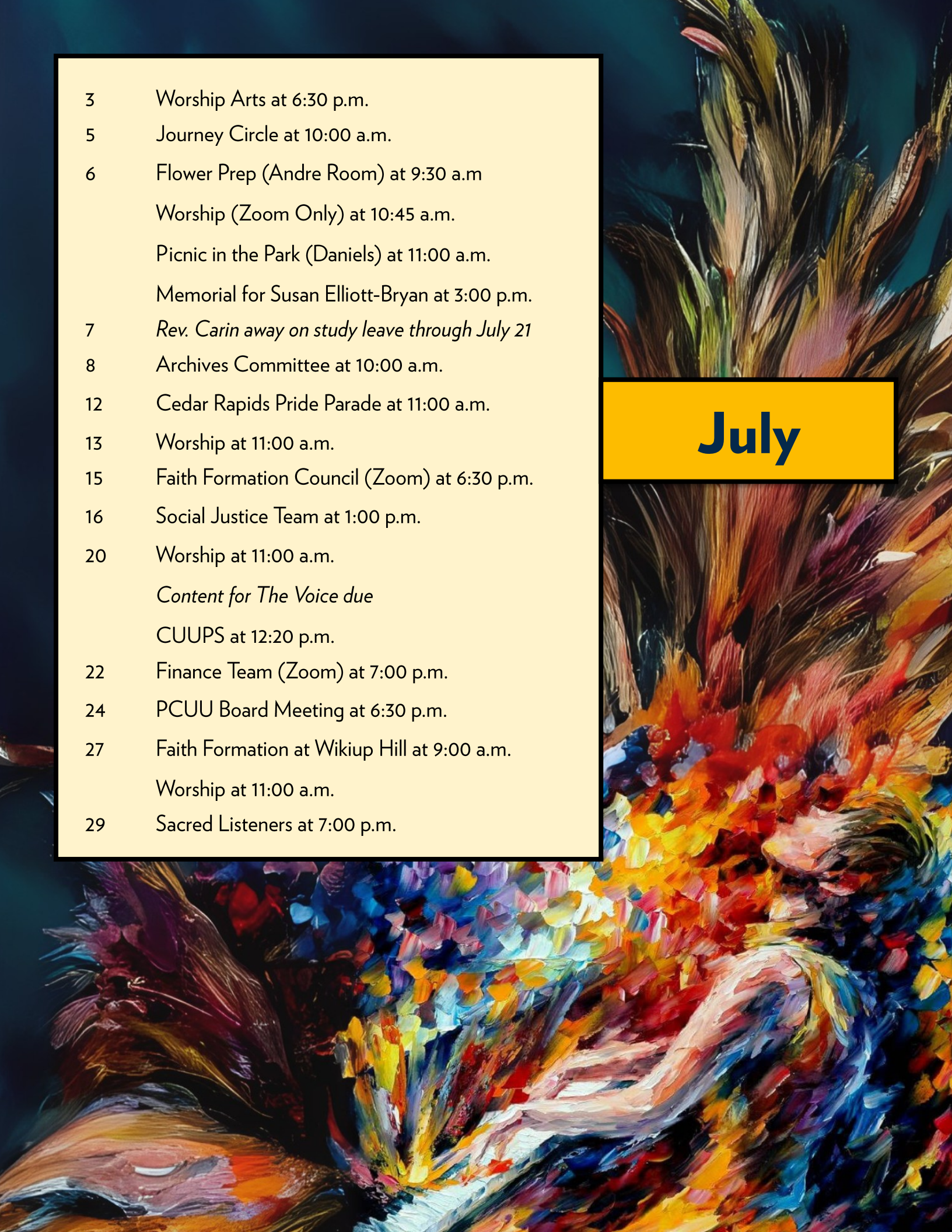
Music of the Month

July's Hymn of the Month is #22, "[Dear Weaver of Our Lives' Design](#)."



[Explore Lea Morris' music catalog here.](#)

Lea Morris

- 
- 3 Worship Arts at 6:30 p.m.
- 5 Journey Circle at 10:00 a.m.
- 6 Flower Prep (Andre Room) at 9:30 a.m.
- Worship (Zoom Only) at 10:45 a.m.
- Picnic in the Park (Daniels) at 11:00 a.m.
- Memorial for Susan Elliott-Bryan at 3:00 p.m.
- 7 *Rev. Carin away on study leave through July 21*
- 8 Archives Committee at 10:00 a.m.
- 12 Cedar Rapids Pride Parade at 11:00 a.m.
- 13 Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- 15 Faith Formation Council (Zoom) at 6:30 p.m.
- 16 Social Justice Team at 1:00 p.m.
- 20 Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- Content for The Voice due*
- CUUPS at 12:20 p.m.
- 22 Finance Team (Zoom) at 7:00 p.m.
- 24 PCUU Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
- 27 Faith Formation at Wikiup Hill at 9:00 a.m.
- Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- 29 Sacred Listeners at 7:00 p.m.

July

PEOPLES CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT

“Leading compassionate lives through spiritual growth and just action.”

Our Staff

Minister

Rev. Carin Bringelson (she/hers)
minister@peoplesuu.org

Congregational Administrator

David Kind (he/his)
office@peoplesuu.org

Office Hours

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

Interim Director of Faith Formation

Bridget Laflin, M.Div. (she/hers)
faithformation@peoplesuu.org

Office Hours

Tuesday & Thursday
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
(and by appointment)

Social Media / IT Outreach Technician
Matthew Wilde

Worship Accompanist
Judy Mitschelen

Choir Accompanist
Andrew Stoneking

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS:

office@peoplesuu.org or

(319) 362-9827

Our Board of Trustees

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Emily Hoselton
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Josh Wagner
Lu Wilcox

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Gary McGraw, Treasurer



STILL WE RISE

