

Minister's Message

Dear Members of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ,

"And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and do good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."
– Hebrews 10:24-25

As we enter 2024, I trust this report finds you all in good health and high spirits. This report is a combination of my December 2023 and January 2024 reports. As your pastor, I am grateful for the opportunity to update you on the various aspects of our church ministry and provide a comprehensive overview of our recent accomplishments, ongoing challenges, and plans for the future.

Worship and Spiritual Life

In the past quarter, our worship services have been rich and vibrant, fostering an atmosphere of reverence and growth. We have witnessed an increase in attendance during Sunday services and a greater participation from our congregation in various spiritual opportunities, such as Bible studies, prayer groups, and other ministries. The choir and worship team continue to craft meaningful services that facilitate the worship of our Lord, bringing us closer to God's presence.

Church Ministries

Our church ministries have been active and effective in serving the needs of our congregation and community alike. Our outreach programs have successfully met the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in our local area. We must acknowledge the tireless efforts of our dedicated volunteers who generously offer their time and resources to make these ministries thrive.

Finance and Stewardship

Our financial position remains stable, largely due to the unwavering commitment and faithfulness of our congregation. Despite the current challenges in our society, we have managed to meet our financial obligations and provide consistent support to local and global missions. However, we must continue to promote a culture of generous giving, encouraging faithful stewardship as a means of advancing the Kingdom of God.

Leadership and Discipleship Development

Although our congregation may not be growing numerically as quickly as we would like, we have witnessed individual growth and maturity who have shown a sincere desire to serve the church and community. As a pastoral goal, I intend to actively invest in leadership development programs and discipleship initiatives, engaging and mentoring emerging leaders to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for our church.

Building and Maintenance

Our church property requires continuous attention and regular maintenance to provide a safe and welcoming environment for worship. We have addressed several repair issues and undergone necessary renovations to uphold the aesthetics and functionality of our facilities. To maintain this positive momentum, we must continue to allocate adequate resources for long-term maintenance and improvements.

Future Plans and Challenges

Looking ahead, we anticipate several challenges that demand our attention. We must continue to navigate the uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic while adapting our ministry practices to meet the changing needs of our congregation and community. Additionally, we need to improve our communication strategies by embracing digital tools and platforms to reach out to both members and the wider community.

Following last year's Listening Sessions, I will lead a self-reflection and assessment of our congregation during the first quarter of 2024. By doing so, we will be able to reflect on the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement of our church. The church's needs and priorities will be better understood, but most importantly, we will gain an understanding of 'who we are now', and 'what we want to be when we grow up'.

My hope and prayer are that we will develop a strategic plan: using the insights from the self-reflection and assessment to develop a strategic plan for the next 5-years. This plan should outline the goals, priorities, and timeline for the church. It may include initiatives to strengthen community engagement, enhance worship experiences, and build leadership capacity.

In conclusion, ***I am inspired by the dedication and commitment exhibited by our church and encourage you not to be weary in well-doing for we shall reap if we faint not.*** . . We must remain steadfast in our mission to spread the love of Christ and make a positive impact in our community and the world. With your continued support and God's guidance, I am confident that we will overcome any challenges that lie ahead.

In gratitude to God for God's grace and loving you into God's next!

Rev. Benjamin Ledell Reynolds
Interim Minister

Dear Members of Peoples Congregational United Church of Christ,

Private love has public consequences. Any act of love, made public, teaches everyone who witnesses it an important lesson each of us must learn over and over. Love desires to be spoken. Like God, in creation, love endures all things except silence. Love cannot be silent. Love shall not be silent.

I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for the love and support you have shown me since I joined this beautiful community. It has truly been a blessing to serve as your Interim Minister. In this letter, I want to share something very personal with all of you. When I first arrived in May to serve as your Spiritual Leader, I came to you as a single man. Over the past few months, I have been fortunate to meet someone special—a person who has brought immense joy and love into my life.

Even as a church leader, my journey of faith is ongoing and constantly evolving. This relationship has been a source of strength, love, and support, which has further deepened my understanding of God's grace and acceptance. I firmly believe that as members of this loving and inclusive community, we are called to celebrate and honor the love in our lives.

With great joy and excitement, I want to share that Gerard Clifford Bragg and I will marry on February 14th. This is a significant step for us, and I wanted to personally let you know as your minister because you have become an essential part of my life and journey of faith. I plan to officially introduce Gerard to the congregation on Sunday, February 18th following the morning worship.

I firmly believe that sharing this joyous milestone with the congregation would not only bring us closer as a community but also serve as a testament to our church's commitment to inclusivity, love, and acceptance. I believe that by openly sharing my experience, we can foster a deeper sense of unity and understanding within the church.

Moreover, I firmly believe that our coming together as a congregation to celebrate love, regardless of orientation or gender identity, sends a powerful message of inclusiveness and acceptance to those who may be struggling with their [own] journeys. I hope that by sharing about my marriage and allowing the congregation to get to know Gerard for the man he is, we can inspire others to be true to themselves and find solace and support within our church community.

We have decided to have a private wedding, but it would be an honor for both of us to have members of Peoples join us in celebrating this momentous occasion later this summer at a reception. Your love and support would mean the world to us.

I understand that sharing personal aspects of our lives can sometimes be met with differing opinions, but I have full faith in the people of Peoples' ability to lead with love and empathy. By amplifying our commitment to embrace diversity, we can continue to create a safe and welcoming space for *everyone* who walks through the church doors. I would encourage open dialogue, understanding that not everyone may immediately embrace or comprehend this news. However, I want to assure you that my commitment to serving this congregation and our shared spiritual journey remains unwavering.

I remain, loving you into God's next,

Rev. Benjamin Ledell Reynolds

SUNDAY

7:00 a.m. Sunday Morning Praise and Worship Teleconference
Call-in-Number: 720-740-9739 Access Code: 4684874
The Line Opens at 6:55 a.m. - Call in and invite others.

8:00-9:45 a.m. Virtual Adult Church School

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88390857788?pwd=RmZoY2xqeTBlRVdTK09XWFY5cG9OQT09>

Meeting ID: 837 4429 8433 Passcode: 853640

10:00 a.m. Hybrid Worship Service and Virtual Service

Church School & Youth Ministry meet 2nd and 4th Sunday at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel (September-June).

12:00 p.m. Sermon by Phone – Sermons available every Sunday

Telephone Dial-in #: 1-202-318-5405

Listen to weekly church sermons and messages.

WEDNESDAY

7:00 a.m. Wednesday Word – A Devotional Conference Call

Dial-In Number: 605-475-5950, Passcode: 8964544# Second and Fourth Wednesday

This is not a toll-free number. Charges may apply.

12:00 Noon Prayer Meeting Dial-In – Prayer Service is every Wednesday.

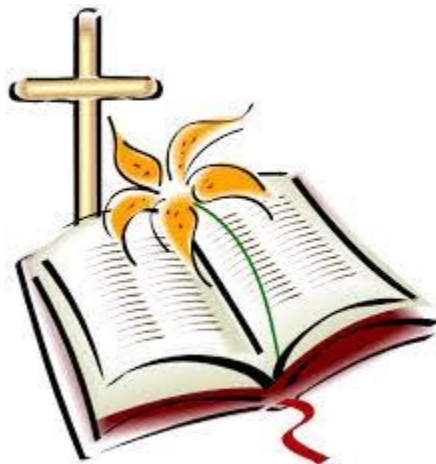
Dial-In Number: 518-992-1039, Access Code: 659959#

THURSDAY

6:00 p.m. Virtual Bible Study (Classes suspended July and August)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/99268523678?pwd=NFZrUzNlUXBXczJkMWVxZlVZclU5UT09>

Dial-in Number: 301-715-8592 Meeting ID: 992 6852 3678 - Password: 784420



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Peoples Church! All individuals who participate in our Worship and Liturgical Services and /or Events may have their images appear on our Social Media Platforms, Live Streaming, or communication documents. By attending these Services and Events, you tacitly agree to having your image displayed.

MUSIC MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are several opportunities for you to participate in the music ministry at Peoples. We invite you to come and be a part of the Adult Choir or the Praise & Worship Team. Instrumentalists are also welcome.

The Adult Choir is now recruiting new members

Open: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass.

Qualifications: Must be able to carry light musical notes part way across the church. Must have sufficient vision to see the director twenty feet away.

Experience: No application accepted from persons who have not sung, hummed or whistled in the shower.

Wages: Satisfaction and joy in God's service.

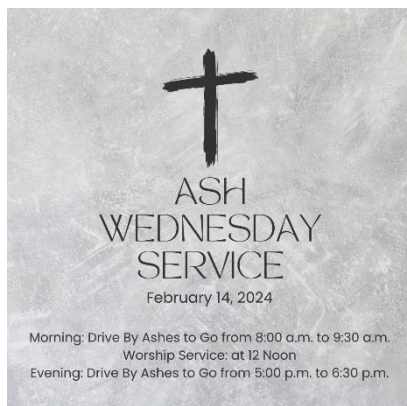
Hours: Sunday mornings with occasional opportunities for overtime (at above mentioned wages).

Rehearsals: Once a week except in the summer.

Apply: By attending the next rehearsal. Saturdays from 10:30 am - 12 noon.

Save the Date: WJAI and National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. Beta Chapter presents: "A Jazz Concert" featuring the students and alumna of the Washington Jazz Arts Institute on Sunday, March 3, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. in Peoples Church Sanctuary. A donation of \$25.00 per person is appreciated. Tickets may be purchased by Zelle or PayPal – nspdkbeta23@gmail.com from members of Beta Chapter or Eventbrite.com (a fee is added). If you are not able to attend, donations may be made to WJAI.org. PLEASE SUPPORT OUR YOUTH.

The WJAI Presents "IN THEIR OWN WORDS", a jazz documentary shown throughout the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival, held President's weekend in Rockville, Md. Check the festival schedule for times. Davey Yarborough and Esther Williams are performing at the festival on February 17th at 7:00 pm.



Martin Luther King Sunday



[“Direct Link to Online Giving for Donations.”](#)

REALM REGISTRATION



**Scan the QR Code: Peoples Realm
Sign-Up, Sign-in or Make a Donation**

**Peoples Congregational
United Church of Christ**

4704 Thirteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011
Phone: 202.829.5511
Follow us on Twitter
@PeoplesCongUCC

We are on the Web!
www.peopleschurchucc.org



Love God & Love Neighbor

Prodder Guidelines

The Peoples Prodder is our Monthly Newsletter to inform our community about recent announcements, updates and information pertaining to the life of our congregation.

All announcements and flyers for the upcoming edition of the Prodder must be submitted by 12:00 Noon on the 20th of the prior month.

Announcements and flyers can be emailed to info@peopleschurchucc.org.

Please do not mail information; electronic submissions are required. Announcements should be between 50-200 words maximum and should be informational about Peoples Church events or members and their families. All announcements may be edited and submissions are subject to final approval by the Ministers.

Contact Information

Interim Minister

Rev. Benjamin Ledell Reynolds
interiminister@peopleschurchucc.org

Church Moderator

Brenda B. Smith
moderator@peopleschurchucc.org

Administrative Staff

Operations Specialist
Yvette Hunter
yhunter@peopleschurchucc.org

Maintenance Staff

Akien Ingram
Towanda Chew



In Memoriam



Bezelle Thomas
Passed on January 23, 2024

Yvonne Grasty
Passed on January 28, 2024

