

The Peoples Presbyterian Church, Milan, MI

The Church Mouse



Volume 10 Issue 1

A place to belong...

A place to become...

A place to make a difference.



Baking, for me, is a kind of Communion

By Rev. Kelly Boubel Shriver, Pastor

As many of you know, one of my favorite television shows is a PBS series called “The Great British Baking Show.” It’s an American re-run of the most popular show in Great Britain (seriously, more popular than soccer!). Ten episodes follow a cast of amateur home-bakers through weeks of challenges: giant, complicated cakes; thin, lacy cookies; precise, buttery patisserie; crusty, dark breads. It’s a fabulous television show, and well worth the investment of your time and energy (find it on PBS.org).

Part of the reason I love this show is that it’s a true celebration of food. Yummy beautiful baked goods, and the hard work it takes to achieve such creations. Unlike so many American reality television shows (even the cooking ones), this show shies away from drama in nearly any form...unless you consider a stubborn cake refusing to rise properly “drama.” The bakers help one another out, offering assistance to their competitors as needed. The judges seem honestly sad to “kick someone off the island” each week. It’s simply a good-hearted show about bakers, their creations, and Great Britain. The tent is hung with Union Jack bunting and the casting has come to be a sort of arbiter of Britishness.

Recently, a friend (knowing of my love of all things baking) sent me a video of a young woman on the New York Subway. This woman, sitting on her yellow plastic seat, pulls a cake, a knife, and some frosting out of her paper bag, and then she proceeds to ice the cake (carefully, with gloves, not touching any part of the subway) while the car rattles along. Everyone watches her curiously, as you might expect! Once she finishes her

lovely iced cake, she pulls out plates and forks and begins to slice up the cake and offer it around the train. Some people refuse the cake in confusion, but most take a piece and begin to eat. The camera pans out and you see a whole car full of strangers, snacking on cake, chatting with one another. When an elderly man asks this young woman why she did it, she simply says, “I think New Yorkers need to share communion together a little more often. And everyone loves cake!”

I think this is the heart of why I love baking. I love reading baking books, watching baking television shows, trying out new recipes, and dreaming up new ideas. I love baking because, for me, it’s a kind of communion. When I bake a loaf of bread or a batch of cookies, I never eat the whole thing myself, I’m always sharing it with John’s co-workers, church fellowship hour, or the boys’ teachers. I love to bake in order to share something good with other people.

This view of baking, I’ve come to realize, has shaped my theology of not only the Eucharist, but more importantly of Christian hospitality in general. I can tell, by that happy feeling I get when I send cookies to work with John (it’s the same thing I see in the smile on the subway cake girl’s face), that in sharing what I love with others, there’s communion in that place. Hospitality isn’t about being the best, the fanciest, the most lavish. Hospitality is about sharing something simple, something brought about by your own hands, no matter what that is. It’s showing others that they are welcome and they are loved, with a slice of cake and a friendly smile.

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Christian Education Report: Having fun learning

By Carole London, Christian Education Committee Chair

The children certainly enjoyed presenting this year's Christmas Pageant, "Who is Knocking at my Door?". There were 27 youth involved in the pageant and worship service that day. The Genesis Bells played and a poem was shared by many of the kids. We all enjoyed a wonderful family potluck afterwards.



Photo Credit:
Michelle
LaFuentes



The children participated in making Christmas ornaments which they handed out to everyone who attended the Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship.



Epiphany brought not only the wise men to the Christ Child, but a birthday party in His honor as well! A creative and delicious birthday cake was made by Amy Gardner (thank you Amy!), and many useful gifts were generously given by the congregation. Thank you to all who helped make this Christmas season so joyous!

The Lenten Season is upon us and we are in full swing! The children will be making their annual Kings' Cake to serve at Fellowship Hour on February 7 (don't miss out!). They will also be busy assembling all the fish banks for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Then on February 14, we will be presenting Christian Education's Lenten Outreach project. **Details on the project are on Page 3.**



May we all be filled with the blessings of the Lenten Season as we prepare to walk through the long journey to Easter Sunday!

Christian Education's Lenten Mission Project

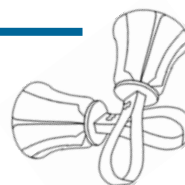
By Carole London, Christian Education Committee Chair

Our Lenten Mission Project this year will be "Treasure Boxes of Love" for SafeHouse in Ann Arbor. SafeHouse is a safe location for women and children to find refuge from a violent home life. When the children arrive, they usually have very few of their own possessions, because their departure was a quick one. Our "Treasure Boxes of Love" will give them something to call their own, and they will be able to take it with them when they leave SafeHouse. Now you know why we were collecting all those shoe boxes! It is our hope that all the children will be able to fill a box, and we invite the congregation to join us in this mission project. We will be present the project on February 14, and at that time there will be further information on ideas of what to put in the boxes. Let's all spread some love to those who were in desperate living situations and who are now at SafeHouse.



Have You Missed the Handbells?

By Nancy Kuzniar, Handbell Choir Director



Did you miss their music at the Christmas Eve service? Do you realize the handbells have not played for worship (or anything else) since last spring?

A bit of history: In 1972, PPC used memorial funds to purchase two octaves of "Schulmerich English Handbells," and then in 1976, an additional octave was donated. In 1997/98, a three octave set of Malmark handchimes was purchased with memorial funds.

Handbell music looks much like piano music. The ringers learn to see their specific notes, and to ring the notes at the right time. That's one of the reasons we have handbell practice!

The appeal of handbells goes beyond the music itself. Important elements of being part of the PPC handbell choir are support, friendship and a sense of connection. We are friends. We enjoy working together with these special instruments to create beautiful music.

PPC has a valuable asset that currently is not being used. Why? With Alice Allstetter's passing and several ringer retirements, we do not have enough ringers to provide the beautiful music that comes from handbells and handchimes. It takes 7 or 8 ringers to play two-octave handbell music, and 10 ringers to play three-octave music. Very little two-octave music is written other than for training purposes. The "interesting" music is written for three-octaves and more.

Until last fall, handbells have been played at PPC every year since 1972. An example of the dedication of the group is that one year (years ago), the handbells played the prelude for three Sundays in a row when the organist was on vacation. For many years the handbells have regularly played for worship once a month, and have "always" played for special seasons and Sundays such as Palm Sunday, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas Eve. Until last Thanksgiving and Christmas. Not enough ringers = no handbell music in worship.

We currently have six PPC ringers who would love to be able to get back to the enjoyment of ringing and sharing this special kind of music. **WE NEED AT LEAST TWO, AND PREFERABLY FOUR MORE PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN LEARNING TO RING.** It's fun, it's not hard, and with some practice it's easy to learn quickly. It's not necessary to be a member of PPC to join the bells. The commitment is to attend practice once a week (not in the summer), and play for worship once a month plus Easter and Christmas.

Please consider joining the handbells, and if you have a friend who might like to learn to ring – invite them. Contact Nancy Kuzniar at 439-1719 or n.kuzniar342@att.net to join the bells or if you have questions.

Mission and Outreach Report: Ways to Serve Others

By Sue Barney, Mission and Outreach Committee Co-Chair

As you think about ways to serve others this year, please consider the following opportunities:

On the fourth Wednesday of each month, two volunteers from PPC help serve, clean up, and provide dessert for 50 people at the Riverside Community Meal for local needy people in the community at First Presbyterian Church in Ypsilanti. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall if you are able to help.

Mercy House on Stone School Road in Ann Arbor, is looking for volunteers to host a Sunday evening meal. If we have enough interest from PPC, we will choose a date to prepare and deliver a meal for 25-50 people. If you have a suggestion for a menu and would like to help cook, please contact Sue Barney.

Thank you to all who give so much to all of our outreach programs. We are truly blessed!

You are making a *difference* in the lives of others.

Rose London Memorial Scholarship applications available

By Doris Campbell, Memorials and Scholarships Committee Chair



Applications for the Rose London Memorial Scholarship are now available in the church office. High School Seniors graduating in the year 2016 and attending college or trade schools in the fall of this year are eligible. Seniors must be active members of Peoples Presbyterian Church. Those interested in obtaining complete guidelines for this scholarship may request a copy from Michele in the office. The deadline for submission of the application is March 31, 2016.

Merry Makers will be at JR's in Milan on February 13

By Charles Pratt, Fellowship Committee Chair

Be sure to get your name on the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall for our next Merry Makers event. We are heading to JR's, 1000 Dexter Street right here in Milan. **We will all be meeting there at 5:00 pm.** This is a fun event where we get together for good food and conversation! See you there!



And all who *believed* were together and had all things in common.

Acts 2:44

Stewardship Report: A reflection of 2015

By Steve Barney, Stewardship Committee Chair



As the Stewardship Committee begins to look forward to 2016, we thought we would provide you a wrap-up report of our efforts in 2015.

Annual Pledge Campaign:

As you may know in 2015, Stewardship adopted the New Consecration Sunday process for annual pledges. This approach had been highly recommended by Presbytery, and successfully utilized by a number of churches in the Presbytery over the past several years. Our New Consecration Sunday was led by Doris Ann Campbell (as our representative from Detroit Presbytery) and proved to be very successful, with many participants expressing how the message and process enhanced the meaning of Stewardship for them, and what God is calling them to give. On New Consecration Sunday, members and friends of the church pledged over \$104,000. And as additional pledges were received from members who couldn't attend the service, our total pledges are at \$107,000 for 2016. Our members also generously give to many other monetary campaigns throughout the year, such as One Great Hour of Sharing, Peacemaking Offering, and Memorials.



Ongoing Stewardship:

In addition to the New Consecration Sunday pledge campaign, during 2015 the Stewardship Committee tried to recognize how stewardship is more than an annual pledge drive. It's more than monetary giving.

This aspect of stewardship is certainly evident throughout our congregation.

Examples are everywhere as we reflect, looking at the dedicated service of so many of you who work inside our ministry to serve our members and friends within the church, and the communities outside our walls.



These are just a few examples: Your support as Christian Education teachers; Vacation Bible School volunteers; Elders and Deacons; members on other committees at the church; members and friends working around the church to keep the building and grounds in good repair throughout the year. We have members coming back to the church every evening to ensure the building is secured and safe, and the many of you who provide for an inviting and welcoming Fellowship hour after each Sunday's service.

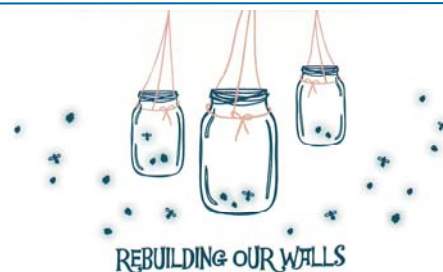
PPC volunteers go outside our walls and work on various Mission and Outreach programs. Examples are Mercy House in Ann Arbor and the Riverside Community meals at First Presbyterian in Ypsilanti. We have members and friends making food donations like the Thanksgiving meals and/or the "Green Tape Sunday" monthly food contributions, given to those in need through Aid in Milan; and those providing Christmas presents for families through the Community Adopt-a-Family outreach program.

There is our Women's Group knitting hats for cancer patients, our church donations providing the means to assist our local school run programs like peer support/anti bullying...the list goes on and on, and reflects the faithful stewardship of our congregation and its dedication to serve God through Peoples Presbyterian.



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Rebuilding Our Walls Update:

For 2015, about \$47,000 was received (as of the beginning of December) from the pledges for the Rebuilding Our Walls building campaign. As you may recall, about \$55,000 was pledged last year for this two year campaign, so we were off to a good start. During the course of 2015, we were able to complete much of the work on our list of items for which the building campaign pledges were designated. Those included replacement of the pumps and flow switches for the boiler heating system; waterproofing and painting the manse basement; remodeling the nursery in the church; and repairing and re-shingling the roof over the Sanctuary.

In the fall, Stewardship asked members and friends of PPC, who had not pledged to the second year of the campaign, to please consider doing so. There are still three items on our identified list of repairs/updates that need to be completed. Those include painting the wood areas on the exterior of the church building; re-siding the manse garage; and updating the heating and cooling systems of the church to electronic controls. All totaled, these remaining items will cost approximately \$36,000. We will begin these remaining projects in the spring and summer of 2016 as funds become available. Again, it is your generous support that will allow us to ensure our church properties are well maintained, and welcoming, for our community. It is so much appreciated!

In Summary:

The Stewardship Committee (Steve Barney, Doris Ann Campbell, Jack Cranson, Brian Lafuente) thanks you for your ongoing commitment to see the ministry and mission of Peoples Presbyterian continues to serve our members, friends, and community.

Session Highlights: January 2016

By Nancy Kuzniar, Clerk of Session



Annual Officer Elections: Jack Cranson was elected as Corporation President, Nancy Kuzniar as Corporate Secretary and Clerk of Session, and Ken London as Treasurer, all for one year terms,

Membership: Church Active Membership (people who have joined the church) on December 31, 2015 was 108.

Mission: In December, Mission Committee collected approximately 45 gifts for two Milan families identified through Aid in Milan. Three additional Kroger gift cards were donated to Aid In Milan.

Hats, gloves, scarves, socks were collected and donated to homeless people at the Ypsilanti Riverside Community Meal. Steve and Sue Barney volunteered at the Riverside meal on December 23, and delivered 60 holiday cookie packs to serve that evening.

Worship & Music: New purple paraments have been ordered, and should be here for Lent. Red paraments will be selected and ordered. When these have been received, we will have completed sets for all liturgical seasons.

The Lent sermon theme will be "The Landscape of Lent." The church will order a variety of flowers to decorate the sanctuary for the Easter service again this year. Sign-up sheets and pew cards will be available soon.

A "Now Testament Lesson" will be shared with the congregation once a month during worship, dealing with things currently happening in the church.

PPC Hats for Cancer Project: A total of 202 hats were made and donated in 2015 (one more than in 2015): 185 to the St. Joe Hospital Oncology Unit and 17 to the Ypsilanti Homeless project.





February 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 9 am Bible Study 7 pm Bookworms	4	5	6 1-4:30 pm "Let's Chill Winterfest": Volunteers to Milan Fire Station for Chili Cook-off
7 9 am Choir Practice 10 am Worship: Transfiguration of the Lord, Communion, C.E. King's Cake during Fellowship Session Committee Monthly Reports are due to the Clerk.	8	9 7 pm Worship and Music Committee Meeting	10 9 am Bible Study 5:30 pm Pancake Supper 6:30 pm Worship: Ash Wednesday	11	12	13 5 pm Merry Maker Event: JR's in Milan
14 9 am Choir Practice 10 am Worship: 1st Sunday in Lent, Ordination/Installation of Elders & Deacons, OGHS Fish banks to be given out, presentation of the C.E. Lenten Mission Project "Treasure Chests of Love" for SafeHouse, C.E. 11 am "End of Life Issues" Adult Education Class—Lounge 12-3pm Elders/Deacons Leadership Training Session Committee Packets will be ready for pick-up.	15 <i>Presidents' Day</i>	16	17 9 am Bible Study 7 pm Session Meeting	18 1 to 3 pm PPC Hats for Cancer Project	19	20
21 9 am Choir Practice 8:30 am Deacons Meeting 10 am Worship: 2nd Sunday in Lent, C.E. 11 am "End of Life Issues" Adult Education Class—Lounge Church Mouse Newsletter Articles are due for March Issue.	22	23	24 9 am Bible Study	25 9:30 am Church Mouse Newsletter Collating	26	27
28 9 am Choir Practice 10 am Worship: 3rd Sunday in Lent, Welcome New Members, C.E. 11 am "End of Life Issues" Adult Education Class—Lounge	29	February Fellowship Hour is hosted by: Deacons 				

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