



"An inclusive community, celebrating God's unconditional love through engaging worship and faithful service"



January 1, 2023

**"What Work is God Giving to You
This New Year?"**

The Love of God Gathers Us

Gathering Music

*We greet those around us or sit quietly
as we settle into sacred time and space*

Ringling of the Bell

Prelude & Candle Lighting

“Gloria! To the Lord Our God”

Ylvisaker

Sam Gromoll, *acolyte*

A flame represents the light of Christ among us

Words of Welcome

Pastor Clare Gromoll

*****Call To Worship** (*responsive*)

Carol Dusbabek, *liturgist*

One God calls us now in this Christmas season to become new—

**All To make room for our own nativity, even when there is no room
at the inn.**

One When we are lost—

All Hope.

One When we are busy—

All Peace.

One When we are sad—

All Joy.

One When we are bitter—

**All Love. Let this hour be a time to hope for all these gifts of God.
Amen.**

*****Opening Hymn**

“I am the Light of the World”

NCH #584

Vs. 1-2

Cheri Schwartz, *cantor*

Acknowledging Our Humanness and God's Grace

Prayer of Longing (*unison*)

Faithful God, we rejoice that you have sent your promised Christ. And yet we confess that we are not fully ready for Christ's coming; we are reluctant to live as if the whole Earth were your domain. We know the story—the shepherds, the angels, the magi—but we don't fully understand what it means. Awaken us by your Spirit so that Christ's birth makes a difference in our lives. Grant us your peace, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

prayerful silence

Musical Interlude

...as our own longings quietly emerge

Assurance of Grace

*****Passing the Peace**

*We share a sign of peace with those gathered now (in-person, virtually)
We extend the peace later by phone call, email, text message*

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you! **All: And also with you!**

Let's welcome one another!

Name tags are found in the Narthex (just inside the front doors)

Welcome forms in pews: request a prayer or name tag, update contact info, etc.

A Time With Children

Sung Invitation *We sing as our children come forward*

**This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

*In fall 2022, we gave a first annual gift to Walker|West in St. Paul, MN as a reparations payment for our use of this African American spiritual.
"Walker|West creates a music learning community rooted in the African-American cultural experience, where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, explore, and grow through music."*

Singing "Happy Birthday"

*..Happy birthday dear **Eddy** (Hintze-Graf), **Diane** (Legato), **Cindy** (Siegel) & **Avery** (Albright)*

Wondering Together

Blessing One Another *Seated, we open our arms to the children*

Children : God be with you **All:** And also with you

Sung Affirmation *We sing as children return to families*

**Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine.
Ev'rywhere I go, I'm gonna let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine, oh let it shine.**

We welcome the sounds and movements of children in worship

*Lisa (Childcare Provider) also cares for infants and toddlers
(and older ones who join in today), 9:15 - 10:45 in the Nursery downstairs*

*If needing space to move around, families are welcome to use
the Narthex (entry area) or Meditation Room (off front left exit from Sanctuary)*

Proclaiming God's Love

Scriptures

Psalm 8 ~ *The Inclusive Bible (responsive)*

God, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the Earth! You have placed your glory above the heavens!

From the lips of infants and children you bring forth words of power and praise, to answer your adversaries and to silence the hostile and vengeful.

When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place–

what is humanity that you should be mindful of us? Who are we that you should care for us?

You have made us barely less than God, and crowned us with glory and honor.

You have made us responsible for the works of your hands, putting all things at our feet–

all sheep and oxen, yes, even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

God, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the Earth!

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-13 ~ *The Inclusive Bible*

There is a time for everything, a season for every purpose under heaven:

a season to be born and a season to die;

a season to plant and a season to harvest;

a season to hurt and a season to heal;

a season to tear down and a season to build up;

a season to cry and a season to laugh;

a season to mourn and a season to dance;

a season to scatter stones and a season to gather them;

a season for holding close and a season for holding back;

a season to seek and a season to lose;

a season to keep and a season to throw away;

a season to tear and a season to mend;

a season to be silent and a season to speak;

a season to love and a season to hate;

a season for hostilities and a season for peace.

...cont. next page

What do workers gain from their efforts? I have reflected on this while learning all the kinds of work God gives to humankind. God has made everything in harmony with the divine; yet although the Almighty has imbued eternity in our soul, we are unable to grasp the totality of God's work from beginning to end.

What I do know is that what is best for us is to be happy and enjoy life as long as we live. And God's gift to us is to eat and drink and find fulfillment in our work.

Morning Message "What Work is God Giving to You This New Year?"

Responding To God's Love

Prayer Song

"Deep Peace"

Sing! Prayer & Praise #201

All verses

see next page

Prayers of the People

When sharing a joy or concern for yourself, another, or a part of the world; please project your voice to be heard. We'll add your prayer to our Prayer Corner.

One: God, in your love

All: Hear our prayer

Prayer of Jesus (*unison*)

**Our Father and Mother who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.**

Thy kin-dom come. Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

Amen.

Prayer Cards

(on the Information Table in our Fellowship Hall)

If you voice a prayer for a loved one during Prayers of the People, we welcome you to start a card for us to sign during Fellowship.

Or simply take a blank card with you as you leave!

“Deep Peace”

All verses

♩ = 44

G D Em Bm C G/B Cmaj⁷ D

1. Peace, peace, deep peace, my peace I give to you. _____
 2. Love, love, strong love, my love I give to you. _____
 3. Joy, joy, great joy, my joy I give to you. _____

E Bm⁷ Cmaj⁷ Gmaj⁷ Cmaj⁷ D G

Peace, peace, deep peace, my peace I give to you. _____
 Love, love, strong love, my love I give to you. _____
 Joy, joy, great joy, my joy I give to you. _____

Em Bm⁷ Cmaj⁷ G Am⁷

Not as the world gives, I give to you, not as the
 Not as the world gives, I give to you, not as the
 Not as the world gives, I give to you, not as the

B¹¹ B B⁷ Em D G D Em

world gives, I give to you. Peace, peace, deep
 world gives, I give to you. Love, love, strong
 world gives, I give to you. Joy, joy, great

Bm C Am⁷ Bm/D D⁷ G Am/G G

peace, my peace I give to you. _____
 love, my love I give to you. _____
 joy, my joy I give to you. _____

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

“Child of Mary”

Malawi Melody

*Offering plates circulate at this time
We support our church financially as we have means to do so
Welcome Forms also go in the offering plate (prayer request, updates, etc.)
We can also mail in a check or give electronically by scanning the QR code*



*****Offertory Response “In the Bleak Midwinter”**

**What can I offer, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;
but what can I offer: all my heart.**

Sharing in Holy Communion with Milk and Honey

*Holy Communion is open to members and friends of all ages
as we seek to follow Jesus in the way of radically inclusive love*

*****Invitation & Prayer (responsive)**

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to God Most High.

**All-loving God, you are Creator of energy and matter, the heavens and the Earth. Therefore, we celebrate you - joining our voices with the wind and the streams, the animals and the flowers, the living and the dead (pause), the stars and the planets and all the company of creation—forever singing our unending hymn to proclaim your glory.
Amen.**

*****Sung Response**

“Santo, Santo, Santo”

#111 CH

Sung twice - first in Spanish, then in English

C G7 Am F G C

San - to, san - to, san - to. ¡Mi co - ra - zón te a - do - ra! Mi
Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. My heart, my heart a - dores you! My

F G7 C Am F G7 C

co - ra - zón te sa - be de - cir: ¡San - to e - res Señ - or!
heart knows how to say to you: Ho - ly are you, Lord!

Words of Remembrance & Blessing

Sharing the Bread of Life & Cup of Blessing

**** Please approach by the central aisle, returning by a side aisle.*

*Take a piece of (gluten-free) bread and eat it
Carry a small cup of warm milk back to your pew*

Pastor Clare will then prompt us to partake of the milk

Sung Response

“Come to the Table of Grace”

#112 Sing! Prayer & Praise

Sung as we come forward to receive Communion

F C/E Dm F7/C

1. Come to the ta - ble of grace. _____
 2. Come to the ta - ble of peace. _____
 3. Come to the ta - ble of love. _____
 4. Come to the ta - ble of joy. _____

Bb C7 F C

Come to the ta - ble of grace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of peace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of love. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of joy. _____

F Gm7 F/A Bbsus2

This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.
 This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.
 This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.
 This is Christ's ta - ble not just yours or mine.

F/C Bb/C C7 F Bb/F F

Come to the ta - ble of grace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of peace. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of love. _____
 Come to the ta - ble of joy. _____

A Note about our ritual of Milk and Honey

Several years ago, People's Church began a practice of sharing a cup of milk and honey during the first service of the new year. The cup harkens back to God's promise to the children of Israel in the time of their Exodus from Egypt – that they would be led to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Today we remember that, even in times of bitterness, God's hope and possibility endure. As we begin a new year, Ecclesiastes reminds us: There is a time for every season and every matter under heaven.

Let us consider this season in our own lives, wondering to what work God is calling us. Sipping from the sweetness, we silently reflect on these questions:

- What do I need to plant? What do I need to harvest?
- What do I need to tear down? What do I need to build up?
 - What do I need to scatter? What do I need to gather?
- What do I need to keep? What do I need to throw away?

Musical Interlude

...(as we reflect)

Space to make notes below..

*****Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)**

Creator God, you have blessed us with sweetness in every season. Thank you for your eternal promises of hope, possibility and renewal that can be found in each of us. Thank you for this wonderful, changing world that is eternally alive with your Word and your Love. Help us to find wisdom and courage in your creation, sensing the deep roots of love that strengthens and sustains us, now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER CORNER

Please hold these joys and concerns in your prayers:

For persons known to us...

*With **John Norheim**, we pray for love and comfort to surround his mother **Betty Julin**, who is nearing the end of her life and being cared for at a hospital in Minneapolis.

*For **Mary**, a good friend to Cindy Parsons & Bob Dickie who lost her husband shortly before Christmas. May love surround Mary and all who grieve with her.

*With **Milan Horak**, we hope for a full and smooth recovery after a complete knee replacement.

*For **Jere Fetter**, continuing to struggle with upper leg pain and mobility. His next procedure is at Mayo in February. We pray for relief from pain.

*For **Dale Shaller** who recently received a pacemaker after a heart event and testing. With Dale, we give thanks for his access to amazing healthcare and for the care and support of family and friends.

*For **Brian Dickie**, son of Cindy Parsons & Bob Dickie, continued healing after a head injury that required stitches. We give thanks that Brian sustained no brain injuries.

*For Pat and Nat's granddaughter, **Kayla** - for peace in her decision-making.

*We celebrate birthdays of: **Eddy Hintze-Graf** (5 yrs. the 31st), **Diane Legato & Cindy Siegel** (5th) & **Avery Albright** (2 yrs. the 7th)

And in the wider community...

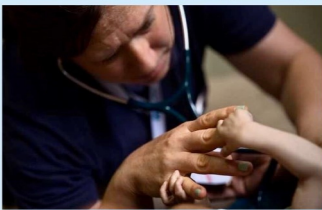
*For parents and other family members, supporting their children's well-being and joy during this holiday season and break from school.

*For all who are living lives behind bars - that they find hope, meaning and purpose even while incarcerated. May we learn from those neighbors about courage and faith.

*As owls and woodpeckers make their joyful presence known this winter, may we welcome them to inspire our efforts to support the integrity of the whole Earth community.

*We give thanks for the signing of the Respect for Marriage Act. May we continue to move toward equitable respect among all human beings.

*During this winter holiday season; may we hold greater awareness for all who are lonely, grieving, and managing mental health challenges.



**Pursuit of a Call from Traditional
to Humanitarian Medicine
A Conversation with Aidan Gromoll**

**Sunday, Jan. 8 | 11:00-11:45 am,
in the Fireside Room & Zoomed**

Join us as we gather for a presentation and conversation with Dr. M. Aidan Gromoll, a pediatrician from Wisconsin, sister to Pastor Clare, and friend of People's Church. Aidan will speak about her journey from traditional medicine in the US to the humanitarian field. After completing her pediatric residency, she worked as a pediatrician in Illinois until 2013 when she opted to leave her position to volunteer in resource poor settings. She initially participated in several short-term missions in Haiti.

She has spent the last seven years providing care for refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable populations in the US, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Serbia, Bosnia, Romania, Moldova, Iraqi Kurdistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Lebanon, Honduras, Mexico. Aidan will discuss motivation, challenges, rewards, practical issues and future plans.

All are welcome!

Advent & Christmastide Gratitude!

Thank you for all the ways we were present together during Advent and Christmas. We welcomed 13 friends (in person) from the wider community from the Solstice through Christmas morning. And we were joined by numerous friends via live stream and watching recordings (249 total views).

We offer particular thanks to the following for supporting our Advent and Christmastide experiences:

- **Greeters, Acolytes, Liturgists, Tech Team and Fellowship hosts** | for being essential co-creators of meaningful Sunday morning experiences!
 - **Children's Ministry Team** | for engaging our youngest members in ways that helped them explore the meanings of this sacred season!
 - **Jackie Savage** | for weekly managing of our "Sign on 95," letting people in the wider community know they are welcome among us!
 - **John Norheim** | for faithfully keeping our sidewalks and entryways shoveled and accessible!
 - **Michael Bjork, Sharon Neuenfeldt, and our PCC Choir** | for beautiful music that causes our readings, prayers and preaching to dance!
 - **Keely Vandre, Claire Bjork and Michael Bjork** | for cantoring many carols across Christmas Eve and Christmas morning, strengthening our shared experience!
 - **Frank Cole, Lori Mildon and Eric Vandre** | for adding beauty with recorder, flute and guitar!
 - **Kimberly Jackson** | for producing 7 worship bulletins in December!
- Andi Favilla and Jenni Shaller** | for weekly decorating the Sanctuary in artful ways as we progressed through the season!
- **All of you!** | for investing time and energy, participating in the life of our congregation!

Hearts overflow with gratitude!

We encourage anyone to take a poinsettia with you today!



Exploring a Potential Merger with St. Peter's UCC A Preliminary Timeline

Our Leadership Team invites all members and active friends of our congregation to be present for upcoming conversations, experiences and votes!

In the Jan. 4th Mid-Week News, we will share the minutes from our Dec. 4th PCC Planning, Elections & Budget Meeting. That was our first conversation (as a whole congregation) about the potential merger process.

[Jan. 8th - St. Peter's UCC has a forum for itself to discuss its church council's proposal that their path forward be an exploration of the pursuit of a merger with us]

Jan. 15, 10:45 am | A Forum of People's Congregational Church (during Fellowship Time), facilitated by Pastor Daniel Harrell, interim legacy minister at St. Peter's UCC

[Jan. 22nd - St. Peter's UCC holds its Annual Meeting, voting on affirming a path forward of exploring the pursuit of a merger with us and affirming the selection of their 3 lay members of a Church Merger Task Force]

Jan. 29, 10:45 am | Annual Meeting of People's Church (during brunch), voting on (among other business items) affirming a path forward of exploring the pursuit of a merger with St. Peter's UCC affirming the selection of our 3 lay members of a Church Merger Task Force]

Feb. 5th, 9:30 am | (Potential) Joint Worship Service at People's Church, celebrating together in Holy Communion and commissioning the Church Merger Task Force during worship

[Across February and March, the Church Merger Task Force develops and drafts a covenant of merger, incorporating input from both congregations.]

April 9th | Each congregation votes on affirming a covenant of merger (each in their own church building for Easter Sunday), meeting to vote right after worship

*Please plan to participate in this process! Reach out to Pastor Clare, outgoing Moderator Rolf Dittmann, and incoming Moderator Paul Spilseth with any questions you may have.
We will be in this time of discernment together!*



**MN Conference UCC Covenant Day!
at Robbinsdale Parkway UCC
February 4, 2023 @ 9:30 am - 3:30 pm**

**Please contact Kimberly if you would like
to be part of a carpool that day.
(lunch and snacks are provided)**

This winter and spring, we (People's Congregational Church) will connect with Hazel Park UCC (located on the border of St. Paul and Oakdale), our sponsor congregation in our affiliation process. We anticipate the MN Conference UCC officially welcoming us a dually affiliated congregation at the Conference Annual Meeting in early June.

See “Mid-Week News” for a refresher on our congregation's dual affiliation process and to register for this event.

Pastor Clare will attend Covenant Day and we hope to have a hearty group of People's members there! This will be a great opportunity to deepen our connection with members of UCC congregations in the greater twin cities area.

Covenant Days are a time to gather together and be the church! Our gathering on February 4 will include workshops, worship, food and fellowship – a time for members, lay leaders, and clergy of local congregations to connect with one another and Conference staff.

Workshops

- **Local Church Moderators/Council Presidents Gathering** - facilitated by Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Kelly Gallagher
- **Planning your Church's Future & Considering Your Legacy** - Rev. Cindy Mueller
- **Creation Justice** - Director of Outdoor Ministries Rev. Sheri Nelson & Rev. Dwight Wagenius, Mayflower
- **Demystifying Your Church's Financial Covenant** - Bob Olson, Development Director, MN Conference UCC
- **Pastor/Parish Relations Committee Training** - Rev. Kelly Gallagher, ACM, MN Conference UCC
- **Re-imagining Church: Spaces & Places** - featuring a panel of MN Conference congregational leaders

We invite you to these upcoming activities...

ST. CROIX VALLEY PRAYER CIRCLE
Jan. 4 | 6:30 pm
@ People's Church
309 Third St. N.
Bayport
People of all faiths & paths

EMBRACING DORMANCY: *Fruitful Rest*

Join our circle of prayer
Hearts unite & envision healing
Each person contributes to our impact
All ages welcome, bring friends

peoplescongregational.org
Questions? Contact the office | 651-439-5667



People's Book Club

We read theologically progressive books by diverse authors

People's Congregational Church (Bayport)
Jan. 18 | 6:30-8 pm | @ church & Zoomed

CONVICTIONS

HOW I LEARNED WHAT MATTERS MOST

Marcus J. Borg

Interested? Contact us:

office@peoplescongregational.org

*Valley Bookseller (Stillwater) has copies for us
at 15% off the \$16.99 list price!*

...All are welcome!

Kimberly (Communications Coordinator) works primarily remotely

She will next be at church: **Jan. 3-5**

Kimberly will work remotely: **Jan. 10-12, 17-19 & 24-26**

You can reach her every week (T, W, Th 9 am - 4 pm) at 651-439-5667
and at office@peoplescongregational.org

Need access to the church building? Want to visit with Pastor Clare or
Kimberly in person?


Please call (or email) ahead of time to avoid missing us.

Pastor Clare is on call at all times: 651-600-6409

Thank you to today's partners: Sharon Neuenfeldt (Worship Accompanist),
Cheri Schwartz (cantor) Sam Gromoll (acolyte),
Cheri Schwartz & Bob Dickie (greeters), Carol Dusbabek (liturgist),
Mindy (communion & fellowship) Paul, Bob & Mark (tech),
Jackie Savage (Sanctuary organizer, outdoor sign),
Andi Favilla & Jenni Shaller (decorations), Lisa Culbertson (Childcare Provider)



People's Congregational Church

Rev. Clare Gromoll, Pastor ~ pastor@peoplescongregational.org
309 Third St. N, Bayport MN 55003-1028
(651) 439-5667 / office@peoplescongregational.org
www.peoplescongregational.org  @PCCBayport

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