

PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST
BURLINGTON, WI

VOL XII, ISSUE II
FEBRUARY 2017

Special points of
interest:

World Day of
Prayer Coming!

ONA—Extravagant
Welcome

Ash Wednesday
March 1st

More Changes...



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The Plymouth Epistle

A Newsletter for the Members & Friends of Plymouth Congregational UCC, Burlington, WI

WORDS FROM WANG – “How Will They Know We Are Christians?”

I write this on what has become commonplace for winter of 2017; a gray and dreary day. But we are also beginning the month of February and that always means that winter is half over!! I’m a realist, however, and know that Wisconsin is most unpredictable when it comes to the arrival of spring so the best we can hope for is a typical end to winter. A little sunshine along the way wouldn’t hurt however!!

The good news is that in the midst of all life’s transitions (unlike the weather) there are always the constants. And for us in the church, one of the most beneficial constants is our faith; for our God is that stronghold, and as I say every Sunday, “our rock and our redeemer.” But lest we take our faith for granted, a little refresher never hurts which begs the question, what it is that makes us Christian?

For some time now, your church leaders have considered offering opportunities to revisit some of the core values, traditions, rituals, and teachings of our Christian faith. I have never met anyone who felt it was below them or an insult to get back to the basics from time to time. Consequently, I have committed to developing a series of sermons to do that very thing. These foundational “teaching sermons” will begin on Ash Wednesday and continue on the following Sundays during the season of Lent.

Each lesson will begin with “They’ll Know We Are Christians by... (A spin on the Christian folk song “They’ll Know We are Christians By our Love.”). The themes for each respective week we will be as follows (not in stone)”

March 1: “They’ll Know We are Christians: The Prequel”

March 5: “They’ll Know We are Christians: by Our Persistence”

March 12: “They’ll Know We are Christians: by Our Intellect”

March 19: “They’ll Know We are Christians: by Our Example”

March 26: “They’ll Know We are Christians: by Our Open Minds”

April 2: “They’ll Know We are Christians: by Our Faith”

April 9: “They’ll Know We are Christians: by Our Humility”

April 16: (Easter) “They’ll Know We are Christians: by Our Love”

And that’s not all...

Also as part of our Lenten offerings I will be leading a book study. The text we will be exploring together is not your typical Lenten theme or topic though it is as relevant and inspirational as any other book we might consider; not to mention it **will** give us all cause for spiritual reflection and introspective thinking. (See the **ONA Column** for dates and times.)

The book is *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs-Christian Debate* by Justin Lee. I think we would all agree that the more we study together and seek understanding the better we will all be as Christians regardless of our personal views on controversial issues. Open Minds and open hearts are always the key to peacemaking and bridging all that divides us as human beings. Not to mention, that’s how they’ll know we are Christians. See ya’ in church. Pastor Bob

February 5 – 5th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Acts 11:1-18

Sermon Theme: “You Are What You Eat”

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion

February 12 – 6th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Matthew 5:21-37

Sermon Theme: “You Have Heard it Said....”
(UH OH!) Rev. Jim Burd preaching

February 19 – 7th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Matthew 5:38-48

Sermon Theme: “Perfect? Are You Kidding, Jesus?” Rev. Jim Burd preaching

February 26– 8th Sunday After Epiphany

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-9

Sermon Theme: “The Transforming Power of Story”

March 1 – Ash Wednesday

Soup Supper at 6:00, Worship at 7:00

Worship Theme: “They’ll Know We Are Christian - the Prequel”

March 5 – 1st Sunday in Lent

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-7

Sermon Theme: “They’ll Know We Are Christian - by Our Persistence”

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion



PLYMOUTH PRAISE IN WORSHIP – February 24

Guess what day it is? That’s right woodchuck chuckers, it’s Groundhog Day! Or at least it will be around the time many of you read this. That must mean that spring is within range in spite the possibility of six more weeks of winter. Either way, we sing praises to our *God of Change and Glory* as the hymn states. And what better way to sing praises than with our Plymouth Praise Worship Team.

“Plymouth Praise” is a group of singers and players who lead with a more contemporary style of worship music and do so typically on the 4th Sunday of the month.

Please note the change in rehearsal schedule for February. Pastor Bob will be on the road for the 2nd and 3rd Sundays this month so we are moving rehearsal up to the first Sunday so that we might prepare for our usual Fourth Sunday.

February 5 @ 11:30 – Rehearse for Feb 26

February 26 @ 8:45 - Rehearsal with 10:00 worship to follow.

We always welcome new singers or players. Come help us make a joyful noise.

VALENTINE’S COOKES FOR SHUT INS.....

We are looking for anyone willing to bake 2 dozen cookies and bring them to church by Sunday, February 5th. Plates will be assembled after church that day and delivered during the week.

If you could help assemble or deliver, please contact Jill Albrecht (262-534-4640).



From the Moderator



Anyone that knows me well knows I love to read. My favorite books include fiction mystery stories with strong characters who are usually Detectives or Lawyers, non-fiction history and sports, particularly baseball, and religious non-fiction on personal faith and growth, Bible study, or self-improvement.

I read a lot of religious topic books as part of our church Men's Group (sorry, we don't have a "catchy" name...just Men's Group). For example we just started a book on Faith and Belief by Martin Copenhaver (see more information below). Winter isn't done yet, and we have plenty of nasty weather days coming. Good days to curl up with a book and read. If you want a book that will help you grow along your faith journey, try one of the books I've recommended below. You can find any of these books on Amazon, Barnes and Noble or Christian Book Distributors websites. Or let me know and I'll get you the information.

"Living Faith While Holding Doubts" by Martin Copenhaver, who is a well-known UCC Minister and author. In this book he "explores the healthy tension between faith and doubt, and demonstrates how a balance of both will actually allow you to develop a deeper relationship with God." The men's group is just starting this book, and I'd encourage everyone to read it. Whenever I hold the classes on exploring what our Christian faith is all about, I'm sure I'll refer to this book.

"To Begin at the Beginning" by Martin Copenhaver. This book is described by William Willimon as a "wonderful introduction to the Christian Faith or an invigorating way to renew our faith". Willimon is Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry at Duke University. I think this book is a must read for all.

"The Life God Blesses" by author and pastor Gordon McDonald. He asks the question: "Are we prepared to weather the storms of Life?". This book was published in 1994 but the message is timeless and I am in the process of reading it again. I highly recommend it to everyone.

If you like a serious topic that is written in a lighter style and with humor, pick up a book by Max Lucado. His books are easy to read and generally the chapters are short. Most of his books include study questions for discussion. Some of my favorite Lucado books include "Facing Your Giants: a look at the life of David", "Come Thirsty", a book about not letting your faith go dry but instead let God make you more useful in his hands, "Glory Days: Living Your Promised Life Now", a study on the life of Joshua. Give Lucado a read; he is a prolific writer and has dozens of books in print.

If you do read one of these books, let me know if you enjoyed it or not. I'm always looking for more "good reads" so please share your reading list with me.

And remember to thank God every day for all the blessings he has given you. - Ron

ONA 2017 (New monthly feature) **“Extravagant Welcome”**

For some time now, thanks to our hospitality team, Plymouth Church has had a rug in our entryway that reads **“Extravagant Welcome”** which sends a message to anyone who enters that “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey you are welcome here.” As the process of exploring our becoming an OPEN AND AFFIRMING CHURCH has continued, one remark we keep hearing is “I thought we already were welcoming to LGBT people.” This remark comes with the assumption that due to our affiliation with the United Church of Christ and its long standing policy of non-discrimination that by virtue of our covenant with the UCC that we are an open and affirming church. Not so.

The other common theme running among us is “Well, we’re a friendly church and we already are welcoming. So why do we need to bother going through the process and have a vote?” Again, this is a fair assessment but still doesn’t answer some important questions or address some critical issues. Below is a useful article provided by the national (UCC) Open and Affirming Coalition (ucc.org). Please read it carefully....

*‘All Are Welcome’ isn’t enough - “Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people of faith often experience emotional and spiritual injury in churches that condemn their capacity to love and seek love. Because they’ve learned that “All Are Welcome” usually doesn’t apply to them, they **can’t assume** that any church will be safe for them and their families.*

A public welcome by an Open and Affirming (ONA) church sends a clear message to LGBT seekers (and members) that they have a home in the United Church of Christ. ONA churches do experience net growth. When new ONA churches attract new members they are not all gay, many of them are often young straight couples who identify with the values ONA represents, and want their children to learn the faith in a welcoming church.”

In the coming months, as we continue to explore this together as a congregation we will learn that for every biblical reference that historically has been used to condemn LGBTQ people there are 3 or 4 that affirm them. Here a few examples:

- Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Romans 15:7)
- There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)
- For Christ, having received, not one or two of us, but all together, has thus connected us, so that we ought to cherish one another.” (John Calvin)

ONA Listening Session #1 – February 26 @ 11:30-12:30 (in the sanctuary)

Book Study: *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs-Christian Debate* by **Justin Lee**. During Lent Pastor Bob will be conducting a book study on the book *Torn*. Chapter by chapter discussions will take place on Sunday mornings @ 8:30 with the possibility of an online chat as well. Those interested in participating can either purchase the book on their own (amazon.com) or we can order one for you.

Dates for Book Study: March 5, 12, 19, and April 2 & 9.

Please sign up by notifying the church office.

Mission News:



Shoe Box Donations by Month

GOAL - 200 BOXES

- January – toothbrushes
- February – toothbrushes
- March – bar soap
- April – sewing kits and tools (tape measures, small hammers, pliers, screwdrivers, etc.)
- May – combs and small hand mirrors (plastic or travel type)
- June – t-shirts (long & short sleeve)
- July – flip flops
- August – school supplies
- September – bandanas and socks
- October – toys
- November – assemble Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes

Please note that customs **no longer** allows toothpaste or candy in the boxes as some countries will not accept them with those items.

Your Plymouth Mission Team

January has come and gone very quickly it seems.....maybe the weather has had something to do with that. We have been blessed with warmer temperatures than normal, I am NOT complaining. :) January is a quiet month with our Children's Ministry Programs. December is such a busy month, so it's nice to enjoy a little down time. We have started our second semester of LOGOS already, and things are moving along smoothly. Great to have such wonderful kids and volunteers in our program.

We will be having our LOGOS Sunday on February 26th, so please come and join us for a wonderful service with our youth. We are looking into going to a Milwaukee Bucks game for their Faith and Family Night on Friday, February 24th at 7pm. Please stay tuned for more details.....we hope we can make it a fun church family night out!!

Have a great month!!

Remember to love your neighbors with all your heart! Being kind is such an easy thing to do.

Blessings!
Nikki Burd, Children's Ministry Director



MORE CHANGES

Have you seen the changes in the former pastor's office?

It is now our church library and, with the addition of the table and chairs that were moved from the chapel, our new conference room. There are other additions to this room, as several of our church 'treasures' have been moved there as well. The beautiful communion table that was given to the church in memory of Lucius and Frances Conkey was first used to serve communion on October 28, 1891. A pulpit that we can see in a photo of our new church of 1903 is another room addition. Because of the picture we can date the pulpit to 1903, but was it new then or had it been used in the earlier church? Two chairs at one time were part of the sanctuary but nothing more is known of them.

Perhaps this brings up questions about these items, and perhaps questions about just what other things around our church might be in the antique category. The Historical Committee has hung six photo frames with information about: the 1891 communion table; the early pulpit; our first pipe organ which was dedicated June 28, 1908; our present bell which has been calling us to worship since 1852; the architectural drawings of the church of 1903; and a collection of photographs now proudly owned by the Burlington Historical Society. There is a bulletin board which will answer at least some questions about those people whose names we see every Sunday in our beautiful church windows.

Another recent change is that the carpeting has been replaced in the Education Wing hallways, both upstairs and downstairs. The sanctuary and parlor carpeting project is coming along and there is a group in place working on various options.

Wander around and check out these updates for yourself!!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Ash Wednesday—March 1 for 7pm service we need 2 ushers and liturgist



Maundy Thursday—April 13 for 7pm service we need a liturgist

Easter—April 16 for 7:30am we need 2 ushers & 1 liturgist,
for 10:00am service we need 3 ushers

Easter Breakfast—we would like to “resurrect” an Easter Breakfast opportunity between our 2 worship services. Please consider your team or a group of friends to coordinate.

Contact Beth in the church office if you can fill any of these spots!



GAME DAY!!

Saturday, February 18th

11am - 5pm

Bring a game you'd like to play,
but be prepared to play something new!

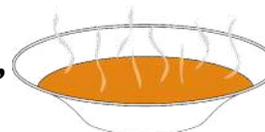


Ash Wednesday, March 1st

Soup Supper at 6pm

Service at 7pm

If you have a yummy soup recipe you would like to make for our meal,
please contact Lori Benstead (763-9079) or Gidget Brown (763-7293).



- 2 - Sue Nelson
- 3 - Amanda Gyger
- 4 - Kiffie Scott
- 5 - Brett Moen
- 6 - Trudy Leith
Dave Willick
Bill Wald
- 7 - Jeanette Wilson
Mary Skwierawski
- 11 - Meghan Peterson
Ellen Graham



- 13 - Eric Lunderskov
Henry Zusan
- 14 - Bob Sandberg
Emma Iselin
- 16 - Brad Brenner
- 19 - Caden VanSwol
- 23 - Mollie Wang
- 24 - Donna Schellpfeffer
- 25 - Diane Hanson
- 27 - Sue Alby
- 28 - Chad Peterson
Aimee Bigelow



Ron & Pam Moersfelder –
February 2
Terry & Katie Simenson –
February 26

Special congratulations to Jeanette Wilson who celebrates her 94th birthday February 7th.



I cannot thank you enough for your prayers and kindness expressed over the last few months. I am so grateful for my church family and their support. Your thoughtfulness and expressions of sympathy have not gone unnoticed.

- Pat Sandstrom

*Thank
You*



The family of Alan Murin who passed away on January 12th.
Our prayers are with Laura and Mikayla during this difficult time.



Any cancellations due to dangerous weather conditions will be on our voice mail and on WISN Channel 12.





Fair Trade Coffee Project - Items sold 2nd Sunday of the month

- Organic Tamari Roasted Almonds — \$5.00 per package
- Equal Exchange Teas — \$3.00 per package
- Regular Whole Bean and Ground Coffee — \$7.00 per bag
- Decaf Whole Bean and Ground Coffee — \$8.00 per bag
- Regular Flavored Coffees — \$8.00 per bag
- Hazelnut Decaf — \$9.00 per bag
- Hot Cocoa Mix — \$6.00 per can
- Equal Exchange Large Chocolate Bars — \$2.50 each
- Divine Chocolate Bars - \$1.50

We also have Women's Bean Project items:

- Soup Mixes - \$5.50 each
- Cookie Mixes - \$5.00
- Iced Tea Mixes - \$3.50
- Dip Mixes - \$3.75
- Chocolate Covered Espresso Beans - \$5.75

Sharing Sunday — 1st Sunday of every month — All items go to Love, Inc.

Love's food pantry continues to need your help!

The following non-perishable food and other items are greatly needed:

canned fruit, canned vegetables, soup

toothpaste, toothbrushes

hair spray, hand soap

feminine hygiene products

canned spaghetti

brown sugar, sugar

mayonnaise, mustard, catsup

disposable razors

mouth wash, shampoo

tissues, toilet paper

diapers (all sizes)

macaroni, cereal

jelly, peanut butter

laundry detergent

dish soap, deodorant



Monetary contributions are always accepted.

Just place your check in the offering plate or mail it to Plymouth Church.

Blood pressure screening - February 12th

Blood pressure screening will take place in the fireside room following worship.



Plymouth Children's Center receives funds from grocery stores:

Plymouth Children's Center collects grocery receipts from Richter's. We receive 1% of the total on the receipts. Richter's receipts require a *Funds for Friends* sticker on the back and can be put in the blue box outside the office door. Thank you for your continued support.

Flowers for Sunday

If you would like to supply flowers for the altar on a Sunday, please sign up for a date on our Flower Chart. It is located by the door in the parlor that leads to the nursery and the church offices. Look ahead to important dates in your life that you would like to commemorate by providing flowers for our church service. We thank Marty Baker for the exquisite arrangements she has been providing for the past several months. We have truly appreciated her gifts of time and talent!!





FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS

SUNDAY	Feb 5 10:00 am	Feb 12 10:00 am	Feb 19 10:00 am	Feb 26 10:00 am
DEACONS	February 5: Jim Burd – Bread LaVonne Howell, Betty Peterson, Kiffie Scott			
USHERS	Ron & Pam Moersfelder Betty Peterson	Tim & Kay Burd Nikki Burd	Paul Gander Steph Eveland Diane Hanson	Scott, Peggy & Halie Behnke
LITURGIST	Jackie Kastengren	Kiffie Scott	Steve Sullivan	LOGOS Kids
FELLOWSHIP SERVERS	Bob & Jackie Kastengren	Tyler & Becky Daniels	Steph Eveland Diane Hanson	Ron & Pam Moersfelder
AV OPERATOR	John Kranich	Jamie Edwards	Dave Snyder	
NURSERY	Steph Rediger	Betty Peterson	Joel Graham	Ev Price
ACOLYTE	Chloe Rediger	Gibson Souther	Josh Katzman	Raegan Rediger

**Deadline for the March issue of *The Plymouth Epistle* is :
Wednesday, February 22nd. Thanks, Beth**



**“Ladies Lunch Bunch”
Wednesday, February 1st
Noon at Pine Street Café**

Come for fun and pleasant conversation.
Order from the menu and pay for your own lunch.
If you need a ride, call the church office at 763-6890.

PLYMOUTH UCC STAFF

Rev. Robert E. Wang, Minister - 262-308-4180 (H)
Beth Picazo, Secretary
Stephanie Eveland, Financial Secretary
Nikki Burd, Children’s Ministry Director
Jeffrey Hughes, Custodian
Marty Baker, Wedding Coordinator
Diane Olson, Organist & Bell Choir Director
Jamie Edwards, Choir Director
Lisa Carnahan, Choir Accompanist



**REV. ROBERT WANG, MINISTER
OFFICE HOURS**

Tuesday-Friday: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
If possible, please call ahead
to make sure Pastor Bob is available

PLYMOUTH UCC OFFICE HOURS

Beth: Monday - Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Fridays, 8:30 a.m.—2:30 p.m.
Steph: Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Church Office: 262-763-6890

Web Site: www.ucply.org

Email: Plymouth@PlymouthUCCBurlington.org

Minister Email: Minister@PlymouthUCCBurlington.org

Financial Secretary Email:

steph@PlymouthUCCBurlington.org

**PLYMOUTH CHILDREN’S CENTER
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Sara Trewyn, Program Director
Phyllis Hancock, Assistant Director



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Noon – Ladies Lunch Bunch 5pm LOGOS 6:30pm Bell Choir	2	3 6am Men's Breakfast	4
5 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Coffee & Conversation 11:30am Plymouth Praise	6	7 7pm Choir	8 6:30pm Operating Council Meeting 6:30pm Bell Choir	9	10 6am Men's Breakfast	11
12 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Coffee & Conversation 11:00am Fair Trade Sales 11:00am Blood Pressure Screening	13	14 10:30am A.S.A.P. 7pm Choir	15 5pm LOGOS 6:30pm Bell Choir	16	17 6am Men's Breakfast	18 11am Game Day
19 8:45am Bell Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Coffee & Conversation	20	21 7pm Choir	22 5pm LOGOS 6:30pm Bell Choir	23	24 6am Men's Breakfast	25
26 8:45am Plymouth Praise 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Coffee & Conversation 11:30am ONA Listening Session	27	28 10:30am A.S.A.P. 7pm Choir	Notes: Pastor Bob will be out of the office from February 6-20. Contact the church office if you are in need of pastoral care during that time.			



**PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
124 W.
WASHINGTON
STREET
BURLINGTON, WI
53105-1478
262-763-6890
262-763-6802 FAX**

**ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED
DATE MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT
DELAY
FEBRUARY 2017
EPISTLE**

We hope you like our monthly newsletter. It is such a great communicator of happenings at our church. However, if you no longer wish to be on our mailing list, please notify us by either mail, telephone (262-763-6890) or email - plymouth@plymouthuccburlington.org.

LOVE



The women of Cross Lutheran Church
will host the
World Day of Prayer
Friday, March 3, 2017

Fellowship will begin at 9:30am
Service will begin at 10:30am.

An invitation is extended to all women interested in gathering with other women from our area and from around the world to collectively worship on this day. If you are interested in participating please see Carolyn Schoneck