

PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST
BURLINGTON, WI

VOL XII, ISSUE VIII
AUGUST 2017



Special points of
interest:

Vacation Bible School!

*WI Annual Conference
overview*

Save the Date!!!



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The Plymouth Epistle

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

WORDS FROM WANG – “Looking Up Stream”

I simply could not believe what I was reading. It appeared in some comments on the City of Burlington’s Facebook page. Mayor Jeannie Hefty was sharing how proud she was of “Burlington Strong” and the outpouring of support from the community in response to the 100 year flood that impacted us all at some level.

But it was the comment by a certain woman that truly floored me. The woman, an Illinois resident, was responding to the news about the Echo Lake dam being gradually opened to release the pressure on the dam. The gist of the comment was, “Well, since the dam is being opened to let more water out up there is Burlington going to pay for all the damage it is going to cause us down here?!”

Call it ignorance, self-pity, or the “it’s all about me” mentality; we have to ask, how someone could actually think that one riverfront community already impacted by flash flooding could actually be blamed for more flooding downstream. Not to mention the fact that many towns like Burlington have built dams to actually control flooding.

What really gets my goat is the fact that this is such a common theme in our society today. It is so easy to blame others for personal hardships or to pass the buck for problems that we face as individuals and communities; some of which are certainly our own doing while so many more are outside of our realm of control.

In an attempt to turn this story into a positive lesson for us all I remind you of a little parable (non-biblical). Once a certain was a village having a community wide picnic, when someone noticed a small child screaming for help in the river nearby. As a couple people rushed to save the child, more children appeared in the river and more of the villagers joined in the rescue effort. The village was so overwhelmed with what was happening that two of the villagers finally decided to go up-stream to find out how and why the children were entering the river to begin with.

The moral of the story: if we lived in a just world (upstream) there would be no need for charity (downstream). Charity is how we deal with immediate problems; the symptoms; we donate food, clothing, money; we volunteer to help “clean up the mess.” The Parable of the Good Samaritan is a good example of charity. We are pretty good at charity; dealing with the effects. But so much of Jesus’ teachings tell us that we should not stop there but, rather, attempt to address the root problems; the causes.

Working for justice means going upriver and seeing why people are entering and drowning in the river; and by addressing the roots causes of the problem and then work to help prevent the problems at their origin.

In the end, there remains those who are victims of the complex system that is our society and though **I do not condone the kinds of “blaming” remarks like this woman’s** I want to encourage heartfelt efforts to address systemic change. May all of our hearts be driven to make a difference not just by throwing some loose change in a kettle at Christmas time but by living at the core of the gospel message which means confronting the real issues and problems that face our community, nation, and world.

See ya’ in church. Pastor Bob

ONA 2017 - *The Journey Continues*

To our newer readers, ONA (Open and Affirming) is a status claimed and proclaimed by churches in the United Church of Christ who identify themselves as being non-discriminating to those of any sexual orientation. The ONA church does not judge or condemn any single member of the human race for being the person God has created them to be. The ONA church truly lives out its call that “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey – you are welcome here.”

Through study, prayer, and thoughtful discussion, Plymouth Church is currently engaged in considering what it would mean for us to become a member of this growing faction of our parent denomination; the United Church of Christ. This feature is the 7th one in a series which began in January of this year; those previous articles are archived on our church website. Public listening sessions have also taken place since we began discussions (see below).

Next ONA Listening Session #5 – (movie and pizza) August 20 @ 11:00-1:00

We will be watching together the documentary film entitled “*Call Me Malcolm.*” *Call Me Malcolm* is an amazing story of the human spirit and God's spirit, and the liberating struggle to realize and express with confidence the marvelous gift of one's truest sense of self. As Malcolm shares his own story and through the stories of others we meet, *Call Me Malcolm* offers us a glimpse into the real lives of real people who are transgender. But it is only a glimpse. There are many stories to be told and *Malcolm* helps us make connections to our own stories, encouraging us to share them. That can seem daunting in a culture which has done more to heap shame on persons who identify as transgender. The good news of *Malcolm's* story is the way in which shame and fear are overcome by grace, compassion and knowledge. Viewers cannot help but come to a deeper understanding of faith, love, and gender identity, and by doing so, arrive at a deeper understanding of their own journey.



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
AUGUST 8, 9 and 10 from 5:30-7:00
Ages 3 thru 2nd grade**

“God Is My Super Hero!”

**Contact Nikki Burd (206-4943)
with questions or to sign up!**



Greetings from the newest Moderator.

After a couple of years of dramatic changes, both in the church and my personal life, I am looking forward to a more peaceful year. The new carpet in the parlor and sanctuary looks great and I know many are enjoying the new hearing loop that has also been installed. But this doesn't mean no change this year as we are still exploring the possibility of becoming an ONA church. I encourage everyone to attend at least one of the listening sessions scheduled for the summer and fall if you haven't been able to make one of the earlier sessions already.

Sincerely,

Laura Murin

God's Gals August Event

The event for God's Gals in August will be "Lunch in the Park" at Echo Park on Sunday, August 20th from 11:00-1:00. Bring a sack lunch and enjoy the beautiful outdoors!

(If weather is not conducive to being outside we will move our lunch to the church Fellowship Hall.) We will plan to continue working on birthday cards for Waterford Senior Living

We will try to keep our gatherings on the 3rd Sunday of each month so you can plan ahead. September 17th will be a Progressive lunch, with plans to follow after we have our next get together. Please consider having us at your home for part of the meal. Sounds like fun!



Shift: Our Unfolding Story

Reflections on Statewide UCC Annual Meeting

I had the honor this year of accompanying Pastor Bob to the Wisconsin Conference Annual Meeting at Green Lake Conference Center as the church delegate. There was a little ulterior motive at work since I played drum with Pastor Bob for some of the worship music. That being said, I would have been glad to go even if I weren't playing. Annual meeting is a time for representatives from UCC congregations across the state to come together and do the business of the church—passing budgets, voting on next year's board of directors, and hearing reports from many of the projects the Wisconsin UCC Conference helps to fund. However, it is much more than just a business meeting.

First, it's an opportunity for church members to compare notes on how we do things. There's no way to recall how many conversations I had over the weekend about using the cajon (the drum I play) in praise band and how we organize our special music and worship styles at Plymouth. One of the larger motions voted on, as Pastor Bob mentioned in June, was for the conference to be declared "Immigrant welcoming". I attended a fantastic workshop about what First Congregational UCC in Janesville has done to become one of the first Immigrant Welcoming congregations in the state. There was also a "Share Fair" and exhibit hall where individuals and churches shared what they were doing on projects ranging from raising sexual assault survivor awareness to fighting human trafficking to basket making programs to leadership development and more.

There were also wonderful speakers and worship services. Rev. John Dorhauer, President and General Minister of the UCC spoke Friday evening about the future of the UCC, and how we can work to remain current and relevant to an increasingly "post religion" culture. Saturday morning, Rev. Everett Mitchell gave a lively and impassioned talk about race in church and how we need to grapple with race and white privilege in a denomination that is currently 90% white. How do we work to create a multi-culturally friendly worship community, going beyond just giving lip service to the "Everyone Is Welcome Here" concept? Videos and slides from the talks are on the conference website and well worth a watch.

Reflecting after the weekend, if there was a secondary theme to the conference that I saw, it was "When we say 'everyone is welcome' how do we define 'everyone'?" Currently, our congregation is grappling with the Open and Affirming process, to make 'everyone' include the LGBT people. If someone were raped, would they feel like our church is a safe place to talk about their attack? Would an illegal immigrant look to our church as a safe place to go? Did you know that the largest ICE detention center in Wisconsin is in Kenosha? Could we do more to support those incarcerated, commonly without charges, or the families left behind? Did you know there is a high rise in downtown Milwaukee where thousands of people are held for weeks or months with no windows or access to the outside, awaiting trial? These are people who haven't even been convicted of a crime. WISDOM, a group affiliated with the UCC is

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Shift: Our Unfolding Story

Reflections on Statewide UCC Annual Meeting (continued)

working to bring attention to the deplorable living conditions and to find a more humane housing alternative. What do we do to encourage minorities, people of color and other religions to feel welcome at our events or our worship?

As you can probably tell, the weekend got me quite fired up and ready to take on all the ills of the world. On my way home, the more rational and level-headed side of my brain started throwing speed bumps in my mental enthusiasm. “But are there that many people of color in pasty-white Burlington?” “If we have to go all the way to Milwaukee to find Muslims to work with, doesn’t that just reinforce the “otherness” of them?” “Is Plymouth UCC really ready for all these changes?” Thanks to my procrastination, 2 major events happened before I got this article written to change my viewpoint; one only important to me, but the second to the city of Burlington as a whole.

One Friday, the guys stayed after work to drink a beer or two in the parking lot, and I hung out to chat with them for a bit. For those who don’t know, I’m a landscaper, so when I say “the guys from work”, that means Mexicans, all born in Mexico. At one point, I was talking with Ponch. Now, Ponch is one of the assistants, meaning he’s very knowledgeable and has very good English. He’s been in the US maybe 20 years, has a Green Card, a wife and two daughters. We were talking about current events, and Ponch said “Since all this craziness with the President, I’m afraid to make eye contact if I see a white person in the grocery store. I don’t know that they’d do anything to me, but I don’t have any way of knowing they won’t.” That’s the same feeling I would get in college when I would walk home late at night, but he’s just buying groceries for his family. Nearly half the population of this country is black or Hispanic or Asian, or Muslim or Middle Eastern or any one of a hundred other groups that aren’t “white and Christian”. If we are to work to create the Kingdom of God in our community, how can we do so when everyone not “white and Christian” is living in fear?

The second event was the flood of July 12. That evening after work, Bryce Clark and I decided to walk over to check on the Hayloft and see what we could see. With all the streets closed to traffic, and no power in most of the city, there were many people out walking around and taking pictures of the flooding. Later, I described it as “the biggest block party ever only...horrible”. But beyond the flooding, one other thing struck me over and over: the number of people of color that were there. There was no vehicular traffic, so they all had to have walked there, but I saw people of every shade and nationality imaginable. Anyone who tells you there’s only two black families in Burlington, apparently I saw both of them across the street from the Hayloft. Burlington is not really as pasty-white as we tend to believe. Doing a rough recollection, I’d believe it if someone said over a third of the people I saw that evening were not white.

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Shift: Our Unfolding Story

Reflections on Statewide UCC Annual Meeting (continued)

If we are going to be a congregation that reaches beyond the four walls of our building to be a relevant and integral part of our community, then we need to begin recognizing what our community actually includes. Even though nobody talks about it, there are LGBT members of our community looking for somewhere to feel safe and included. There are victims looking for a safe place to recover from what happened to them. There are immigrants fearful of a hidden bigot or an ICE raid. There are people of color who have learned to be invisible for safety.

There was one other phrase that I heard many times that weekend at Green Lake. “When you do the right thing, it’s not going to be the easy thing, and you WILL make people angry, however, you still know it’s the right thing to do.”

So I ask us as a congregation, what will our unfolding story be? Will we stay hidden in our four walls and enjoy things as they always have been, or will we risk leaving our comfort zone to reach out into the community as it actually is, to become something bigger, more colorful, and more vibrant than we can imagine? I’m not saying I have a grand 12-step plan or anything of the sort, I just ask you to think about it. Open your eyes to how bias could be coloring your world-view, and try to be conscious of how we can begin to work to overcome those obstacles, to become a more loving community in Christ.

And for those interested in being a delegate for the 2018 Annual Meeting, please talk to Pastor Bob or myself. It was an amazing experience. Thank you to Pastor Bob for inviting me, thank you to the congregation for allowing me to represent you at this state-wide event, and I look forward to having the opportunity to do so again in the future.

- Charis Mitchell



SHIFT: Our Unfolding Story



- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 - Kyle Harder
Steve Horner | 13 - Troy Everson
Scott Behnke |
| 2 - Amanda Willick | 15 - Tyler Daniels |
| 5 - Eric Behnke | 16 - Bo Coleman |
| 6 - LaVonne Howell
Raegan Rediger
Isaiah Jones | 17 - Sandy Striegel
Justin Foster |
| 8 - Evelyn Price
Nicki Stoll
Chad VanSwol | 18 - Allie Zusan |
| 10 - Sara Foster | 19 - Don Striegel |
| 11 - John Krikie
Jane Dukes | 20 - Kirby Warner |
| 12 - Jackie Kastengren
Dick McKinney | 21 - Peyton Daniels |
| | 23 - Rylee Wightman |
| | 24 - Jessica Schultz |
| | 25 - Julie Sullivan |
| | 29 - Judy Wang
Becky Thompson |

- Don & Sandy Striegel – August 5
- Chad & Heather Kane-Terhorst – August 6
- Mike & Julie Springer – August 7
- Scott & Marilee Hoffman – August 14
- Steve & Jayne Bella – August 15
- Bill & Toni Meinel – August 24
- Eric & Deb Lindell – August 25
- Paul & Ann Edwards – August 26
- Jim & Jean Smithback – August 27
- Jim & Elaine Burd – August 29



Our sympathy goes to the Wilson and Klaehn families after the passing of Jeanette Wilson on July 2, 2017. A Memorial Service will be held at Plymouth Church on Wednesday, August 16 at 2pm, with visitation from 1:00-2:00.

We also extend our sympathy to the Klaehn family after the passing of Blanche Klaehn on July 23, 2017. A Memorial Service will be held at Plymouth Church on Saturday, August 12 at 11am, with visitation from 10:00-11:00.

We hold these families in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

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 | mouth wash, shampoo |
| toothpaste, toothbrushes | tissues, toilet paper |
| hair spray, hand soap | diapers (all sizes) |
| feminine hygiene products | macaroni, cereal |
| canned spaghetti | jelly, peanut butter |
| brown sugar, sugar | laundry detergent |
| mayonnaise, mustard, catsup | dish soap, deodorant |
| disposable razors | |



Monetary contributions are always accepted. Just place your check in the offering plate or mail it to Plymouth Church.



Plymouth Children's Center receives funds from grocery stores:

Plymouth Children's Center collects grocery receipts from Richter's Marketplace. We receive 1% of the total on the receipts. Richter's Marketplace receipts require a *Funds for Friends* sticker on the back. There is a blue box on the table outside their office door that you can put the receipts in. 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. 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. We have truly appreciated her gifts of time and talent!!





AUGUST VOLUNTEERS

SUNDAY	August 6 9:30am	August 13 9:30am	August 20 9:30am	August 27 9:30am
DEACONS	August 6: Carolyn Schoneck – Bread Elaine Burd, Jackie Kastengren, Julie Klaehn			
USHERS	Scott & Peggy Behnke	Paul & Marilyn Gander	Bob & Jackie Kastengren	Joe & Karen Iselin
LITURGIST	Jackie Kastengren	Sara Graham	Jamie Edwards	Paul Schultz
FELLOWSHIP SERVERS	Gidget Brown Kathy Pieters	Paul & Marilyn Gander	Bob & Jackie Kastengren	Joe & Karen Iselin
AV OPERATOR	Jamie Edwards	John Kranich	Dave Snyder	Ron Patla



“Ladies Lunch Bunch”
Wednesday, August 2nd
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.

**Deadline for the September issue of *The Plymouth Epistle* is :
 Friday, August 25th . Thanks, Beth**

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

PLYMOUTH CHILDREN’S CENTER

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Sara Trewyn, Program Director
 Phyllis Hancock, Assistant Director



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 SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

Beth: Monday - Thursday, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
 Steph: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Church Office: 262-763-6890

Web Site: www.uccply.org

Email: Plymouth@PlymouthUCCBurlington.org

Minister Email:

Minister@PlymouthUCCBurlington.org

Financial Secretary Email:

steph@PlymouthUCCBurlington.org



AUGUST CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Notes: Pastor Bob will be on vacation July 31 through August 14. Rev. Jim Burd will be preaching while he is gone. Beth will be on vacation August 14-18.		1	2 Noon – Ladies Lunch Bunch	3	4 6am Men's Breakfast	5
6 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee & Conversation	7	8 5:30pm VBS	9 5:30pm VBS	10 5:30pm VBS	11 6am Men's Breakfast	12 11am Blanche Klaehn Memorial service
13 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee & Conversation Fair Trade Sales	14	15	16 2pm Jeanette Wilson Memorial service	17	18 6am Men's Breakfast	19 11am Game Day
20 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee & Conversation 11am ONA Listening Session 11am God's Gals "Lunch in the Park"	21	22 10:30am A.S.A.P.	23	24	25 6am Men's Breakfast	26
27 9:30am Worship 10:30am Coffee & Conversation	28	29	30	31		



**PLYMOUTH
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53105-1478
262-763-6890
262-763-6802 FAX**

**ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT
DELAY
AUGUST 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.



“SAVE THE DATE!”

October 29, 2017

Our Fall Fundraiser at Veterans Terrace.

**Be thinking of donations or baskets
you would like to contribute.**

More info coming soon!!



*“Just when ya think you're done,
it's already back-to-school time!”*