

PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST
BURLINGTON, WI

VOL XII, ISSUE X
OCTOBER 2017



*Special points of
interest:*

*New Website and
email addresses!*

God's Gals

ONA 2017

Heritage Sunday



OCTOBER

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The Plymouth Epistle

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

WORDS FROM WANG – *To Be or Not to be a Compassionate Community?*

Well here we go again! The airwaves and social networking are being flooded with people's pontifications on the latest controversy; NFL players and staff reacting to Donald Trump's "campaign" speech (wait, wasn't he already elected) condemning a player's right to peacefully demonstrate during the National Anthem.

Note: players who are using their fame and status to make a statement are not doing so because they feel "oppressed" as some critics have stated. They are doing it to show solidarity with those who are. Not to mention, many professional athletes have stepped up their "social" game and used their wealth and influence to do a lot of good. Do I think they are being disrespectful to the American flag? No more than those Christian churches who choose not to display the flag in their sanctuaries - as is their right. (Don't freak out. The flag is still in our sanctuary...no more comments on that issue).

I am mentioning this whole bruhaha here because I want us as a congregation to keep our focus; to stay the course by maintaining a level of graciousness, civility, and decency as we seek to respond to the great schism being experienced in our country during these most tenacious times.

I was so impressed with one professional athlete being interviewed who simply stated, "we need to be compassionate;" a word I have used on many an occasion. As a religious institution, *being compassionate is crucial to our survival*; not to mention it's what drives us in living out our call as disciples to a most gracious, but bold, activist working for the common good of all people. Yes, Jesus was an activist; a non-violent resistor to a system that continuously created actions and policies discriminatory to a people who were consistently victimized by the system's power and judgment.

On October 8th we will gather as a congregation in a specially called meeting to discuss and vote on whether we should declare ourselves a compassionate community or not. That is what it boils down to. We are a mainline protestant church that professes a more progressive faith; a faith that is less judgmental and more proactive when it comes to basic human rights. Furthermore, we do not consider ourselves religious fundamentalists and therefore seek to interpret the Bible for our times. That means, we constantly struggle with discerning what is "truth" and "relevant" versus what was implied and practiced in a very different world and context when the Bible was developed.

Simply put, the resolution (see ONA column) we will vote on, if approved, will validate a practice of extravagant welcome that we implemented many years ago. So, will we officially declare ourselves to be a compassionate community in practice and in truth? Will we agree to genuinely support the statement that "*no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey YOU ARE WELCOME HERE?*" That is the question we will be called on to answer. To be or not to be a Compassionate Community?

See ya in Church!
Pastor Bob

Worship Opportunities for October

October 1 – World Communion Sunday

Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7

Sermon Theme: “Is the Lord Among Us Or Not?”

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served.

October 8 – 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Sermon Theme: “Appropriating God for Hate?”

Note: Congregational Meeting to vote on the ONA Resolution

October 15 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Philippians 4:1-9

Sermon Theme: “Whatever Is...”

October 22 – 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Sermon Theme: “It’s All About the Base”

October 29 – 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 22:34-46

Sermon Theme: “Heart and Soul Matters”

November 5 – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Scripture: Matthew 23:1-12

Sermon Theme: “M.R.I of the Soul: How Revealing”

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served.



CONFIRMATION CORNER – Up and Running

We are pleased to have 11 (7th and 8th graders) students enrolled in this year’s Confirmation program which began sessions in September. We meet during LOGOS on Wednesday nights with special field trip type events on occasion. October sessions are the 4th, 18th, and 25th.

Students are currently in the process of selecting and meeting with adult mentors. There are still a couple in need of suggestions for mentors; any takers? It is a great opportunity if you are interested. In order to say on task student/mentor meetings should begin this month with the first chapter in the assigned resources which is actually chapter 16. If mentors needs some guidance speak to Pastor Bob or previous mentors; there are quite a few. **Note:** Our first field trip is to **Beth Hillel Temple on (Friday) November 10.**

YOUTH & FAMILY FELLOWSHIP - “Richardson Adventure Farm” - October 15th

Richardson Adventure Farm (richardsonadventurefarm.com) in Spring Grove, IL is known for having created the **largest corn maze in the world**; with trails totaling nearly 9 miles. A little fun fact about the Richardson family is they are members of The Richmond Community United of Christ where Pastor Bob served in the 90’s.

The corn maze, however, is just one of many activities available. See their website for a description. In addition to the activities offered we will have hot dogs etc. and s’mores over the campfire. We hope many of our older youth (7-12th grade) will attend (especially confirmation students) but we thought we would open it up to families as well. So, anyone interested in some fall fun can sign up and join us. We only ask if you have children younger than 7th grade that a parent attend with them. We will also need volunteer drivers/chaperones. **Note:** Calvary UCC in Twin Lakes (Judy Wang’s church) will be joining our group. Here are the details: October 15

We have a fire circle with picnic tables reserved from 4:00-8:00pm.

(Church will cover the rental charge and food)

Admission: \$16 age 13 - adult. \$13 age 12 & under (discount for groups over 30)

Depart from church at 3:30 to caravan (families can meet us there if they choose)

Return to church at 8:45ish

Please sign up by calling/emailing the church office by October 11th.



Mission News:



SHOEBOX COLLECTIONS CONTINUE

The collection item for October is TOYS.

Donations for the shoeboxes is winding down so grab some school supplies, bandanas and socks while you are out shopping. There will be smiling, grateful children opening these shoeboxes so make it special! All of your donations are much appreciated.



NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING—OCTOBER 1st It is time once again to support the Neighbors in Need collection which is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the U.S. One third of the mission supports the Council for American Indian Ministries and 2/3rds goes to the Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts and direct service projects. It supports an award-winning (Martin Luther King, Jr. award) Whatcom Peace & Justice Center which tries educational efforts to reduce violence. It also publishes Indykids (www.indykids.net) trying to raise awareness for our kids at a young age on social issues.

NEW CHURCH WEBSITE AND EMAILIT'S FINALLY HERE!!

We shout a huge "THANK YOU!" to Ron Patla for all the time he spent this summer in designing our new website. Check it out at www.plymouthucc.church. Please also change our email contact information to the following...

Beth - office@plymouthucc.church
 Steph - finance@plymouthucc.church
 Pastor Bob - pastor@plymouthucc.church

Website

E-mail

God's Gals

Seventeen of God's Gals had a wonderful Progressive Lunch on September 17th with many thanks to the cooks and especially the generous hostesses, Marlene Peacock, Diane Hanson and Steph Eveland. We took time to discuss our future plans and it was decided that the majority liked meeting on Sunday afternoon in Fellowship Hall after church with a Salad pot luck every other month beginning November 12th. We'll continue the project of making Birthday Cards for the residents at Waterford Senior Living. No special talent needed for this just plan to come and socialize while we work. We'll discuss future plans as we meet and bring a book to share if there is something you enjoyed reading. This new group is a work in progress open to all ladies of our church along with friends. Hoping to see you at the next gathering. No reservations needed, just come. Any questions, give me a call.
 -Jackie Kastengren, 534-3949



September was a great month for the Children's Ministry! It's the start of Sunday School, LOGOS and getting our youth ready for a great year! I want to say thank you to all my volunteers that offer their time and talents with our youth in our church. I could not do my job without YOU!!! LOGOS has begun it's 8th year at Plymouth, and I have been very blessed to be apart of it. This will be my 6th year as the director and I have loved watching all the kids grow up!! This is what this program is all about!! October is going to be a busy month....We have Bowling after Church on the 1st, Bake Sale on the 8th, Corn Maze with our confirmation kids on the 15th, and the Packer Potluck the 22nd!! See you all in October!



Blessings,
Nikki Burd, Children's Ministry Director

Special Congregational



Meeting

**Sunday, October 8th
At the end of the worship service.**

**The only order of business is to
discuss and vote on the
ONA Resolution.**



I would like to thank you all for the cards, memorial donations and kind words following my dear Dad's death. Having a church family is very comforting to me especially through the hard times in life.

- Stephanie Eveland

Dear Plymouth Congregational Church,
Thank you for the generous scholarship. Your gift will help me earn a degree in Animal Science with a minor in Math. Eventually, I hope to earn a PhD in Animal Nutrition and work in research. Again, thank you for your gift and support.

- Jera Monaghan

Dear Plymouth Congregational Church,
Thank you very much for the generous scholarship to aid my education. It will help cover books for the year. I appreciate your generosity to help students and believe in my college and future career.

- Ellie Monaghan

Thank you for the opportunity to apply the Plymouth Church Scholarship towards continuing my education. I was able to purchase all of my textbooks with the scholarship. I look forward to being able to give back to our community with everything I will gain at school in Saint Lois University.

-Ad maiorem Dei gloriam. (For the greater glory of God)
Jonathan Martin



***Sunday, October 29th – 4:00 pm
Veterans Terrace, 589 Milwaukee Ave., Burlington***

***TICKET SALES - In Advance - \$35 - At the Door - \$40
Available at church on Sundays or in the church office during the week***

5:00 pm – Dinner Catered by Gooseberries

Loud & Silent Auctions, Raffles, & Games

Live Music featuring TRACY BECK

***Proceeds help to support our mission effort – both local & worldwide
This is Plymouth’s only fund raiser all year. All contributions greatly appreciated.***

See Sue Nelson, Lisa Mushel or Jamie Edwards for ways you can help!

Contact: Plymouth Church at 262-763-6890 or office@plymouthucc.church for more information.



SHARE A BASKET!

See the bulletin board in the church parlor for ways you can contribute auction baskets for “Fall That Jazz”.

We have theme ideas posted or you can come up with your own! Feel free to advertise your own business or share your handiwork. You can purchase the contents for the basket and we’ll take care of the rest! Basket items need to be received by **October 15th!**

Any questions? See Jackie Kastengren.

ONA 2017 - *“Resolution and Covenant”*

For the past 9 months Plymouth Church has prayerfully engaged in formal and informal discussions, conducted listening sessions, provided monthly features in *The Epistle*, conducted books studies, viewed a documentary film, and listened to sermons, all in an attempt to resource and equip church members that we might make an informed decision on whether or not we wish to make a statement in our philosophy, mission, and sincerity about truly becoming a place of welcome to all people. The Open and Affirming (ONA) action team has drafted two final documents to be discussed and voted on at a congregational meeting set for Sunday, October 8th. The first is a resolution for action and the second is the statement required by the UCC coalition to become a “registered” ONA church within the United Church of Christ. We have included both documents as an insert in this issue.

CHURCH POTLUCK LUNCHEON **Sunday, October 22nd**

Bring a dish to pass and join us
for food and fellowship!
Packer fans can then head back to the
sanctuary and watch the game at noon!



PACKER PARTY

PACKER PARTY THIS MONTH
October 22 - Kick Off @ Noon
Green Bay vs New Orleans

Feel free to wear your favorite Packer attire to church!

Beginning with General Synod 2017 in Baltimore this summer, the United Church of Christ began the transition to a new logo for the denomination. The logo, last re-designed in 2004, has been updated to reflect both tradition and innovation within the church as it faces the challenges and opportunities of Christian witness in the coming decades.



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The new logo's design and colors are intended to complement the graphic representation of "A Just World for All," developed to illustrate new Purpose, Vision, and Mission Statements adopted by the national setting of the church last fall. Those statements were finalized at the October board meeting, adopted following a denomination-wide survey in 2016 and are summarized by the words "A Just World for All."

"I have been traveling around witnessing the work of our churches," said the Rev. John C. Dorhauer, UCC General Minister and president, "and what we are doing will not change. What will change is our ability to tell the story more fully, and to narrate the impact of a mission we are all collectively engaged in. We are hoping to deepen the sense that we are all in this together; and that together we make a profound difference in our world."

The new logo's colors were chosen to work with both 'A Just World for All' and the '3 Great Loves campaign — Love of Children, Love of Neighbor, Love of Creation,' which will be rolled out during General Synod in Baltimore (June 30 – July 4). Blue has replaced red, with black retained as the second color, in the new design, to visually and symbolically represent Creation elements of water and earth.

The phase-in of the new logo begins with its first appearance on the July 2017 – December 2018 UCC Desk Calendar, in the mail to churches this month, and will continue with its introduction at General Synod, where attendees will see the new logo on the screen in the Plenary Hall, in Synod materials, and on identity merchandise in the Exhibit Hall.

Following Synod, the next phase of the transition will be the appearance of the new logo on a completely re-designed and re-organized UCC website, and streamlined KYP (Keeping You Posted), the denomination's weekly e-zine. These changes will take place in early October.

The new logo retains an updated version of the traditional element of the UCC comma — a much-loved and widely used emblem of the United Church of Christ introduced as part of the "God is still speaking," identity campaign. That campaign quoted a line from Gracie Allen that her husband George Burns found among her papers after death. In a letter addressed to him were the words, "George, never place a period where God places a comma." A variation on that line, along with the graphic comma, has been used since 2004 as a symbol and shorthand way to refer to "continuing testimony," or the ever-unfolding nature of God's word for new times. The new primary UCC logo consists of an updated comma emblem and the words "United Church of Christ." "God is still speaking," remains as the UCC's tagline, and the new logo may be used with or without the tagline.

In addition to the comma, the UCC retains its original emblem for use by congregations and other entities of the denomination: the traditional "cross, crown, and orb" graphic, including the words "That they may all be one" (John 17:21), which dates from the founding of the United Church of Christ in 1957—a statement of the UCC's intent to be a "united and uniting" church.

"It's never easy to move on from a familiar and well-known logo—especially in the church, and especially when the old logo meant 'God is still speaking' to many of us," said Tina Villa, UCC communications director. "While those words are as fresh as ever—which is why we are retaining them—our logo itself needed a visual update. And it needed to reflect the new directions the church is headed in, while not abandoning the core beliefs that anchor us: 'God is still speaking,' and 'that they may all be one.'"



2 - Reese Mushel
 3 - Jamie Edwards
 Aryia Horner
 4 - Becky Daniels
 5 - May Jagodzinski
 Katherine Picazo
 6 - Joan Shecterle
 Kole Albrecht
 8 - Carolyn Schoneck

9 - Steve Picazo
 Tasha Escobar
 10 - Lois Jones
 12 - Ray Amdahl
 Beth Picazo
 13 - Ron Moersfelder
 14 - Payton Campbell
 Kaleigh Snyder
 15 - Brady Mushel
 16 - Charis Mitchell
 17 - Ian Wanasek
 18 - Andrew Picazo
 19 - Brenda Robison
 20 - Grace Keller
 21 - Scott Hoffman
 Pastor Bob Wang

22 - Barb Ray
 Elysia Escobar
 23 - Ryan Simenson
 24 - Phil Rediger
 25 - Dick Shecterle
 26 - Lori Benstead
 27 - Janet Wren
 Correne Wilson
 28 - Pam Moersfelder
 Hunter Kastengren
 29 - Pat Sandstrom
 Anabelle Kane-Terhorst
 30 - Steve Spitzer
 31 - Steve Bella



Justin & Sara Foster – October 3
 Clayton & Kathy Kruse – October 5
 Larry & Ellen Gyger – October 22
 Chad & Jolene Peterson – October 27

We send our congratulations to.....

Keith and Sue Krumholz on the birth of their 1st grandchild!
 Emma Elaine Fram (daughter of Alyssa Krumholz Fram and
 Ari Fram) was born, July 15, 2017.

Jason and Tamra Fricke on the birth of their daughter,
 Eliza Loryn Fricke on September 12, 2017.

Cara and Nate Bahr on the birth of their daughter Aayla Lorraine Bahr on September 24,
 2017. She joins big brother Isaac and proud grandparents are Jack & Marty Baker.



We send our condolences to...

Jackie Boutan and her family after the passing of her mother,
 Lois Rudolph on September 15, 2017. Our prayers are with
 them during this difficult time.

GAME DAY
October 21st
11am—5pm



**Bring a favorite game or
 come learn a new one!**



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

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.



Blood pressure screening -October 8th

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 Marketplace. They 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 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!!



OCTOBER VOLUNTEERS

SUNDAY	October 1	October 8	October 15	October 22	October 29
DEACONS	October 1: Betty Peterson – Bread Sue Alby, Steph Eveland, Pat Sandstrom				
USHERS	Tyler Daniels Dick & Betty Peterson	John Kranich Paul & Christine Schultz	Paul Schultz Bob & Jackie Kastengren	Deb Lindell Tim & Kay Burd	Scott, Peggy & Halie Behnke
LITURGIST	Kiffie Scott	Ron Moersfelder	Jamie Edwards	Paul Schultz	Toni Kranich
FELLOWSHIP SERVERS	Steph Eveland Diane Hanson	Bob & Janet Wren	Joel & Sara Graham	Paul & Marilyn Gander	Gidget Brown Kathy Pieters
NURSERY CARE	Sara Graham	Stephanie Rediger	Becky Daniels	Nikki Burd	Meghan Peterson
AV OPERATOR	Jamie Edwards	John Kranich	Dave Snyder	Jamie Edwards	John Kranich
ACOLYTE	Josh Katzman	Elysia Escobar	Raegan Rediger	Gibson Souther	Caden VanSwol



Attention! New venue!

“Ladies Lunch Bunch”
Wednesday, October 4th

Charcoal Grill

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.

Ladies Lunch Bunch

**Deadline for the November issue of *The Plymouth Epistle* is Monday, October 23.
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



**PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF NEW WEBSITE
AND EMAIL ADDRESSES!**

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

Tuesday-Friday: 9:30 am to 4:30 pm
 If possible, please call ahead to make sure
 Pastor Bob is available

PLYMOUTH UCC OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday, 8:30 am. - 3:30 pm
 Fridays, 8:30 am - 2:30 pm
 Church Office: 262-763-6890

Web Site: www.plymouthucc.church

Email: office@plymouthucc.church

Minister Email: pastor@plymouthucc.church

Financial Secretary Email:

finance@plymouthucc.church



OCTOBER CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Coffee & Conversation Noon Bowling at Town & Country Lanes	2	3 7pm Choir	4 Noon Ladies Lunch Bunch at CHARCOAL GRILL 5:00pm LOGOS 6:30pm Bell Choir	5	6 6am Men's Breakfast	7
8 8:45am Bell Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Congregational Meeting Coffee & Conversation Fair Trade Sales Blood Pressure Screening	9 <i>Beth will be on vacation October 9-13</i>	10 10:30am Prayer Group 7pm Choir	11 6:30pm Operating Council Meeting 6:30pm Bell Choir	12	13 6am Men's Breakfast	14
15 8:45am Choir Rehearsal 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Coffee & Conversation 11:30am Plymouth Praise 4:00pm Leave for Corn Maze	16	17 7pm Choir	18 5:00pm LOGOS 6:30pm Bell Choir	19	20 6am Men's Breakfast	21 11am Game Day
22 8:45am Plymouth Praise 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Potluck Luncheon Noon Packer Party	23	24 10:30am Prayer Group 7pm Choir	25 5:00pm LOGOS 6:30pm Bell Choir	26	27 6am Men's Breakfast	28
29 10:00am Worship 10:15am Sunday School 11:00am Coffee & Conversation 4:00pm "Fall That Jazz" at Veterans Terrace	30	31 7pm Choir				



**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
OCTOBER 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 - office@plymouthucc.church



*You are invited to...
Our 6th Annual Heritage Sunday
November 19, 2017 at 10:00 am*



*On this day we will be honoring those who
have been members of Plymouth Church
for 25 years or more.
Please plan to join us for this
special celebration!*

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Burlington, WI
Resolution to Become an “Open and Affirming” Church
-2017-

We at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ believe that all human beings are created in the image of God, just as we are (Genesis 1–2); that each one of us is reverently and wonderfully made (Psalm 139).

And whereas we believe, despite any previous biases or Biblical interpretation, when carefully studied in their original context and applied in our present setting, that there are no Biblical texts that condemn any form of loving or life-giving human relational expressions between people of the same sex, bi-sexual, or transgendered persons. Therefore, neither do we condemn or discriminate against people who identify as LGBTQ+.

Whereas we believe that Jesus of Nazareth’s most profound teaching was in response to the question of which commandment is the greatest. Jesus said to love God with everything we have; our soul, mind, heart, and strength, and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. When asked who was our neighbor, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, a religious minority, who stopped to help a wounded stranger on the road. Jesus used a scorned and hated person as the example of what love looks like.

Whereas we believe that Jesus’ love was a revolutionary love; love that feeds folks when they are hungry, love that gives folks drink when they are thirsty. Love that visits those who are sick and imprisoned, and love that liberates folk from their suffering. Love that practices extravagant hospitality. Love that never, for any reason, excludes anyone from being a part of the community of Christ.

Therefore, we stand on the side of Love. And like Jesus, we welcome all who are burdened and heavy laden with the stress and strife of life. Like Jesus, we constantly ask ourselves, what would love have us do?

Whereas we wish to honor our covenant with the wider church that is the United Church of Christ by following their lead with “courage in the struggle for justice and peace.” Whereas, we at Plymouth Church, under the advisement of the UCC Open and Affirming Coalition, have conducted listening sessions, book studies, published newsletter articles, provided resources, and engaged in faithful dialogue on the issue of LGBTQ+ and the Christian Church for the past year.

Whereas we recognize the anxiety that accompanies any controversial issue and genuinely respect the varying views and expected hesitancy within our membership in moving forward with the “Open and Affirming” process. We have, to the best of our abilities, attempted to reach out and to help inform and enlighten all members and associated friends of the church on the issue and how it will affect us as a faith community especially in our ministry of hospitality.

We therefore resolve that Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Burlington, Wisconsin become a certified **Open and Affirming Church** by declaring that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here; and will therefore seek to practice inclusion, extravagant welcome, and hospitality in our worship, fellowship, mission, and practice at every level of our existence.

The following is our covenant that, if approved, will be sent to the national office so that we might be included in the registry of ONA church nationwide.

Plymouth UCC Burlington, WI – ONA Covenant

We, the members and friends of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, recognize that the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) community has been the target of discrimination and judgment and we consciously choose to renounce any such discrimination or judgment.

We are an inclusive and diverse church; a place of unconditional love that inspires all individuals in our community. We seek to be an expression of God's Love in the world by declaring ourselves an open and affirming (ONA) church, and by embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of every person, since we are all created in God's image.

In so doing we will intentionally invite and welcome into our faith community persons of every gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ability, age, race, nationality, economic and social status, faith background, marital standing and family structure.

We will thus live out the creed; no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here; to minister with us and among us, to receive the grace of a "still speaking God," to share your time, talents, treasures and energy in worship and all the rites and sacraments, in community life, education, and missions, and in filling staff and/or leadership positions.

We, the members of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ ONA Action Team wish to present this resolution and the accompanying *Open and Affirming* covenant for review following the meeting on September 17, 2017. We will then propose a called meeting of the congregation for October 8, 2017 where we will discuss and vote on the resolution. If approved, a task force will be put in place to oversee our future work as we seek to gradually live into that new mission and practice