

PLYMOUTH
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST
BURLINGTON, WI

VOL XVII ISSUE V
MAY 2022



**Special point of
interest:**

**Confirmation
Mentors**



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The Plymouth Epistle

Monthly Newsletter

WORDS FROM PASTOR

Dear Members and Friends of Plymouth UCC,

What's the most difficult part of ministry for me? Writing an article for the newsletter. This year I was especially dry. I noticed a colleague of mine responding to all of my posts in a FB clergy group, so I finally said, "Margaret are you avoiding your newsletter article too?" Indeed, she was. She finally admitted to "cheating." She writes her sermons out, but on Easter Sunday something came to her at the last minute, so she went off script. She was using the sermon she wrote for her newsletter. So the words below belong to Margaret Mills a dear colleague in Ohio. I changed Ohio to Wisconsin, but otherwise I wrote none of this. It is here with her permission knowing that I now owe her a great debt.

What happens when you place a seed in the ground? Every plant, every flower, every tree or bush that takes root required that a seed fall to the ground, be buried and die to its life as a seed. The transformation that takes place means that the seed has to relinquish its former self to become something new. Many things take place as the seed becomes new but nothing was as necessary as that seed letting go of itself.

Could that be why it happened in a garden?

Let's look at other gardens - Jesus going to the garden to pray after the meal with his disciples, and it is in the garden where Jesus is arrested, there was a garden near where he was crucified, and the setting of the Easter gospel reading is also in a garden.

So many questions for poor Mary - and the only one to ask is — the gardener. Will we ask the Gardener who tends our souls? Yes we have questions but here's what we know — the seed has to break open for new life to form. The darkness of the tomb is the soil that feeds the process of resurrection. When Jesus emerges, he is a new creation. As the passion narrative begins in a garden so the setting for the first resurrection appearance is likewise a garden.

When you plant your gardens, here in this part of Wisconsin, I hope you'll think of these gardens, and the seeds that die to become new, and our Jesus who died to become something new — will we enter that empty tomb and become something new? I hope so. We can't leave the empty tomb and go back to our routine without change. Will the empty tomb mean there will be a difference from your life as usual.

What tombs do you need to be freed from?

This is the resurrection story. It happened in a garden — Jesus emerged from brokenness to new life. Hallelujah! Christ is risen. God is creating. Rejoice.

Blessings,
Rev. Becky

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

May 1 – 3rd Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Acts 9:1-20

Note: The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be served.

May 8 – 4th Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Acts 9:36-43

May 15 – 5th Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Acts 11:1-18

May 22 – 6th Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Acts 16:9-15

May 29 – 7th Sunday of Easter

Scripture: Acts 16:16-34

CONFIRMATION STUDENTS AND PARENTS

In order to plan for next year I would like to have a **meeting of all confirmation students and parents on May 8 following worship**. This is not to be a lengthy meeting to hammer out a lot of detail, but this is simply a meeting for me to get to know who is wanting to be involved and to get a sense of the group's commitment. IMPACT students will be involved in the worship that morning so hopefully all of you are planning to be there. If you cannot make it for some reason, contact me to let me know.

See you there!

Rev. Becky

CONFIRMATION MENTORS NEEDED

Due to the uncertainty of the search process, confirmation will be a mentor heavy program. It's difficult to pick up someone else's program mid-year so I want the transition to be as seamless as possible. I will need a mentor for each student. The scope of the program hasn't fully been worked out yet, but it will help me in the planning if I have an idea of who I will be working with. Please let me know if you are **willing to be a mentor**.

Thank you,

Rev. Becky



¹⁴ I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. Rom 15:14 NRSV

¹⁷ O God, from my youth you have taught me,
and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

¹⁸ So even to old age and gray hairs,

O God, do not forsake me,
until I proclaim your might

to all the generations to come. Psalm 71:17-18 NRSV

MODERATOR'S WORDS

Well, Spring has sprung, the Easter Bunny has come and gone (unless he ended up in a stew pot like he did at my house), and things are perking up at Plymouth.

We enjoyed a meaningful and well-done set of services through Holy Week and a packed-out crowd on Easter Sunday. Several committees are at work along with the OC. Our Christian Education department is equally exploring how to grow its activities and outreach. The Search Committee has almost completed our "church profile" for final review with the Conference which will move us onward to the next phase of the process.

Some other news out of the OC includes the very successful announcement that the Youth Bake Sale netted \$685 - thank you to all who helped support that. There is a small ad hoc group that is reviewing our current membership rolls to identify folks we need to reach out to regarding their status. The music and worship committees are also looking at ways to expand our service experience through reincorporating some old practices as well as exploring some new ones.

We invite you to express and share your ideas about other things Plymouth can begin considering regaining its previous vibrancy of two years ago. Remember - a growing church is an expanding church: expanding in the sense that there are ever increasing opportunities for participation.

After the long hibernation of the past two years, we are beginning to finally thaw out and move forward into a sense of hope and life and excitement.

On another note, I will extend my apologies that we have fallen behind on some things. Due to my ongoing unfamiliarity with the rhythm of things at Plymouth, we did not get things started on budget preparations for the new year at the usual time. We do now have an ad hoc committee working on that, but to ensure they have adequate time to gather all the data needed, the OC agreed that we should move the Annual Meeting back.

For this year, the **Annual Meeting** will take place on **Sunday, 12 June**, after the service of worship. Please mark your calendars. We realize that moves us into what is the beginning of travel time for many of you. However, to make sure we have a realistic budget to present we needed to create that extra time.

Blessings and joy throughout this Eastertide! - John Gibbon



Mark your calendars for Plymouth UCC's Annual Meeting:

JUNE 12th

This month begins Strengthen the Church offering.



The Wisconsin Conference focus on our:

Did you know that 50% of the money raised by our gifts to the “Strengthen the church” offering stays in the WI Conference?

That typically amounts to \$20,000 from the \$40,000 we donate each year. **So please give to the “Strengthen the Church” offering on June 9th.**

The funds collected help two special programs for our congregations and clergy: conflict resolution and coaching. It used to be that if a church hit a snag (either with the pastor or because of a conflict between church members) and needed expert help in conflict resolution, the members would have to hire an outside expert. A lot of churches simply could not afford this. The result was that no expert came in with the right

tools to help folks talk things out and the situation would end badly.

But our Conference has been training our own people to do conflict resolution so money is no longer a problem and, in addition, the trainees understand us because they usually come from the same background as we do. Further...

Churches that achieve their base pledge to “Our Church’s Wider Mission” and donate to all 4 national UCC fundraisers each year are counted as “5 for 5” churches for supporting every special national effort. These offerings give our churches a way to be a small (or large) part of something big! Local churches and people are helped by these offerings in our state, across the nation, and around the world. Giving to these offerings means that our funds added together can provide more support in much larger ways that we can do alone.

Thanks for your help through these annual UCC fundraisers and other emergency and special-need offerings:

- **One Great Hour of Sharing** • **Strengthen the Church** • **Neighbors in Need**
- **The Christmas Fund** • **Our Church's Wider Mission**

All donations are appreciated, and are used toward disaster relief, mission trip scholarships, help to local churches and clergy, immigrant and refugee assistance, social justice action, overseas ministries and more as we join hands across our communities, the nation, and the world in service of Christ.

This information and encouragement is sent to you from the Northwest Association’s Division of the Mission of the Church in the World.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING

...Our Conference is also training experienced ministers from our own people to coach pastors who would like a broader understanding of their churches and how to interact with parishioners. The Lay Academy, Outdoor Ministries, and Communities of Practice also benefit from this offering. Giving to “Strengthen the Church” offering does a lot of good on our behalf.



We would like to take the time to give a special thanks to all our kids that participated in the Palm Sunday service & bake sale! They did a wonderful job! We hope to have them participate in more of our Sunday services!

The Bake & Ham Sale was a huge success! We want to thank all our IMPACT families for the wonderful baked goods they made for it & Scott Wilson for donating the yummy ham! A big thank you to everyone who supported our youth program!

In April, the kids also put together Resurrection Eggs that reminded them of the story of Easter. They also were given M & M Easter Poems, Easter Story Snack mix, and a recipe to make yummy Resurrection Rolls at home with their families to celebrate Easter.

Coming up, the kids will be participating in the Missions TLC baskets. The kids will be working together to make blankets for children for the TLC baskets.

This year has really flown by! Our last IMPACT for this year is Sunday, May 8th. We are hoping the kids get to participate in that service that day and have a fun celebration afterwards!

We look forward to what's coming up new for our IMPACT Youth Ministry program in September! Please consider volunteering in the upcoming year in any way you can to make this program really thrive!

Hope everyone had a wonderful Easter!

Blessings,

Tracy Freitag

-IMPACT- Plymouth Children's Ministry Director



COMING SOON: SUMMER!

With summer approaching, many relish a change of scenery during Wisconsin's milder season.

If you would like more information about camp offerings, please check United Church Camps Outdoor Ministry.

Investigate their offerings at
UCCI.ORG



- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 - Jason Fricke
Bryce Clark | 15 - Jj Kastengren
Breanna Sheetz-Volling |
| 2 - Pam Wanasek
Barb Freeman
Joshua Reichert | 18 - Jack Simenson
19 - Katie Simenson
Tina Wightman
Tamra Fricke |
| 3 - Nan Wilson
Analiese Tremmel | 22 - Joanie Witte |
| 4 - John Olisar | 23 - Molly Keller
Erik Kerkhoff |
| 6 - Sara Wanasek | 24 - Ross Katzman
Ryleigh Deyo
Casey Reich |
| 7 - Sam Jagodzinski
Lillian Witte
Sebastien Rediger | 25 - Carmen McKinney |
| 11 - Christine Sheetz | 27 - John Kranich
Alex Wilson |
| 12 - Barb Church | 30 - David Heinz |
| 13 - Ann Edwards
Kate Bonner
Jaeda Mendez | 31 - Jayne Bella |
| 14 - Kim Wessinger | |



- Bob & Jackie Kastengren – May 3
 Ken & Sue Nelson – May 10
 Rollie & Debbie Witte – May 15
 Rob & Jennie King – May 22
 Joe & Karen Iselin – May 25
 Jeff & Julie Tremmel - May 25
 Bill Wald & Penny Yanke – May 26
 Steph Eveland & Diane Hanson – May 27
 Steve Sullivan & Kiffie Scott – May 28

Deadline for the June issue of The Plymouth Epistle is :
Thursday, May 19th Thanks, Kathy

Search Committee Update:

Your Pastoral Search Committee is nearing completion of our church profile. While God prepares the heart of our next pastor, please keep your search committee in prayer as they work toward using the profile to seek candidates for this vocation. Thank you.

Glenn Stoll	SEARCH COMMITTEE	Jill Albrecht
Steve Picazo	Continue in prayer for the search committee and the (unknown) person who will be our new pastor.	Gidget Brown
Jackie Naughton	Ron Moersfelder	Joe Iselin

POSITION	NAME	GROUP FACILITATOR OF
Minister	Rev. Rebecca (Becky) Johnston	n/a
Moderator	John Gibbon	n/a
Vice Moderator		Mission & Social Action
Past Moderator	Nikki Burd	Stewardship & Budget
Recording Secretary	Carolyn Schoneck	n/a
Treasurer	Mary Ellen Close	Finance
Member at Large	Tasha Escobar	Membership & Involvement
Member at Large	Deanna Snyder	Spiritual Enrichment
Member at Large	Karen Iselin	Christian Education & Fellowship



MISSION EVENTS

Peanut Butter & Jelly Collections Dates **May 1-31**



The Mission Team will be conducting our annual PB&J collection for LOVE, Inc. starting on Sunday, May 1st through Tuesday, May 31st. While grocery shopping, please purchase some peanut butter and/or jelly to donate. Children, who during the school year receive free or reduced meals, will now need to have those supplied at home. Peanut butter is a good source of protein for either breakfast or lunch. Love Inc. finds it difficult to keep the pantry adequately stocked with peanut butter and jelly during the summer months. Please place donations in the parlor.

April's Love meal was barbecue and buns, baked beans, vegetable salad, and cookies. **Thank you** to Gidget Brown, Betty Peterson, Jackie Naughton, Deanna Synder, Barb Freeman, Kathy Pieters, Karen Iselin, and Don K. for providing food and serving.

A Love meal will be served at Love, Inc. on Wednesday, May 18. We are now preparing the food in our homes, serving at their location and cleaning up after the meal. Your help is greatly appreciated! Please sign up with Julie at 262-492-4713.

PPRC UPDATE: Imperfect Beings

None of us is perfect.

Sure, we want to be, maybe we even *strive* to be, but—being human—we always come up short. Probably every day we do something that doesn't turn out how we expected or hoped. Maybe we burned the toast, or added a number wrong in the checkbook, or cut a board too short while building, or forgot to turn in an Epistle article we intended to write. Despite our best efforts, life is full of challenges and chances for things to go wrong.

Sometimes we make mistakes, but other times it just seems like the deck is stacked against us. And there's nothing we can do but get up the next day and go at it again and try to do better.

All of us are imperfect beings—even our ministers.

Sure, all of us want our pastors to always say the right thing at the right time, or arrive just when we need them, or have that perfect bit of wisdom that will help us out of whatever jam we've gotten into. We want our ministers to be like Jesus. That's what He'd do; He'd have all the answers! But we're not Him. None of us. Not even the best pastor ever called measured up to that standard. Not even Peter, "the rock" of His church. Like us, ministers are only human.

One of the jobs of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee is to remind all of us in the congregation that ministers are human, too. Like everyone, they have good weeks and bad weeks, highs and lows, days of great insight and days of thick-headedness, etc. And we all have days when we just plain screw up. (And hopefully days when we can fix those errors.)

No minister can be everything to all people all the time.

As we at Plymouth search for a new Pastor, we need to remember that. Whomever we call, they will *not* be able to do everything for everyone—and they certainly won't be able to do it *alone*.

When that new person comes, we will all have to pitch in to help make him or her the best minister possible. Because when things don't work out in a church, that's almost always at least as much *our* fault as it is the pastor's. But if we all do our best, and remember that we're all just human, and forgive and have compassion, and help out...

Then together, we can do great things. We can do the work of The Church. Even though none of us is perfect. As Pastor Becky has said: "We are enough." We are God's Children.

Let's work together, both now and after we've called a new pastor, to make a brighter future for Plymouth and the world.

—Steve Sullivan for the PPRC



**MAY
SUNDAY VOLUNTEERS**

SUNDAY	May 1 10:00 am	May 8 10:00 am	May 15 10:00 am	May 22 10:00 am	May 29 10:00 am
AV OPERATOR	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson	Aaron Jenson
ACOLYTE	Reese Mushel	Calia Freitag			
COMMUNION PREPARERS	Carolyn Schoneck & Lori Benstead				
FELLOWSHIP HOUR SERVERS	Lori Benstead	Stephanie Eveland & Diane Hanson	Janet & Bob Wren	Joe & Karen Iselin	Jackie Naughton & Lori Benstead
LITURGIST	Don Howell	Jamie Kennow	John Gibbon	Nikki Burd	Lori Benstead
USHERS	Lori Benstead & Nikki Burd	Don Howell & Wally Brown	Tim & Kay Burd	Dan & Kelly Iselin	Jackie Kastengren & Pat Sandstrom

We Need Your Help:
Beginning on May 1st, we will serve treats along with coffee and lemonade. We are looking for more individuals to help with fellowship hour, ushering, being liturgist, and preparing communion. If you can serve in any of these ways, please contact Lori Benstead.

The office will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, May 30 & 31.



Beginning Wednesday, June 1st
Church Office Hours:
Mon/Wed 8:30-12:30 Tue/Thu 8:00-2:00
Closed Fridays

PLYMOUTH UCC STAFF

Rev. Rebecca A. Johnston, Interim Minister
 Stephanie Eveland, Financial Secretary
 Kathy O'Brien, Office Secretary
 Tracy Freitag, Children's Ministry Director
 Jeffrey Hughes, Custodian
 Marty Baker, Wedding Coordinator
 Diane Olson, Organist & Bell Choir Director
 Jamie Kennow, Choir Director
 Lisa Carnahan, Choir Accompanist

PLYMOUTH CHILDREN'S CENTER

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Sara Trewyn, Program Director
 Phyllis Hancock, Assistant Director



REV. REBECCA A. JOHNSTON,

INTERIM MINISTER OFFICE HOURS

Please call ahead to check Pastor's availability.

PLYMOUTH UCC OFFICE HOURS

Steph: Mon & Wed 8:30am—2:00pm
 Kathy: Tues & Thurs 8:00am—2:00pm
 *Fri 8:00am—12:00pm

*Fridays: Labor Day-Memorial Day only.

Church Office: 262-763-6890

Web Site: www.plymouthucc.church

Children's Ministry Email: plymouthuccimpact@gmail.com

Financial Secretary Email: plymouthuccfinance@gmail.com

Minister Email: plymouthuccpastor@gmail.com

Office Secretary Email: plymouthuccoffice@gmail.com



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Strengthen the Church Offering Begins This Month						
1 Service 10:00 am Children's Ministry 11:00 am Coffee Hour 11:00 am	2 6:00pm Bells Practice	3 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4	5	6	7
8 Service 10:00 am Confirmation Meeting Coffee Hour 11:00 am Children's Ministry 11:00 am (last meeting before summer) Mother's Day	9 6:00pm Bells Practice	10 10:30am Prayer Mtg 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11	12	13	14
15 Service 10:00 am Coffee Hour 11:00 am O.C. Meeting	16	17 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	18	19 Epistle Deadline	20	21
22 Service 10:00 am Coffee Hour 11:00 am	23	24 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	25	26 Ascension Day	27 Last Friday that Church Office is open before summer hours begin.	28
29 Service 10:00 am Coffee Hour 11:00 am	30 Church Office CLOSED 	31 Church Office Closed 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal				



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