

The Plymouth Placard



April 2005

WORSHIP FOR APRIL

APRIL 3 **CELEBRATE SHARON'S** **INSTALLATION!**

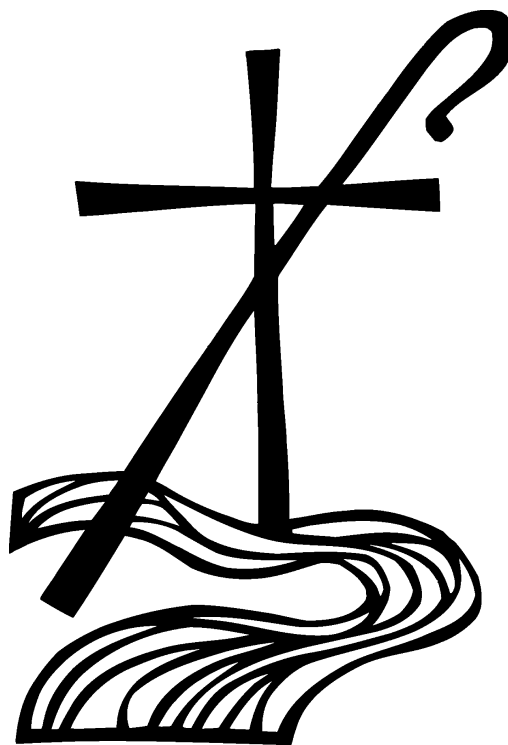
ONE SERVICE ONLY AT 10:45
BE SURE TO JOIN US.
LUNCHEON RECEPTION TO FOLLOW
REMEMBER: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS!

APRIL 10 **YOUTH SUNDAY** TEACHER APPRECIATION BETWEEN SERVICES

APRIL 17
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2.42-47
"ALL THINGS IN COMMON"

TAIZÉ SERVICE AT 6:00 P.M.
FOLLOWED BY A FELLOWSHIP MEAL

APRIL 24
PSALM 31
"WHAT IS YOUR REFUGE?"



OUR SERVICES ARE AT 8:15 AND 10:45 AM, UNLESS
OTHERWISE NOTED.

Room for Hope

Do you ever feel sometimes that the world is closing in on you? That fate smiles more kindly on others than on you? That you could do something, “if only _____?” Woody Allen once said that “Just because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean that everyone *really isn’t* out to get you.”

All of us have such moments. Some of us have grown weary and jaded since 9-11, the war in Iraq, and layoffs left and right. *But, there is room for hope!* I’m not suggesting that we become cockeyed optimists or even go down the Norman Vincent Peale road with the power of positive thinking. We’re called to live into the Easter experience to have new hope.

Jesus must have wondered if the world had turned its back on him as he was walking to be crucified. His followers must have been completely desolate and emotionally devastated by the crucifixion. It probably seemed like the end of the movement, just as it had when John the Baptist was executed. But, it wasn’t the end. It was just a new beginning.

There are days when I feel pretty darned sorry for myself. (If I only had more time..., If I only had greater financial security..., If I only had more hair...) And Jean often reminds me is that I’ll probably feel differently tomorrow, which is usually the case. And if it isn’t, I take it as an indicator that I need to take some action about it.

But, our faith asks us to push beyond even that, because *ours is a faith of hope, of promise, of risk-taking, of new beginnings.* Jesus probably had no idea that his followers would evolve into the largest religion on the earth. But it happened. It might not have expanded without the crucifixion: no resurrection, no new energy for the apostles, no vision of seeing Jesus in a new way. Who knows what might have happened if Jesus had lived to a ripe old age? Instead, we are left with hope, which is an amazing legacy. Yet, we have to endure some Good Friday experiences to get to Easter morning.

Emily Dickinson (whom I like to think of as a disaffected Congregationalist mystic) wrote that

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,

And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all

Hope isn’t necessarily an intellectual endeavor. As the Belle of Amherst writes, it “perches in the soul.” Sometimes hope is, itself, a leap of faith. We need to dare to believe in ourselves in order to move forward. And we need to dare to believe that God is with us!

I sometimes wonder if we at Plymouth are trapped in the idea that we can’t take on a capital campaign because we haven’t done it in so long. That we’re a poor church. That there is too much change to keep up with. That we’ll be demoralized if we fall short. These are **myths that need to be debunked** and **negative spirits that need to be exorcised.**

So, let’s do that! Here are some things you should know about yourself:

- **158** people have joined Plymouth in the last three years
- Our pledges have increased by **~\$150,000** in those years, and we’ve had a budget surplus at the end of each year.
- We’ve completed a **Strategic Plan** for our programs and a **Master Plan** for our facilities.
- We’re running out of **space** for things like ...the choir! Our parking lot overflows on Sunday.
- The best is yet to come!

Do you really believe that “God Is Still Speaking”? I surely do. And I see evidence all around me in the people of this congregation: people who keep us heading in bold, new directions, people who show up to help others, people who have a vision for what we can become and what God’s world can become. That is faith. And faith begets hope.

Shalom!

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Special Congregational Meeting

Sunday, April 17th

This is public notice of a Special Congregational Meeting of the Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC to be held Sunday April 17, 2005 at 9:30 AM

The purpose of the special meeting will be:

- 1.) to discuss the status, plans, and timelines of a possible Capital Campaign
- 2.) to vote on amending the church's constitution by adding an article of declaration of Plymouth as a "Peace With Justice Church."

The Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee will share information and promote discussion from 9:30-10:30 AM. (This is an information session only.) At 10:30 AM the meeting will adjourn for worship.

Upon conclusion of worship, the Special Congregational Meeting will reconvene to review the Peace and Justice Ministry Team's declaration process and to discuss and vote the "Peace With Justice Church" declaration as stated:

"We believe Jesus' teachings call us to enact shalom, to live in wholeness, harmony, community well-being and with equal justice.

We affirm a process of justice-making and peace-making which encourages open dialogue, reconciliation, constructive change and nonviolence.

Therefore, we are called and committed to being a Peace With Justice Church in our worship, education, community life and outreach."

Mother's Day Cards

Mothers' Day is May 8th. The Plymouth Mission Committee is again offering cards for sale on April 24th, May 1st and May 8th. The funds Plymouth raise will apply towards the sponsorship of two Palestinian children in East Jerusalem, Fakhry and Nada, at the Rawdat El Zuhur school. This is the third year we have helped these 8 year olds, and we have received pictures and letters of thanks from them each year. Look for the table in the Fellowship Hall after both services on these three Sundays. Your card purchase will help a child to learn.



TAIZÉ SERVICE

**SUNDAY, APRIL 17
6:00 PM**

**ENJOY A FELLOWSHIP SUPPER FOLLOWING THE SERVICE.
CHILDCARE AVAILABLE.**

MORE INFO: WWW.TAIZE.FR

Fun and Games!

XYZers will have a "Game Night" on April 9th 2005, at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall at Plymouth. No need to sign up, just show up and bring along your favorite game to share. At other game nights we've had Pictionary, Monopoly, Dominoes, Trivial Pursuit, Scrabble, Mexican Train, as well as many others. Plan on a convivial evening and test your skills with other "gamers." For info, Jodie or Bob Rankin, 221-2037; Mary or Don Carpenter, 267-6793; Darlene or David Lueker, 484-3756.

Hilltopper Luncheon Thursday, April 14th

Join us for lunch and fellowship at noon. This is a great time to meet new people or reconnect with old friends, so join us even if you have never come or haven't been in a while. Sign up in the fellowship hall or call the church office to RSVP, 482-9212.

Men's Fellowship Group

Men's Fellowship Breakfast is Saturday, April 16th, 8 AM, at the church. Please sign-up and attend for fellowship, business meeting, and program, *Flashing Spokes and Cranking Pedals*, a presentation by Phil Hoefler about his bicycle trip across the United States last fall.

Middle-Third Herd Upcoming Events



April 1st - Herd Happy Hour @ Old Chicago's (Harmony & Timberline). Let's meet around 5 PM (or whenever you can get there) for discounted drinks and appetizers. Please RSVP to Andrea Kelly at 4kellyfam@comcast.net so I can reserve a large enough table.

April 9th - Dessert and Card Party at 7 PM hosted by Doug & Mary Robinson (6124 Hamilton Ct.). This will be a night out for adults. Please arrange your own child care for the evening. Bring your favorite dessert and drinks. Please RSVP to damsrob@comcast.net.

April 14th - The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe at the Lincoln Center 5:30 PM. Tickets are \$6. Tickets for this show have already been purchased. Contact The Lincoln Center for ticket information.

May 1st - May Day Picnic 1 PM at Spring Creek Park. This will be a potluck picnic. Bring a dish to share, your own table setting and drinks, and a blanket to sit on. We're gonna play ball! If you have balls for kickball, soccer or football, please bring them!

May 6th - Herd Happy Hour @ County Cork (313 W Drake Rd) Let's meet around 5 PM (or whenever you can get there) for discounted drinks and appetizers. Please RSVP to Andrea Kelly at 4kellyfam@comcast.net so I can reserve a large enough table.

Check It Out!

The Peace and Justice Team will be providing in The Placard short reviews of items in the Peace and Justice Library, Fireside Room. You can check out these items; please fill out the check-out card from each item and put it in the designated box. Thanks!

Now, check this out: A JUST PEACE CHURCH, edited by Susan Thistlethwaite and published by UCC Press in 1986, discusses the theological foundations of "just peace" churches and gives the full text of the General Synod XV's pronouncement on that topic. This was run in pieces in previous Placards, but if you want to see the whole thing at once, here it is! Also the book has a lot of background for those statements. It also has questions for discussion, or for individual thought, and some short prayers. And it's only 160 pages long! Check it out!

Budget Update

Your Stewardship Committee has decided to provide you with a monthly update on the financial status of your Church. The information comes from the monthly report prepared by the Treasurer for the Church Council (open to all).

Approved 2005 Budget \$ 418,508
Income to End of February \$ 86,869
Expenses to End of February \$60,338

Please note that first quarter income is high because some members fulfill their yearly pledge in one contribution. As we continue into the year, the monthly income is expected to decrease. Expenses also fluctuate throughout the year, caused by such things as seasonal costs and quarterly bills.

Thank you for your continued commitment to this very important part of the life of Plymouth. It is through your total stewardship (time, talent, prayer, and money) that this community can provide an environment to carry out the mission of



Second Century Capital Campaign "Heads-up" Two Chances to Learn About this Key Issue!

1. April 3rd Forum (9:30-10:30 AM)

Don Alspaugh and Marian Parson from First Congregational UCC in Longmont will be with us to share the process/results of their recently completed capital campaign. This is an opportunity to learn from their experiences.

2. April 17th Congregational Meeting (9:30-10:30 AM)

Join us at the special congregational meeting to find out the status of where we are in defining "Phase One" of our capital campaign. Learn about this critical process so you can make an informed vote next fall.

Youth Ed—“What are the kids doing ‘back there?’”

Welcome to our newest members and say “Hello” to Youth Education at Plymouth! What a wonderful gift to have so many new members joining Plymouth in the past year. Many of you have indicated to me that you are not sure just exactly what we are doing with the kids “back there” on Sunday mornings. So the following article is written especially for all the new members. Welcome to our Plymouth family, and don’t hesitate to contact me, Donna Greene, if you are interested in becoming involved in any aspect of our wildly fun and successful children’s education programming.

What is Workshop Rotation Model?

For children in kindergarten through fifth grade, we use the Workshop Rotation Model for Sunday school, named as such because (1) children meet in a workshop instead of a classroom and (2) groups rotate to a different workshop each week. Children attend workshops in the following small groups: K & 1st graders are Wolves, 2nd & 3rd graders are Moose and 4th & 5th graders are Bears. We use this approach because the interactive, hands-on activities are engaging and developmentally appropriate, resulting in learning that is meaningful and downright fun. We know that individuals learn and remember more with repetition and when they are active and using all their senses. We offer three different workshops for each Bible story and every child gets the opportunity to participate in every workshop. We do not attempt to interpret the stories for children at this age, imposing an adult perspective or theology. Rather, our goal is to pass on our faith stories and the tradition of good “story-telling” to provide a solid foundation upon which children can build their faith.

Why do we call ourselves Trailblazers?

We chose the name “Trailblazers” to fit our “out west” geographical location, as well as our interest in creating a sense of adventure as we explore and discover the stories of our faith. The “trailhead marker” located just outside Hal’s office lists the names of our workshop spaces and lets parents know where to pick up their children at the end of the education hour. As you enter the hall of our north wing, you may notice that the spectacular mural in the hallway takes you from lower elevations all the way to the top of the “twin peaks” at the end of the hall, giving you the sense of being on a hike in the mountains.



What workshops do we offer?

Indian Paintbrush is an art workshop where Bible stories can be experienced through exploration of various art forms. Children might illuminate a manuscript, make a first century clay oil lamp, weave a Moses basket, make a Noah rain stick, create a giant Egyptian mural using hieroglyphics, or fold origami baptism doves. In the **Ranger Station**, children research the lessons in more detail through the study of science, history, geography, archaeology and more. Projects might include making 3-D maps of the travels of Abraham or Paul, conducting science experiments, working on an archaeological dig, measuring out the actual size of Noah’s ark, searching the Internet, or playing Bible computer games.

In *Moving Mountains*, children bring the stories to life by becoming the characters in the story using plays, mock radio broadcasts or television newscasts, puppets, dance, music, rhythm sticks, sign language, or the shadow theatre. Sometimes the whole group assembles to watch a movie, share a Passover meal, or test their knowledge by playing Bible “Wheel of Fortune”. On special occasions we have guest appearances by “Bible characters” that enjoy sharing their experiences first-hand.

Help Needed with Children’s Education Programs

Now that you know more about our programs, it’s the time of year when we need to begin recruiting volunteers for next year. **There are two main ways to be involved**, and according to feedback from current and previous volunteers, both opportunities are just that – opportunities. **We are recruiting new members for both areas.**

What better opportunity will you have as a parent to be involved with your elementary age children than to volunteer to be a **Trail Guide** for their Trailblazer group? Your responsibilities include only showing up on Sunday morning, nurturing and loving the children in your group, and helping them participate in the workshop activities. There is absolutely no lesson planning involved. We even recruit three Trail Guides and a list of substitutes per age group so you can have the flexibility to be off when you need to. This is a fantastic way to be involved in your church if you keep a frenetic pace all week and offers the opportunity for you to spend quality time with your children on Sunday mornings. The program year begins in mid-September and ends the third weekend in May.

We also need help on our Workshop Planning Team. This is a terrific opportunity for those of you who have any experience with children, or an interest in art, cooking, drama, dance, music, history, multi-media, science, nature, storytelling, or any other area we might envision using for a workshop. The planning process offers a creative out-

let, is vital to our education program and has only minimal time requirements. The commitment is one meeting per month to help select ideas for the workshops. Members of the current team now have three years experience with our program and are looking forward to mentoring next year’s recruits. The Youth Education Director selects the stories and brings several ideas to each meeting to get everyone’s creative juices flowing. **“NO, YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE A COMMAND OF THE BIBLE STORIES TO JOIN THIS PLANNING TEAM**, because we don’t want you to show up the rest of us. Our meetings begin with a review of the Bible story or theme, followed by brainstorming usually accompanied by humor and laughter, interesting discussion, and finally a wrap-up with the group selecting three very exciting options for workshops. After planning for a rotation is completed, the youth education director recruits workshop teachers from the congregation based on a good fit between the workshop topics and the gifts and talents of the members. Our next workshop planning meeting is scheduled for April 13th from 6-8 PM at church. We welcome everyone who is interested in possibly joining us next year. We plan several months in advance, so we will begin planning for September and October at our April meeting. Planning meetings are scheduled once per month from late-August through mid-May.

Contact Donna Greene to volunteer at 482-9212 or e-mail me (donna@plymouthucc.org). I’m looking forward to welcoming you to whatever niche best suits you and will help you feel more plugged in to your church and our awesome young people. My prayer is to have all the needs filled

Please keep these members and friends in your prayers.

Recently in the Hospital:

- † Sarah Lollar
- † Eli Slocumb
- † Mollie Nortier

Congratulations to:

† Jennifer and Kim Ogle on the baptisms of their identical twin daughters Emma Pearl Sidou and Chloe Frances Sidong Ogle on March 13, 2005.

† Sally and Terry Gilmore whose son Chris has accepted a call as pastor of First Congregational Church in Boulder.

† On the successful Women's Retreat at the Edward's House on March 5.

Our sympathy is with:

† The family of Keith and Terri Schulz on the recent death of Keith's father from a stroke.

Plymouth Prayer Tree

The Plymouth Prayer Tree has 22 active members. The congregation's "Joys and Concerns," expressed during the Sunday morning prayer time, are forwarded to these members each week. If you have additional prayer requests, please contact Betty Clark at 229-9944 or e-mail her at bettyclarkfc@juno.com.

OGHS Story

In a Darfur camp: A feeding center "has been going without stopping"

By Chris Herlinger
Church World Service

ZALENGEI, Sudan—The World Food Program said earlier this week the war in Darfur has made it difficult to reach some 360,000 persons in need of food assistance.

While that figure would seem to belie the overall improvement in the humanitarian situation—by all accounts, humanitarian efforts such as the Church World Service-supported ACT/Caritas work have made a marked impact in Darfur in the last six months—all could change rapidly depending on events.

"The nutrition situation is very delicate and very fragile," Basra Hassan, a Somali nutritionist working with the ACT/Caritas program in the West Darfur city of Zalengei, said as just one example of ongoing problems. "It could turn back within weeks to the situation it was six to seven months ago."

Luckily, the ACT/Caritas program has implemented a number of supplementary feeding programs in a number of locales, including the Hassa Hissa Camp on the edge of the city of Zalengei—one of three such centers in the Zalengei area.

On one recent morning, the staff of the Hassa Hissa feeding center provided weekly food rations—including supplementary food and protein mixtures—to more than 80 young mothers, 80 pregnant women and 130 children under five, about a quarter of the total number of those served.

The center provides rations for camp residents four days a week, and residents of the camp volunteer to mix the supplementary food and prepare it for distribution.

In operation for about a month, the feeding center "has been going without stopping," said Darfur nutritionist Salahedin Mousa Mohammed, 35, a coordinator of the operation.

"We needed to open a center here," Salahedin said. "The needs have been great."

Story from One Great Hour of Sharing, www.ucc.org.

“Retreating Together”

I can recall every acre, every hogan¹ and every path to the pool. I can still maneuver all the back roads the 1 ½ hour drive from my home in Northern New Jersey. Some summer days I can smell the scent of that earth after the rain had come down in sheets through the dense trees. I can feel the solidity of the rock that was *my* rock, where I would sit in the middle of a stream in the sunshine, shadows of leaves playing around me on the water. The name of the place was Aldersgate, and it was my church’s camp and retreat center.

There is something about camp. The details are preserved with such clarity, and the people who share the experiences also share a bond.

The name of the Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC’s camp is LaForet. Many of you have been there for any number of camps, retreats, or weekends. When I hear you talk about your experiences, I hear words like peaceful, exciting, renewing, inspiring, just-what-I-needed – and that’s *not* just from the young people! Once having been, your spirit longs to return.

There is just something about it.

When a group of people – even those of us who get together regularly – gather outside of their familiar space, community happens anew. I’ve witnessed this at the staff and Council retreats. Some of you have experienced it at the Women’s Retreat or the Men’s Canoe Trip. People whom you see regularly at church or on committees become “whole people”, rather than “church people”. There comes an overwhelming sense of renewal, inspiration, excitement, peace...the Holy.

As you perhaps can tell, I am very excited to be a part of Plymouth’s first (*annual?*) All-Church Retreat at LaForet. There we will step out of our regular routines together and try something new. In encountering our congregation at LaForet we will be opening ourselves to know one another *and God* in a different, but wonderfully intimate way.

The overnight (morning of Sept. 17th to the morning of Sept. 18th) will include time for worship and community, play and exploration. It will be a time for children and adults of all ages, with accessible cabins for both wheelchairs and baby strollers. It will also be an opportunity to renew ourselves as Plymouth Church, revitalizing each of our ministries to this community and to ourselves. Once there, you will know why those who have been there can’t say enough about it. So mark your calendars, look for a sign-up sheet next month and get ready to retreat together.

In Christ,
Sharon

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

An open & affirming
congregation.
Gathered in 1903.
www.plymouthucc.org
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970.482.9212

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Jan Welch, Carrie Hansen
Organists

Alda Frucci, Porter Industries
Custodians

¹ A traditional Navajo dwelling; instead of being made of logs and mud, these were

Plymouth Congregational
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Non-profit organization
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Permit No. 109



NEWS & NOTES

Volunteers!

Do you know the Jr. and Sr. High-aged people in our congregation? They are an amazing group of youth! They are creative and thoughtful...and fun. If you don't know them, I recommend taking some time...and consider working with them throughout the year. There are several ways to do so: as a youth mentor, as a confirmation sponsor, helping with fundraising or as a youth group leader. I am currently seeking the names of people who may be interested in spending time guiding and learning from our youth. If you think you have some time to share and energy to spend, contact Sharon, phone 482-9212 or e-mail

Health Kit Update

Sixteen Health Kits were sent to Church World Service for disaster relief. The next opportunity to donate Health Kits will be in October. Watch for sales on needed items. Thank you for your contributions.

Youth Sunday April 10th

The Senior High Youth Group has been working hard to prepare this very special time of worship. Both services will be identical, so come and celebrate the creativity of these youth in their expression of the theme "Finding God..."

The Junior High Youth Group will take part in the festivities by sharing coffee hour.

Plymouth Dessert Theatre

May 6th @ 7 PM in the Fellowship Hall

Attention Plymouth actors, musicians, and performers: we need you!! We're looking for talented people to participate in the Plymouth Dessert Theatre. If you are interested in taking part (in performing or planning), please call or e-mail Sharon (482-9212, sharon@plymouthucc.org) or talk to Donna Solverud

Mark your calendars — we need an audience, too!