

The Plymouth Placard



February 2005

WORSHIP FOR FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 6 (TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY)

EXODUS 24.12–18
MATTHEW 17.1–9
“COME, WAIT, LISTEN”

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

SIMPLE SUPPER (PROVIDED BY THE
DEACONS) AT 6:30 PM
BRIEF SERVICE AT 7:00 PM

FEBRUARY 13

GENESIS 2.15–17 & 3.1–7
“LIVING WITH GOD AND EACH OTHER”

FEBRUARY 20

ONE SPECIAL SERVICE AT 10:45 AM
FEATURING A DRAMA PRESENTED BY
JON DODSON AND UNITED
CAMPUS MINISTRY

TAIZÉ SERVICE
(QUIET, CONTEMPLATIVE, CONTEMPORARY)
6:00 PM, FOLLOWED BY
FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

SUNDAY, 27 FEBRUARY

EXODUS 17.1–7
“SOLID ROCK, LIVING WATER”

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



Organized Chaos

Last October, I had the good fortune to attend an Alban Institute workshop on “Leading Congregational Change.” God knows it’s a relevant topic for Plymouth! And I’d like to share some of my learnings with you, as we start 2005 together. (More will follow later.)

In an older model of change, we expected cycles to look like this:

Transition > Stability > Transition > Stability

Now, change has become “permanent white water,” to use a rafting/kayaking metaphor. We may feel as if things at Plymouth are swirling and eddying around us continually. And in this turbulent water, there are two basic harbingers of change: **fear/conflict** and **vision/hope**. Either path can help lead a congregation to change. You may assume that the former is bad and the latter good, but energy in a congregation can come from either situation. And that energy can lead us into a new model of change at Plymouth: chaos. (Before you stop reading this article and run away, I’m using chaos in the sense of “chaos theory,” not total Bedlam.)

A chaos model of change starts with **pain** (where we get energy), then adding **possibility** (a vision of where we want to go), then breaking **outside the box** (Getting out of the rut: “We’ve never done this before.”), and the result is **chaos**. That sounds wonderful, doesn’t it? No? In some ways, we’ve been doing this for the last two years (think pastoral transitions, visioning and strategic planning, and capital campaign planning). It hasn’t been a bed of roses, but neither has it been stagnant or joyless.

Once we move into an uncomfortable situation we are able to engage important transitions. Just as the wilderness was an uncomfortable place for Jesus to manifest his call, so it may be that we need some wilderness time to discover the church God is calling us to become. Three stages of transition include: **1. letting go** (this is really painful for most of us); **2. confusion during the in-between time** (most of us deny this stage exists, because it’s very uncomfortable), and **3. starting anew** (most of us are inclined to jump

right to #3, but that can short-circuit the change). Being uncomfortable is not necessarily a bad thing, but it needs to be done with care (for instance, being civil with one another and being aware of peoples’ discomfort). I’ll be observing and inviting the congregation this year to notice chaos and transition, even if it’s terribly uncomfortable. The outcomes are unknown, and that in itself can be scary for some. But, we will journey together *as a congregation*, and we will be on this pilgrimage *with God*.

“Fear is the enemy of change and the announcer of chaos,” according to Gil Rendle, a senior consultant with Alban. “What breaks down in this process is *not* reality, but our concept of reality. It is our illusions that need to be released, so we might see reality ‘uncovered’ or as it really is.”

We are a congregation with a distinctive vocation. I invite you to be intentionally prayerful about discerning who we are called to become. And I ask for you to bring all of yourself into this process: your hopes and fears, your discomfort and your ease, your sorrows and your joys, your head and your heart. This year, we will be intentional about learning more about each other: the young and the older members, the long-time members and those who have joined recently. And we will move forward together.

Peace,



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UPCOMING EVENTS



Spring 2005 Film Series: Spiritual Themes in Films

Watch these movie classics at Plymouth — then come the next morning to discuss them. Films are not only entertaining, many of them carry significant messages. They depict the human condition, illustrate costs and rewards of life choices, show transformations in people, and give us much to think about as we view them through both secular and spiritual lenses.

Again this year, Plymouth's Adult Education and Evangelism Committees, in conjunction with United Campus Ministry, will offer a series focusing on spiritual themes in films. Showings will be held at Plymouth Church at 7:30 PM on the first Saturday of February, March, April, and May. Discussions of the spiritual themes in the films will take place during the Education hour at 9:30 AM the day following each showing. We hope you'll join us. If you cannot attend a showing, please join us for the Sunday discussions.

Don't miss these thought-provoking films!

The Grapes of Wrath

Showing: February 5, 7:30 PM

Discussion: February 6, 9:30 AM

Discussion Leader: Con Woodall B.A., M.A., teacher, actor, facilitator

Pay It Forward

Showing: March 5, 7:30 PM

Discussion: March 6, 9:30 AM

Discussion Leader: Diane Stober, Life Coach, PhD in Psychology

The Seventh Seal

Showing: April 2, 7:30 PM

Discussion: April 3, 9:30 AM

Discussion Leader: Rick Hunt, Master of Theological Studies, Harvard University

Whale Rider

Showing: May 7, 7:30 PM

Discussion: May 8, 9:30 AM

Discussion Leaders: Plymouth Senior High Youth

New group meets Feb. 27th



Is the guilt from that unfinished pair of baby booties you started years ago for your grandchild (who is now in grade school) getting you down? Tired of dealing with all those little pieces of paper that fall out of your address book every time you open it? Help is on the way!

You are invited to attend the first meeting of Unfinished Projects Anonymous in the Fireside Room from 2:00-4:30 PM on Sunday, February 27. This new fellowship group is sponsored by Sarah and Cinda Blessing. Bring your unfinished project and work on it in the convivial, supportive atmosphere of a group of fellow procrastinators! Everyone with an unfinished project is invited. Whether it is the stack of Christmas cards you never addressed, skeletons lurking in the sewing or crafts closet, photos to put in albums, recipe file or address book reorg, all projects portable enough to bring to the church are welcome, along with their owners. Please sign up in the Fellowship Hall, or RSVP at 206-1535 or 420-1955, so we will know how many snacks to prepare.■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sign up now for Justice Alive!

Justice Alive is presented by the Peace & Justice Task Force, Rocky Mountain Conference, UCC. This thought-provoking event, hosted by Park Hill Congregational Church in Denver, February 20 - 21. Registration is due February 4. Cost is \$30 and includes three meals with overnight lodging with local church members available.

Ken Brown, UCC's national Associate for Youth and Young Adult Empowerment and a member of the Justice & Witness Ministries will speak at the Opening Plenary Celebration.. Monday's workshops will use the Liberation Theology Process: **See** (a concise definition of the issue), **Judge** (reflection on the issue/problem based on our faith and our experience), and **Act** (formulation of action local church folks or the conference could DO to make a change). Topics include Tools for Change: Beyond the Protest, Human Rights - Don't Take Them for Granted, Community Empowerment against Racism, Economic Justice: Stewardship and Transformation, and Christianity in a Time of War.

Additional information is available on the table at the back of the sanctuary or talk with any Peace & Justice Committee member. For scholarship information and questions, please contact PHCUCC registrar at phcucc@central.com or 303-322-9122. ■

Call to the Twenty- fifth General Synod July 1-5, 2005



The Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ will convene at 2:30 PM on Friday, July 1, 2005 and adjourn at 9:30 PM on Tuesday, July 5. Our theme for this time together is "Come Listen, Go Serve, God Is Still Speaking." The meeting will be held in the Georgia World Congress Center in Downtown Atlanta, Georgia, and will be hosted by the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Visitors may register for General Synod, arrange housing and select sponsored meals on-line at www.ucc.org/synod. For information, please contact Lee Foley 216-736-2192, e-mail foleyl@ucc.org, or the administrator of the General Synod, Edith Guffey, 216-736-2110, e-mail guffeye@ucc.org, both at 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. ■

TAIZÉ SERVICE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20
6:00 PM

PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE AND ENJOY A FELLOWSHIP SUPPER
FOLLOWING THE SERVICE. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE.

MORE INFO: WWW.TAIZE.FR

XYZers meet for soup, salad and a movie

XYZers will meet Saturday, February 5th in the Fellowship Hall for a soup and salad supper from 5:30 to 7:00 P.M. and then attend the movie "Grapes of Wrath" to be shown in the Fellowship Hall at 7:30 PM. Please bring your own table service to facilitate quick clean-up as we must be through with the room by 7:00 PM. Soup and beverages will be provided. Those planning to attend please sign the sheet on the bulletin board, and indicate if you would be willing to provide a salad or perhaps some bread. ■

Women's Retreat Chicken Soup/Women's Wisdom

Whether you're 15 or 115, a new member or a founding mother, join us for a day of spiritual renewal. We will gather to break bread and celebrate *Sophia/Wisdom* at the Edwards House in Ft. Collins from 8:30 AM-5 PM on March 5th. Space is limited to 25, please sign up in the fellowship hall. Cost is \$40 for breakfast, lunch, snack and miscellaneous. This will also be an opportunity to discuss the future of the Women's Friendship Group. Contact Marsha Scott (225-1912) or Rev. Sharon Benton (482-9212) if you have any questions or need help with cost. ■

Hilltopper Lunch Thursday, February 10th

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. ■

Middle-Third Herd Events for February



February 4th — Herd Happy Hour @ CB&Potts (1415 West Elizabeth St.). We'll meet at 5:00 PM or whenever you can get there for drinks and appetizers. Please RSVP to Andrea Kelly at 4kellyfam@comcast.net so we know how big of a table to reserve. If you haven't been to a happy hour yet, give it a try. It's a great way to meet some people at Plymouth in a smaller, more intimate group.

February 5th — Sledding Trip to RMNP! We'll meet at Plymouth around 9:30 AM to car-pool. Bundle up, bring your sleds, a sack lunch, and some hot drinks. Please RSVP to Andrea Kelly at 4kellyfam@comcast.net

February 26th — The Rainbow Chorus at the Lincoln Center. Silent Auction at 6:30 PM; Entertainment at 7:30 PM. Contact Vicki Bohlmann for ticket information at thompsonand-bohlmann@juno.com or 206-0813.

February 27th — The Chill NWBL Women's Basketball at the Budweiser Events Center. Contact Terri Shultz for ticket information at schulzctl@earthlink.net or 223-8879. ■



Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee (CCEC)

Many of you know that Bea Stoner, our consultant in this adventure, was at Plymouth for a Forum on Sunday, January 9th and stayed the week for Feasibility Interviews. By the time you read this, she will have given us recommendations for a future campaign based on those interviews. Some details were presented at the Congregational Meeting on January, 23rd. Watch for more information in the months ahead. Together and God willing, we can renovate, refurbish, renew and expand our facilities and , in the process by working together, we may just renovate, refurbish, renew and expand our spiritual

Peace and Justice Unveils Church Declaration

For two decades the Just Peace movement has been a grassroots effort of UCC congregations committed to corporately naming and boldly proclaiming a public identity of working for justice and peace. Congregations affirm the theological framework and shape their identity around the vision of a “just peace”, a vision of shalom, that is the interrelationship of friendship, justice and common security from violence.

With great excitement the Peace and Justice Team is pleased to announce the Peace with Justice Church declaration we have crafted following the process of the past year of congregation dialogue and reflection. We’ve drawn from discussions in the adult education forums, book studies, a film series, Lenten Dinners, and small group dialogues to create the following declaration:



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.

We look forward to sharing further discussions with you in the coming months leading up to a congregational vote for adoption after Easter. On **February 27** the Adult Forum will focus on the Declaration and what future directions we see this taking us. We’ll also have a time for dialogue following the second service on **March 13**. Please join us at one of these times or catch us at the coffee hour with your responses. ■

Peace and Justice Team

Don Heyse
Phil Koster
Linda Mahan
Hugh Sanborn
Margaret and Paul Smith
Nancy Sturtevant
Betty Weber

Christmas Eve Offering Recipients

Portions of the letters received from the agencies the Social Concerns Committee chose to share our Christmas Eve Offering are printed below.

"We were delighted to receive the \$800 check from Plymouth...The dollars...will go directly to help those families whose reduced circumstances mean they need help with childcare fees.... This support will help B.A.S.E. Camp continue to provide safe, enriching places for children while they receive tutoring help, enjoy math and science projects, take field trips and participate in daily activities with school friends.... Last spring 25% of the families who receive aid had incomes that dropped them off our ten-step scale. This becomes a significant amount when trying to help between 500-600 children with reduced fees each year.... ...Our thanks to the congregation for their donation to help families in our program."

— Linda Preston, Executive Director

"On behalf of the people who will benefit from your donation and the Board of the Homelessness Prevention Program, I want to thank you for your generous and continued support and the recent check from your church.... Although reports claim that the economy is recovering, for those on marginal incomes or working in service sector positions, this is not the case. State and federal budget cuts to Aid to the Needy and Disabled have resulted in a significant loss of income for those who depend on that assistance. People continue to struggle to balance their budget to meet basic needs as the cost of utilities, childcare, health care, housing and gasoline increase. Last year we helped 498 households, but we continue to run out of money during the third week of each month, and the need increases. We appreciate your support."

— Gail Barera, Director of Homelessness Prevention.

Please keep these members and friends in your prayers.

Recently in the Hospital:

† Bill Lindgren
† Roy Hinkel
† Sylvia Pacer (now at Columbine Rehab)
† Matt Poole

Our Sympathy is with:

† Phil & Suzie Koster and family on the death of her brother, Gary, January 7. A memorial service will be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan January 29.

Congratulations to:

† Bob and Rickie Calkins on their 50th wedding anniversary January 9.

† Doris Rayner who celebrated her 90th

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.

UCC increases Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation goal to \$1 million

The magnitude of the disaster which struck Asia and Africa on December 26 continues to unfold. The human toll is staggering - 213,612 dead; 20,690 missing; 1,135,059 displaced across twelve countries on two continents. (US AID 1/20/05) The United Church of Christ is committed to walk with our global partners throughout the relief, recovery and rehabilitation phases of this disaster which we project will last up to five years. Additional gifts in support of this important ministry are welcome.

Members and friends of the United Church of Christ have poured out their compassion and generosity in wonderful ways, through prayer services, assembling of Church World Service health and school kits and financial contributions. Based on this extravagant generosity, the Global Sharing of Resources office has increased the UCC Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation goal to \$1,000,000.

Donations thus far are supporting the relief efforts of our global partners [...] in India [...], Indonesia [...], Sri Lanka [...], [and] Thailand [...]. To read the complete article, visit www.ucc.org.

How you can help?

1. Pray for the people affected by the Tsunami and our partners who are engaged in relief and rehabilitation efforts.
2. Make gifts payable to your UCC Congregation, marked for "Tsunami Relief Fund" in the memo.
3. Make gifts payable to Wider Church Ministries, marked in the memo portion "Tsunami Relief Fund." Send to Wider Church Ministries; 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115.
4. Make a secure online donation at www.ucc.org.

Source: www.ucc.org

Centered in Spirit

We live in a fast and busy society: family commitments, work or study, playtime and social responsibility all claim pieces of our time. We ride the wave of busyness, perhaps acknowledging but not quite accepting the need to take a moment solely for self and Spirit (even at church on Sunday!). The pace sometimes seems beyond our abilities to keep up – often the only option is to hold on with a grip of iron and wait until the universe sees fit to drop us in a place where we can catch our breath and look around to see where we’ve been deposited...and determine how we can jump back into the race.

I’m reminded of a playground ride that my brothers and I called the “merry-go-round.” Despite a name usurped from the tame amusement ride, the merry-go-round of my childhood, with its metal bars and rapid spin, was anything but mild – *I loved it*. I would sit in the middle, holding tightly to the bars, while my older brother spun me as fast and hard as he could. The world disappeared into blur, and gravity would give a little as centrifugal force took over. It may seem counter to expectation, but I felt an amazing freedom and peace amid the madness of that ride. Of course, part of the sensation was adrenaline, but the majority was a longing to stay in that state until all my world returned to a “rightness” that I could sense was out there.

Having spent time contemplating such moments, spaces of unexpected inner quiet in the midst of chaos speak to me in a new way. Those seemingly turbulent times when we feel like everything is breaking apart may be reinterpreted; the spinning out of control forces us to let go of the external and take notice solely of self and Spirit. We, as North Americans, tend to be so active that we forget that our first call is simply to BE: to *be in* Creation, to *be in* self, to *be in* Spirit. It is this rejuvenation that empowers us to give. In a church community it is worship, prayer and spiritual practices (*being in* God) that feed us to turn around and give of ourselves – whether in the realm of social justice, in the capacity of church committees, or in visiting and caring for others.

As your minister of congregational life and care, I encourage the balance of giving to the life of the church while maintaining a foundation of self in the Spirit. We UCCers pride ourselves on our activism, but the strength of our convictions come from the life of One who balanced his *doing* with his *being*, his teaching and healing with his praying and worshipping. Being centered in Spirit is where each of us can find new life and new commitment to this congregation, Christ’s church and God’s creation as a whole. Even if you’re not willing to grab hold of a merry-go-round with me next time you’re at the playground, perhaps you’ll share with me the practices that help center you.

In the Spirit,
Sharon

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

An open & affirming
congregation.
Gathered in 1903.
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NEWS & NOTES

March Placard Deadline

The deadline for the March Placard is **Monday, February 21st**. Please e-mail your articles to Karin Marsh (plymouth@plymouthucc.org) AND Lauren Mingus (lpmingus@earthlink.net).

Church Van Drivers

Members of our church who drive the church van on a regular basis or may have a need to drive the van for church functions must get their Motor Vehicle Record updated and given to Karin Marsh in the church office. This record is obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles located in the mini-mall at Shields and Prospect. It is a requirement of the church to have this in-

Golfers — Save the date!

On April 30, 2005 United Campus Ministry will hold a Golf Tournament at Collindale. Entry fee for a team of four is \$600. More details to follow.

Please Note

There are five handicapped spaces in our parking lot. Please don't park in this spaces unless you have a handicap. If you believe more handicapped spaces are needed, please mention it to a deacon.