

The Plymouth Placard



December 2004

WORSHIP FOR DECEMBER

DECEMBER 5

ISAIAH 11.1–10 AND MATTHEW 3.1–12
“WHO WILL LEAD?”

TAIZÉ SERVICE AT 6:00 PM
FOLLOWED BY A FELLOWSHIP MEAL

DECEMBER 12

ISAIAH 35.1–10 AND LUKE 1.47–55
“HOW CAN WE REJOICE?”

DECEMBER 19

ISAIAH 7.10–16 AND MATTHEW 1.18–25
“HOW IS GOD WITH US?”

DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

SERVICES OF LESSON & CAROLS AT 5, 7, AND 11 PM
THE 5 O’CLOCK SERVICE WILL BE ESPECIALLY
CHILD- AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY. WE WILL CELEBRATE
COMMUNION AT THE 7 AND 11 O’CLOCK SERVICES

DECEMBER 26

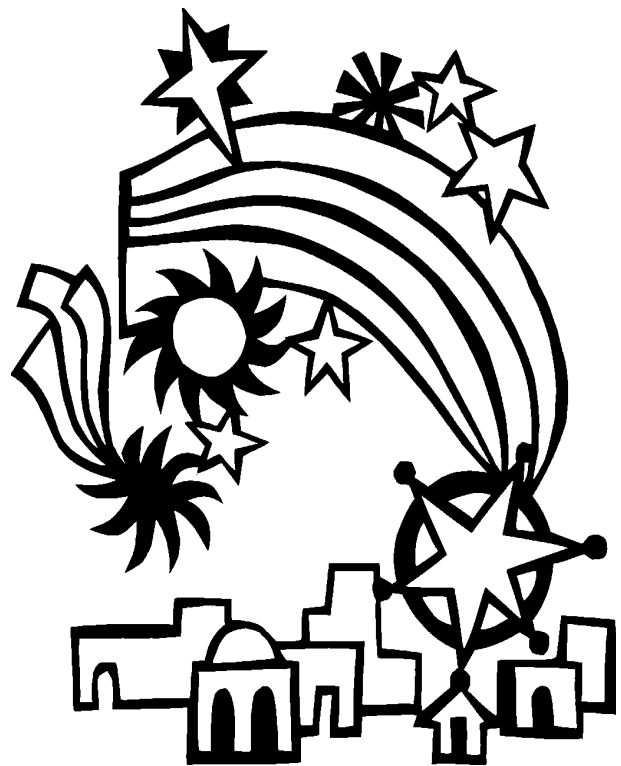
FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMASTIDE!

ONE SERVICE AT 10:45 AM
CHRISTMAS CAROL SING!
MATTHEW 2.1–13

JANUARY 2

SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMASTIDE!

TWO SERVICES
JOHN 1. 1–18
“WHAT IS GOD SAYING?”



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

“Why Do We Have Communion Every Sunday?”

One of the wonderful components of the Calling/Caring Ministry that Dick has developed is that at least twice a year, everyone in the congregation will get a telephone call from a deacon or a member of the Calling/Caring Team. The purpose of the call enhances communication in a three-fold manner: 1) it stresses the importance that in a program-size church like Plymouth, every member is important and is contacted by the church; 2) if there is an important church event coming up, the member gets an additional reminder; 3) it provides a feedback loop from members to the ministers and council.

An important question came back to us during the most recent round of calls: “Why do we have communion every Sunday at the 8:15 service?” Answering that question isn’t so simple. Part of it, though, is **because we want to**. For some in our congregation, taking part in the sacrament weekly is an important part of their spiritual life. In our congregational polity, the local church makes decisions about the ways it observes the sacraments, and this has been our way since before my arrival. (Our church in Connecticut, by the way, had the same pattern: every-Sunday communion at the early service, and first-Sunday communion at the late service.) In some UCC churches communion is celebrated only four times a year! The more typical pattern, though, is monthly.

Perhaps to some of us it seems “Catholic” to have weekly communion. I was talking with an Episcopal priest this week, and he mentioned that once-a-month communion had been their typical practice until the 1970s, but that a reform then shifted their observation to every-week Eucharist. This reflects a slow, steady **shift in mainline churches**: are observing communion more frequently. In answer to the fear of “creeping Catholicism,” John Calvin (initiator of the Reformed tradition that includes the Congregationalists, E&R, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, etc.) thought that frequent communion

was a benefit to encouraging Christian spiritual life. They didn’t do confession and reconciliation as the Catholic church did: the Reformed minister went to the home of each parishioner and asked them, face-to-face, for their confession. (Don’t worry: I have no plans to institute this at Plymouth!)



A typical concern in the UCC sounds something like this: Doesn’t it make communion **less special** if you celebrate it every Sunday? Speaking only for myself, no, it doesn’t. Rather, it becomes an integral part of the service, and one that I look forward to. But, if you don’t feel the same way, it’s **perfectly acceptable not to participate** when we celebrate communion. My first year at Plymouth, it seemed strange to me to celebrate communion on Christmas Eve. (That Last Supper and the baby Jesus somehow seemed a weird combination.) But, the feast is called “**Christ Mass**,” after all. So, even though we may “cheat” and celebrate communion a few hours in advance of Christmas Day, we’ll celebrate the sacrament at the 7 and 11 services nonetheless.

The Board of Deacons and I welcome more questions about our sacraments and how we celebrate them. It’s a sign of congregation health that we’re asking the questions!

Shalom!

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Taizé Worship Changes (*Good Ones!*)

Our monthly Taizé service continues to afford an alternative worship style that many find meaningful. We have been meeting on the first Sunday of the month during the academic year; but will move to the third Sunday beginning January 16, 2005.

Enthusiasm for our Taizé worship is gaining momentum. We now have a volunteer food coordinator (Jean Preslan) who will ensure that simple dinners are offered after each service. The number of attendees has reached a steady state (in the 20's). We have a core group of Plymouth members and friends that regularly attend, but we continue to see new faces from other churches and denominations in the Ft. Collins area. The kinds of comments heard after the last service (November 7) were "so relaxing" and "...like attending the Chicago symphony..."

Historically, we offered this service on the first Sunday of the month with the exception of the summer months. But first Sundays are often crowded with other church activities, and when we (occasionally) celebrate communion at Taizé service, some people don't enjoy having it twice in one day. So, we thought we would try moving to a different Sunday in the new year, to see how that works for people.

We also will be trying some new things with seating. Look for that in 2005. We certainly want to hear feedback from all regarding the service and any changes we might make to enhance your worship experience. If you have developed a yearning to hear a particular chant, let us know that also, and we can try to get it into a future service.

In case you are new to this community, Taizé worship is an alternative form of Christian worship service, based on that done in the ecumenical community of brothers in Taizé, France. It is quiet and contemplative, with no sermons or announcements. Attendees sing a series of simple

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Save the date!

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday, December 19th
9:30-10:30 AM

Please plan to attend the Plymouth children's presentation of "Why The Chimes Rang" directed by Jane Clark. The setting is medieval, the story is heart-warming and the excitement is building. The performance will take place in the sanctuary during the education hour. All other classes have been canceled on this date. You are also invited to a light reception in the Fellowship Hall, hosted by the Youth Education Committee immediately following the performance.

New Members Dinner

Sunday, January 9
6:00 PM

The Congregational Life Committee is sponsoring a potluck dinner at church for new members (everyone who has joined since Hal and Jean were called to the church), church staff, and members of the Evangelism Committee. We hope you will join us. For more information, contact

Church Potluck and Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 23
Following the second service

Lenten Booklet

Attention all of those who are writing Lenten Booklet entries: Writings are currently being compiled and processed by Linda Preston. The deadline to contribute work is December 31. If you would like to participate, please submit your work to Sherry Bundy's file in the narthex or e-mail them to her at dkbundy@comcast.net. Thanks to those who have already contributed to next year's Lenten Booklet.

Hilltopper Luncheon December 9th

Join Us for a Hilltopper Luncheon at Noon Thursday December 9th. We'll have a delicious meal provided by the kitchen angels. There will be no formal program, but it will be a chance for some good fellowship over tasty food. If you can come, please sign up in the Fellowship Hall or call the church office, 482-9212 by Wednesday December 1. Hope to see you there!

Men's Fellowship Meeting

The Men's Fellowship will meet on Saturday, January 15th and thereafter on the third Saturday of each month in 2005. All men in Plymouth are invited to attend as we gather for breakfast, fellowship and activities of mutual interest. Please RSVP to Wayne Shepperd 223-8229, or wshep@lamar.colostate.edu if you plan to attend.

Need A Tax Break?

Gifts of stock are a great way to extend your giving to Plymouth and provide tax advantages to the full extent of IRS regulations. It does take a little while to convert stock, so contact your broker now if you would like to provide additional support for Plymouth before year's end. Questions? Call Les Fraley, our treasurer, at 221-1624, or e-mail him at lest@frii.com.

Reminder: In order for contributions to qualify for a deduction on your 2004 taxes, checks or money must be delivered to the church or postmarked by December 31, 2004. Contributions received after that date, regardless of when the check was written or dated (unless postmarked 31 Dec '04) do not qualify for deduction on 2004 taxes.

The Middle-Third Herd



This fellowship group is a great way to meet people if you're new to Plymouth. The Herd was started out of a need for a younger adult fellowship group. It has evolved into a catch-all fellowship group for those who want to have fun. Anyone is welcome. We do many fun activities throughout the year (game nights, hiking, theater, pot-lucks, monthly happy hour, etc). Please check us out if you're new to Plymouth. For more information on upcoming Herd events, send an e-mail to Andrea Kelly at 4kellyfam@comcast.net and she'll add you to the mailing list.

December Events

Friday, December 3 — Herd Happy Hour. Come join us for discounted drinks and appetizers at the County Cork (313 W. Drake). We'll have a table at 5 PM. Come when you can. Please RSVP to Andrea Kelly at 4kellyfam@comcast.net so we know how big a table to reserve.

Saturday, December 11 — Herd Holiday Party. This will be a night out for adults. Please arrange your own child care for the evening. Debra and Laurie Clark will host at their home in Windsor. Festivities will begin at 7 PM. Dress is casual. Bring a favorite dessert to share and a gift for exchange (\$10 limit). There is also an outreach project in the works. We may be adopting a family and donating gifts. Stay tuned to bulletins for more info. Contact Debra and Laurie Clark to RSVP at dslclarks@earthlink.net.

Living Open and Affirming

Coming to Understand Transgenderism

Even in an increasingly open and affirming society, transgendered persons often remain a poorly understood and even invisible part of the “LGBT” community. Yet by some definitions, there may be millions of transgendered Americans, and tens of thousands have “transitioned” to a new life in which they can inhabit physical bodies and social roles that are consistent with their inborn gender identities.

Do you know a transgendered person, or know of a “friend of a friend” who has faced these issues? Are you interested in better comprehending the transgender and transsexual phenomenon? One way to gain some insight is to read the personal stories of individuals who have found themselves in the “wrong” bodies and have embarked on the transition journey. Two such fascinating stories are offered as autobiographies from two renowned writers:

She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders (Broadway Books, 2003) is by Colby College novelist and writing professor Jennifer Boylan. It is the touching story of beloved teacher, father, husband, and friend James Boylan, who finally came to understand that the only path to peace was to become on the outside the woman he had always known on the inside. Elegantly written, the book treats with great sensitivity not only Boylan's internal journey, but also the loving responses of Boylan's friends, mother, and wife.

Crossing: A Memoir (University of Chicago Press, 1999) offers a much more detailed, conflicted account. Here one of America's leading economists, University of Iowa professor Dierdre McCloskey, relates the story of her own self-discovery, the aggressive hostility of some family members, the trials and tribulations of the transition surgeries, the joys and triumphs of learning to live as a woman, and her new-found religious feelings once she was able to live as herself.

(Lest you fear opening a tome by an academic economist, know that McCloskey, first as Donald and now as Dierdre, is perhaps the world's foremost scholar of economic rhetoric, storytelling, and meaning; the writing is lively and very personal.)

In our own church, look for an Adult Forum session on transgender issues early in 2005.

“Just Peace” Pronouncement

The Peace & Justice Ministry Team presents the final excerpt from the “Just Peace” Pronouncement and Proposal made at the Fifteenth (XV) General Synod of UCC in 1985:

The Fifteenth General Synod affirms justice as essential to a Just Peace.

3. We affirm economic policies that target aid to the most needy: the rural poor, women, nations with poor natural resources or structural problems, and the poor within each nation.

4. We affirm economic policies that will further the interests of the poor within each nation:

- a. promoting popular participation,
- b. empowering the poor to make effective demand on social systems,
- c. encouraging decentralization and greater community control,
- d. providing for the participation of women in development,
- e. redistributing existing assets, including land, and distributing more equitably future benefits of growth,
- f. reducing current concentrations of economic and political power, and
- g. providing for self-reliant development, particularly in food production.

5. We affirm nations transferring funds from military expenditures into programs that will aid the poor and developing strategies of converting military industries to Just Peace industries.

6. We oppose the injustices resulting from the development of national security states that currently repress the poor in organizing society against an external enemy.

7. We affirm a free and open press within each nation, without hindrance from government.

Please keep the following members and friends in your prayers.

Recently in the Hospital:

- † Ruth Jakubauskas
- † Pete Bullard
- † Esther Keil's son, Elson.
- † Janet McCulloch's father, John

Our Sympathy is with:

† The family of Mae Seder, former Plymouth member, who passed away last week. A graveside service was conducted by Hal and a reception followed at Plymouth.

Congratulations to:

- † Sarah and John Beres on the birth of a baby girl. She was born on her grandfather's (Fred Edmonds) birthday!
- † Dave and Sharon Smith on the birth of a new granddaughter, Holly Michelle.

Dear Plymouth friends:

Carolyn and I thank you so much for the wonderful warmth, affection, and generosity you have shown for us, and for the wonderful party and gifts on Nov. 21. You are absolutely amazing and words are inadequate vehicles to express the depth of our appreciation. In addition to the party we have received wonderful notes of thanks. One which touched me greatly came from Amy Norskog out at Denison University in her first year. And Ray Becker made us a beautiful clock for our wall. Our thoughts and prayers will be with you.

Dick & Carolyn

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.

Sock & Mitten Drive for Irish Elementary

This year's sock and mitten drive benefited the students at Irish Elementary, many of whom live at or below the poverty level. The winter will be more comfortable for these kindergarten through sixth-grade students thanks to Plymouth Church. Thank you once again for your generosity. The following items were given during the October drive:

- 22 pairs of gloves
- 7 hats
- 16 t-shirts
- 1 back pack
- 18 pairs of socks
- 7 children's pants
- 9 pairs of shoes
- 3 pairs of shorts
- 1 woman's suit
- 3 men's jackets
- 4 long-sleeved shirts
- 11 pairs of women's pants

Ft. Collins' Utilities Wind Power Program

As of June 1, 2004 Ft. Collins Utilities is offering wind energy to all customers for a price premium of 1 cent per Kilowatt-hour (kWh), a 60 percent reduction from the previous wind energy premium. Customers can choose \$5 or \$10 blocks of wind energy, or have their total energy use come from wind. If you are interested in finding out more about how you can use this clean, renewable energy source call: (970) 221-6700, (TDD 224-6003), e-mail: utilities@fcgov.com, web: www.fcgov.com/utilities/wind-power.php. Xcel energy also offers a wind energy program. You can call the contact phone number on your bill and they will direct you to their wind energy department.

Attention Placard Contributors!

The deadline for the January Placard is **Monday, December 20th**. Please e-mail your articles to Karin Marsh (plymouth@plymouthucc.org) AND Lauren Mingus (lpmingus@earthlink.net). NOTE: To help save time, when possible, please submit articles in font style Garamond, 12 point type. Please do not include tabs. THANK YOU!

International Criminal Court Discussion

The International Criminal Court will be the topic of a program on Tuesday, December 7th at 7:00 PM. The speaker will be Ved Nanda, who is Thompson Marsh Professor of Law and director of the International Legal Studies Program at the University of Denver. The program will be at Plymouth Church. It is sponsored by the Northern Colorado Chapter of the United Nations Association/USA, and is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Margaret S. Smith, President, UNA, Northern Colorado (and Plymouth member).

A Note from the Stewardship Committee

We extend a sincere thank you to all you who have joined in the effort to meet the challenges ahead of Plymouth in the coming year. As of November 18, we have received financial pledges totaling \$279,203. This is 70% of the goal we hope to reach and we are still waiting to hear from many members and friends of Plymouth.

We appreciate the dedication and commitment you have provided on the time and talent surveys. These commitments can only enhance our programs at Plymouth

Yours in fellowship,

Caryl Beaty, Chairman
Verley Boulton
Bruce Lieurance

Jane Nicolet
John Smith
Tobey Yadon

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

An open & affirming
congregation.
Gathered in 1903.
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Taizé

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melodic chants based on scripture, led by a small group of musicians. Interspersed among the chants are scripture readings and several 5- or 10- minute periods of silent meditation. We follow this approximately 35-minute service with a simple (and optional) fellowship dinner, funded by free-will donations. All are invited!

Look for us on December 5 at 6:00 PM for the next Taizé service, and again on January 16 and on the third Sunday through May of 2005. If you have questions or comments, contact Mary Sue Rowan at 663-4327, or e-mail at msrowan@frii.com.

TAIZÉ SERVICE

Who: You!
Everyone is Welcome!

When: Sunday,
December 5 at 6:00 PM

Where: Plymouth Cong'l UCC

Cost: Free-will offering for
supper

Childcare: You Bet!