



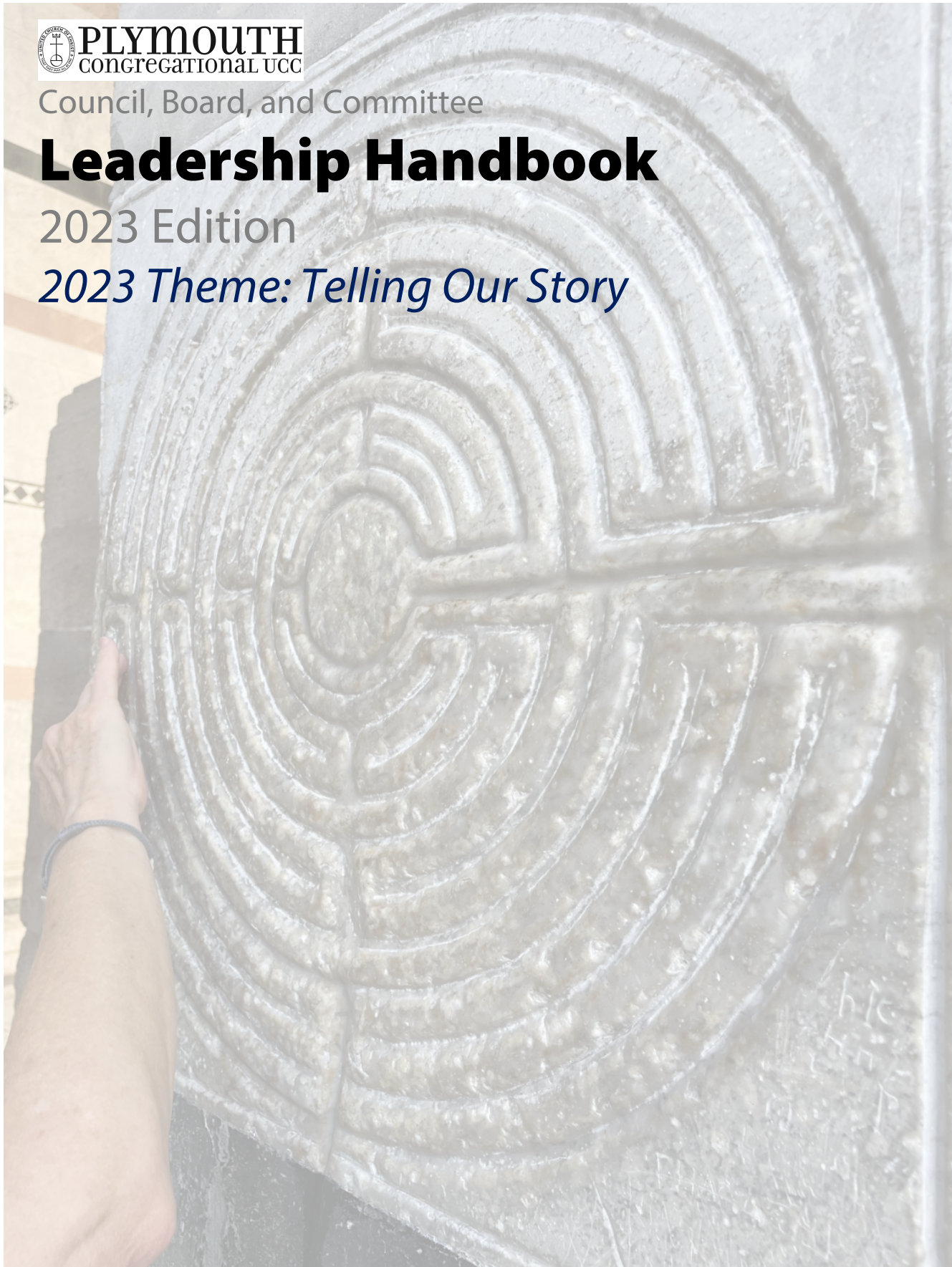
PLYMOUTH
congregational UCC

Council, Board, and Committee

Leadership Handbook

2023 Edition

2023 Theme: Telling Our Story



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PLYMOUTH
congregational
CHURCH, UCC

an open and affirming congregation

Dear Leadership Council, Board, Ministry Team, and Committee Members,

First and foremost, **thank you!** Thanks for being a leader of our congregation, for your hard work and attention, for your faithful response, and for the rewarding experience you have embarked upon.

For some of you, this kind of leadership will be second nature. You may have led groups and meetings in your work or with other volunteer organizations. If you have experience, great! And if you haven't yet experienced leading, awesome! I hope it will be a meaningful and enriching learning experience for you.

In any case, I hope you find this guide useful. If you find yourself with further questions, please don't hesitate to work with the staff person who supports your board, committee, or council. We have a gifted staff, and if they don't know the answer to your question, they will certainly research it until they do. And if you want to touch base with other board chairs, email them on boardchairs@plymouthucclists.org

I also encourage you, as a church leader, to look at your group's experience as an integral part of your spiritual journey. You'll discover more about that in the section called, "What does faith have to do with it?" But, please be prepared to experience God's presence as part of your time together.

Also, please understand that none of us has to do this alone...it takes **all** of us working together to keep Plymouth a fresh and vital congregation.

Blessings!

The Rev. Hal Chorpennig
Senior Minister

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Basic Documents

Plymouth's Mission Statement

Most organizations have mission statements, but few of them are terribly meaningful. Here at Plymouth, our Leadership Council is accountable to our mission statement...it spells out our reason for being. **Reinforce it!**

Anytime you are wondering if your board should do something, pull out the mission statement and see how that potential action or project measures up. One of our learnings is to say, "no thank you" to good ideas that don't align with our mission.

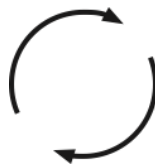


It is our mission to worship God and help make God's realm visible in the lives of people, individually and collectively, especially as it is set forth in the life, teachings, death and living presence of Jesus Christ. We do this by



Inviting: (Evangelism)

Actively inviting others into our faith community, providing a safe welcome for a diverse people.



Transforming:

Creating an open and affirming faith community with opportunities for caring and fellowship that deepen relationships and promote a spirit of unity. Encouraging the spiritual growth of our members and engaging their ministry by nurturing their relationship with God, calling forth their gifts, and equipping them for Christian service.



Sending: (Mission)

Joining others within broader communities to promote the integrity of creation and a more just, inclusive and peaceful world.

Ministers & Staff Contact List

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What does faith have to do with it?

In a word, **everything!** That's why we're here, so please try not to let that escape your board's view as you move forward.

Some boards ask a different member each month to open with a prayer, while others allow the chair to do so. And closing with an extemporaneous prayer is a good practice, too, or saying/singing the Lord's Prayer is great, too.

First Thessalonians 5 has some great advice: "Pray without ceasing." Everything you do can be a form of prayer if you do it with that intention. If you say to yourself, "This meeting is going to be a drag," it probably will be. And if you tell yourself and your team, "We are going to experience this meeting as a form of prayer," you are far more likely to!

Here are some "starter prayers" you can use while thinking about your own:

God of all people, thank you for calling us here this evening to help be part of your reign on earth. Keep us mindful of our time together in this place. Amen.

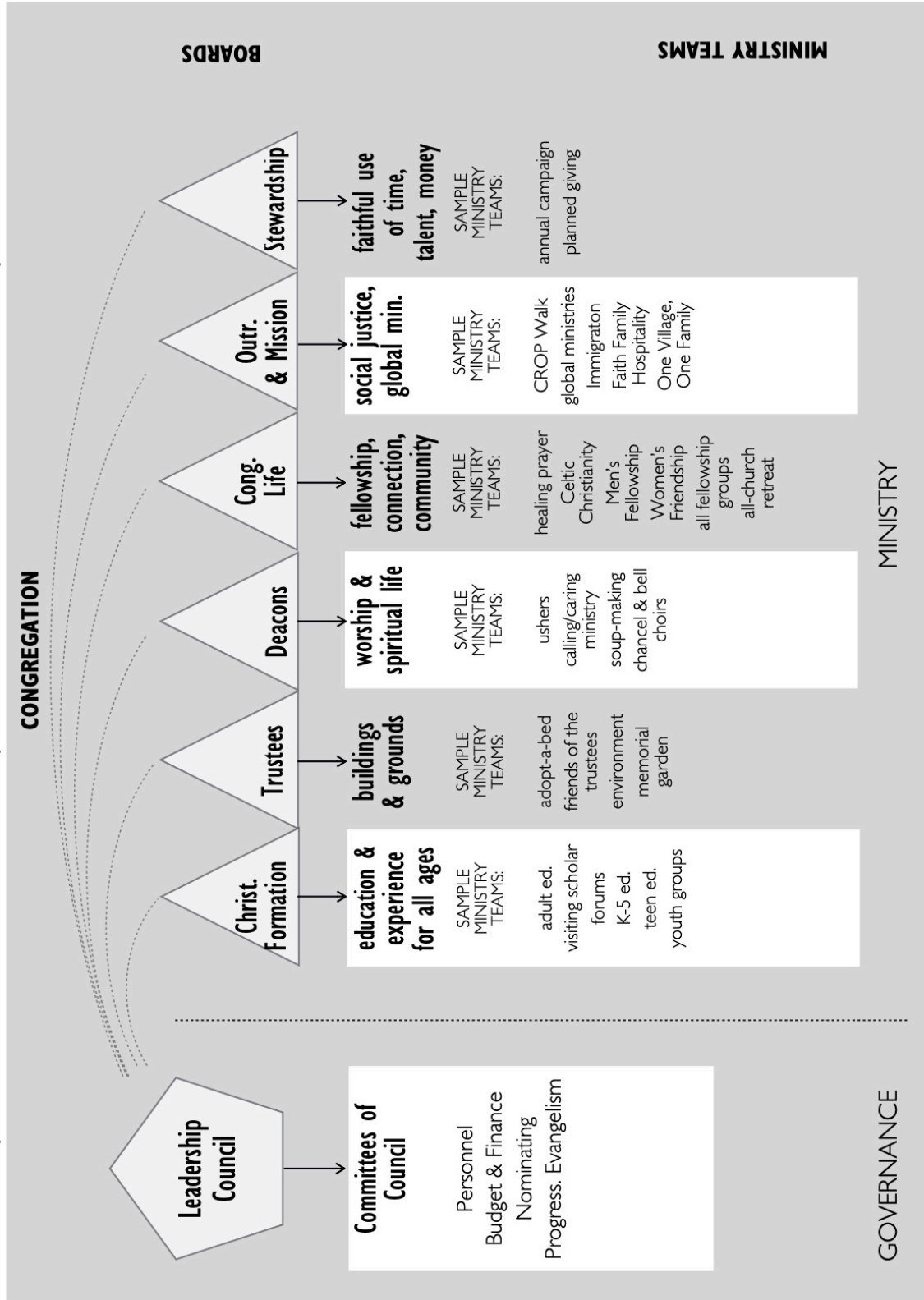
Holy One, bless our time together. May it be filled with connection, effectiveness, and compassion. May our work be an expression of our faith in you. Amen.

For the gift of time together, for the gift of wisdom, and for the gift of faith, we give you thanks, O God. Bless the work of our hands and our hearts. Amen.

Other practices used by Plymouth groups in the past include inviting one member each meeting to share a five-minute encapsulated version of their "faith journey," that includes answers to such questions as what religious tradition you grew up in, what were turning points in your faith journey, when you found the UCC, how you came to Plymouth and what is important about our congregation to you, big questions you still wrestle with. That not only helps you get to know one another, but it also builds trust and encourages faithfulness.

Plymouth Governance Diagram

Plymouth UCC Leadership Council, Boards, and Ministry Teams



Who makes which decisions?

Leadership Responsibilities at Plymouth

CONGREGATION	LEADERSHIP COUNCIL *	SENIOR MINISTER	STAFF	BOARDS
calls settled clergy	hires interim clergy	hires/fires admin. staff		
votes on clergy search comm.	hires/fires program staff, supervises sr. minister	leads and supervises staff team		
elects council & officers	makes nominations		advises Nom. Comm.	
elects board members	creates new positions			
	designs job descriptions			
	strategic planning	holds vision, strategy, and implementation	implements vision and strategy	implements vision and strategy
constitutional changes	makes policy	implements policy	implements policy	implements policy
approves annual budget	creates annual budget			
	oversees budget; amends between cong'l meetings			
participates in and leads classes, offerings	creates boards		Designs/runs programs w/ CF form board	CF form: education and faith journey for all
pledges both financially and time & talent				stewardship: financial support, time & talent
volunteers, gives special support				O&M: social justice, mission, giving
participates in worship		designs/leads worship with staff	designs/leads worship w/ sr. minister	deacons: worship & spiritual life
invites others to Plymouth, welcomes all				progressive evangelism: marketing, welcome
participates in small groups, fellowship				cong. life: building community
owns our property, volunteers w/ trustees				trustees: phys. plant

* INCLUDES committees of council, e.g., Nominating, Planned Giving, Personnel, Budget & Finance, etc.

Board and Committee Descriptions

Nominating Committee

from Plymouth's Constitution

Article XIV. Nominating Committee

- 1.** The Nominating Committee shall be made up of the Senior Minister and six persons, each serving a two-year term. These terms shall be staggered so that three full-term members of the Nominating Committee are elected at each annual meeting. The Nominating Committee shall elect a chair, which cannot be the Senior Minister, whose responsibility it will be to convene the committee at least four months before the annual meeting.
- 2.** The primary role of the Nominating Committee is to develop, each year, a slate of persons to fill the open positions of Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, At-Large members of the Leadership Council, and members of boards. This slate shall be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting as the basis for the election to fill those positions.
- 3.** The Nominating Committee shall also be responsible for nominating a Pastoral Search Committee as described the Ministry Article of this Constitution.

Boards

from Policy LCP-JD-2 (Board Job Descriptions)

Board of Deacons

The Deacons Board seeks to nurture and enrich the spiritual life of the congregation by:

- Overseeing worship, including music
- Identifying and supporting persons considering and pursuing Christian vocation

The Deacons Board is accountable to staff for:

- Developing and maintaining a vision for deacons that is consistent with Plymouth's Mission Statement and the strategic direction set by Leadership Council
- Leading the enrichment of spiritual life of individuals and the congregation
- Planning and executing worship at Plymouth for all services
- Developing calling/caring ministry programs
- Creating approaches, plans, priorities, tactics, and budget requests for enabling its vision, which will be shared periodically with the Leadership Council
- Communicating its work and that of related ministry teams to Plymouth, and the wider community when appropriate
- Collaborating with other boards and Leadership Council in open dialogue and strategic planning for the whole Plymouth community

The Deacons Board has the authority to:

- Charter, recruit, supervise, and support ministry teams and hold them accountable
- Replace volunteer personnel where appropriate
- Fill in gaps or shortcomings where necessary
- Set its meeting times and place
- Allocate and authorize funds to its work and that of its ministry teams consistent with budgets approved by the congregation.
- Create procedures for its own work and recommend policies to Leadership Council

Membership:

- Fifteen elected members + two staff
- Staggered two-year terms, two consecutive terms

Stewardship Board

The Stewardship Board is called to tend to the active stewardship of time, talent, and treasure of all members and friends so that Plymouth is a vibrant growing community of faith and giving by:

- Inviting persons to recognize and utilize their gifts and talents
- Providing year-round stewardship education
- Identifying the multiple opportunities for faithful stewardship both within the fellowship of Plymouth and beyond

The Stewardship Board is accountable to staff for:

- Developing and maintaining a vision for Christian stewardship that is consistent with Plymouth's Mission Statement and the strategic direction set by the Leadership Council.
- Planning and implementing the campaign to support the annual budget of the church
- Offering and promoting the opportunity for planned giving
- Planning any authorized capital campaign
- Encouraging environmental stewardship
- Developing a comprehensive plan for internal communication within the Plymouth community regarding stewardship
- Creating approaches, plans, tactics, and budget requests for enabling its vision, which will be shared periodically with the Leadership Council
- Collaborating with other boards and the Leadership Council in open dialogue and strategic planning for the whole Plymouth Community.

The Stewardship Board has the authority to:

- Charter, recruit, supervise, and support ministry teams and hold them accountable
- Replace volunteer personnel where appropriate.
- Fill in gaps or shortcomings where necessary
- Set its meeting times and place
- Allocate and authorize funds to its work and that of its ministry teams consistent with budgets approved by the congregation.
- Create procedures for its own work and recommend policies to Leadership Council

Membership:

- Six elected members + one staff
- Staggered two-year terms, two consecutive terms

Christian Formation Board

The Christian Formation Board seeks to assist persons of all ages in their life-long faith journey by:

- Equipping them with the ability to understand the Bible, know the history and traditions of the Christian Church
- Providing support to persons in their faith development
- Helping individuals develop personal and communal faith practices
- Encouraging persons of faith to engage critically with issues of importance to the culture and wider community through exposure and education.

The Christian Formation Board is accountable to staff for:

- Developing and maintaining a vision for Christian formation that is consistent with Plymouth's Mission Statement and the strategic direction set by the Leadership Council
- Creating and supervising ministry teams to design and implement programs for children, youth, and adults that engage the intellectual, spiritual, and social aspects of developing Christian life, e.g., Sunday morning programs and OWL

- Creating approaches, plans, priorities, tactics, and budget requests for enabling its vision, which will be shared periodically with the Leadership Council
- Communicating its work and that of related ministry teams to Plymouth, and the wider community when appropriate
- Collaborating with other boards and Leadership Council in open dialogue and strategic planning for the whole Plymouth community

The Christian Formation Board has the authority to:

- Charter, recruit, supervise, and support ministry teams and hold them accountable
- Replace volunteer personnel where appropriate.
- Fill in gaps or shortcomings where necessary
- Set its meeting times and place
- Allocate and authorize funds to its work and that of its ministry teams consistent with budgets approved by the congregation.
- Create procedures for its own work and recommend policies to the Leadership Council

Membership:

- Five elected members + two staff
- Staggered two-year terms, two consecutive terms

Congregational Life Board

The Congregational Life Board seeks to nurture and enrich the social and communal well-being of the congregation by:

- Supporting and developing small groups and fellowship groups
- Developing intergenerational and congregation-wide activities to build community
- Welcoming visitors and integrating new members into the life of the church
- Helping develop leadership and lay ministry capacities among Plymouth members

The Congregational Life Board is accountable to staff for:

- Developing and maintaining a vision for congregational life that is consistent with Plymouth's Mission Statement and the strategic direction set by Leadership Council
- Leading the enrichment of fellowship of the congregation
- Welcoming visitors and new members and integrating them into the life of the congregation
- Creating approaches, plans, priorities, tactics, and budget requests for enabling its vision, which will be shared periodically with the Leadership Council
- Communicating its work and that of related ministry teams to Plymouth, and the wider community when appropriate
- Collaborating with other boards and Leadership Council in open dialogue and strategic planning for the whole Plymouth community

The Congregational Life Board has the authority to:

- Charter, recruit, supervise, and support ministry teams and hold them accountable
- Develop leadership skills and replace volunteer personnel where appropriate
- Fill in gaps or shortcomings where necessary
- Set its meeting times and place
- Allocate and authorize funds to its work and that of its ministry teams consistent with budgets approved by the congregation
- Create procedures for its own work and recommend policies to the Leadership Council

Membership:

- Five elected members + one staff
- Staggered two-year terms, two consecutive terms

Outreach and Mission Board

The Outreach and Mission Board seeks to inform and engage members in the community and beyond and promote Plymouth in the community by:

- Endeavoring to promote Christian mission internationally, regionally and locally
- Finding opportunities for Christian social action
- Encouraging members to engage critically with issues of importance to the culture and wider community by providing opportunities for direct action in the world
- Celebrating and promoting Plymouth's commitments to being a Peace with Justice and Open and Affirming congregation
- Developing external promotion and communication on behalf of Plymouth as part of our call to invite others to follow Christ's path

The Outreach and Mission Board is accountable to staff for:

- Developing and maintaining a vision for Outreach and Mission that is consistent with Plymouth's Mission Statement and the strategic direction set by Leadership Council
- Supporting the mission endeavors of the United Church of Christ, e.g., Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support and special offerings of the UCC, and ecumenically through such organizations as Church World Service
- Leading the congregation in social and economic justice issues in the community and world
- Leading the congregation to foster our commitment to be a Peace with Justice and Open and Affirming congregation
- Communicating its work and that of related ministry teams to Plymouth
- Creating approaches, plans, priorities, tactics, and budget requests for enabling its vision, which will be shared periodically with the Leadership Council
- Collaborating with other boards and Leadership Council in open dialogue and strategic planning for the whole Plymouth community.

The Outreach and Mission Board has the authority to:

- Charter, recruit, supervise and support ministry teams and hold them accountable
- Replace volunteer personnel where appropriate
- Fill in gaps or shortcomings where necessary
- Set its meeting times and place
- Allocate and authorize funds to its work and that of its ministry teams consistent with budgets approved by the congregation
- Create procedures for its own work and recommend policies to the Leadership Council

Membership:

- Six elected members + one staff
- Staggered two-year terms, two consecutive terms

Board of Trustees

Effective Date: August 20, 2018

Accountable to: senior minister and leadership council

Hours needed in a typical month: 3-10 hours

Job Summary

The Trustees are responsible for the buildings and grounds at Plymouth, working together with the sexton and outside vendors. They supervise Ministry Teams, including Friends of the Trustees, and take pride in keeping Plymouth a beautiful and functional facility for the congregation and community.

Essential Functions:

- Oversee maintenance of church grounds.
- Schedule and lead volunteer clean-up days in spring and fall.
- Monitor budget for facility items.
- Maintain church van and work with Ministry Team volunteer for maintenance.
- Perform minor maintenance in church itself: plumbing, roofing, lighting, painting.
- Deal with outside vendors for fire suppression, HVAC, carpet cleaning, irrigation.
- Maintain parsonage property.

- Supervise lease of parsonage.
- Manage parking lot leases.
- Deal with emergency issues.
- Organize Friends of the Trustees (experienced individuals, including many former trustees, who provide experience and expertise regarding specific tasks) to execute tasks around the church.

Other Responsibilities:

- Meet monthly. (approx. 60 minutes)
- Take part in locking church and shoveling snow on Sundays (on a rotation with other trustees).
- Monitor the parking lot work on leases with existing and prospective tenants.
- Work with Memorial Garden Ministry Team.
- Work with Environmental Stewardship Ministry Team.

Desired Skills:

- Availability to help out during the work week if possible.
- Basic maintenance skills: carpentry, minor electrical, plumbing, landscape maintenance, basic HVAC.

Core Competencies:

- Willingness to pitch in: Willingness to learn new things, too.
- Common sense: Knowing when to call in vendors and when to do the work yourself.
- Working with outside vendors: Good skills in supervising and negotiation with outside vendors.
- Contacts within the Fort Collins community: Knowing which vendors or stores to utilize for help.

Membership:

- Nine elected members + one staff
- Staggered two-year terms, two consecutive terms

List of Boards and Committees for Current Year

Please go to plymouthucc.org/leaders for the most recent information.

Board and Committee Meetings and Work

Leadership Council Actions by Month

ADAPT THIS for **your** board, committee, or ministry team!

January	finalize and approve budget; publish for congregation prepare for and lead annual meeting (officers)
February	conduct orientation for new council members, officers Leadership Council retreat assign new Committee of Council liaisons conduct performance review for sr. min. and acting assoc. min.
March	select four at-large delegates to RM Conf. and Platte Valley Assn. (same delegates to both)
April	
May	
June	design and promote theme for Plymouth's program year
July	
August	gear up Budget and Nominating processes clarify Council members continuing/leaving next year and relay this info to Nominating Committee
September	B&F Comm: assemble budget requests, draft budget
October	check in on Nominating Committee progress
November	check in with Nominating Committee again
December	receive update from B&F Committee discuss budget requests/pledges rec'd with congregation submit annual report (moderator) ensure Nominating slate is submitted for Annual Report prepare slate for new Nominating Committee to be elected

Here is a blank form for you to use for your board/committee:

January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	

Four Questions to Ask before Every Meeting

by Dan Hotchkiss

If you dread meetings, don't despair! Four key questions can help almost any meeting to be better focused, more satisfying and productive. You can ask these questions in advance—or you can ask them shortly after the meeting has begun. Here are the four questions:

1. What is the purpose of this meeting?

A meeting with an unclear purpose often is an aimless meeting. Stating a meeting's purpose in advance can help shape almost everything about it: the agenda, the invitation list, the information to collect ahead of time. Best of all, a purpose statement helps you know when you are finished and can go home!

One way of thinking about a meeting's purpose is to identify what you hope the meeting will produce. Most meetings fall into one of several categories, based on the desired outcome. Ideally, each meeting should belong to just one category, even if the agenda consists of several items. That way, the "mood" of the meeting will be more or less consistent from start to finish.

- Some meetings happen for the purpose of **making decisions**. For a decision-making meeting to succeed, it helps to have a statement of what is to be decided. Authority for making the decision may belong to one person or to the group as a whole. Either way, the necessary authority must be in the room, or the meeting will end inconclusively. Relevant information should be gathered and distributed—preferably in advance. In this kind of meeting, a decision is the product—and the meeting is complete when the decision has been made and responsibility for next steps clearly assigned.
- **Organizing for action** is another reason for a meeting. The product of an action meeting is a plan. A task force to clean up the church basement, for example, might hold a pre-cleanup organizing meeting. Action meetings start with a mandate to act—an action meeting is not the place to decide whether the basement should be cleaned! Only people who are ready to engage in action—or to contribute to a plan—should be invited to an action meeting.
- Some meetings happen for **learning and reflection**. These meetings can be some of the most satisfying—or the most divisive, depending on how they are planned. To avoid frustration, it helps to announce the purpose of a learning meeting in advance, so participation can be truly voluntary, and so no one is confused and thinks agreement is the goal. Learning is enhanced when the pressure to make decisions and organize for action are deliberately removed from the agenda. A good way to convene a learning meeting is to say, "We will not be making any decisions in this meeting. Our purpose is to learn." There may be other reasons to get people together, such as "To share information," or "We like each other." To me, it is a stretch to call such a gathering a meeting because these purposes are better served in other ways: by email, or by throwing a party! The worst "purpose" for a meeting is that bylaws or other documents require a certain body to meet. If no one can think of a more focused reason for a meeting than that, it's time to amend—or simply to ignore—the bylaws.

2. What is our plan for this meeting?

Meetings are more fun when they have a plan, especially a plan that fits well with the purpose. If the meeting organizer has not prepared a plan, it's up to the participants to make one. A good procedure is to work backward from the meeting's purpose. If the purpose is to make decisions, a

clear statement of the scope of what is (and is not) to be decided can save lots of time. Planning separate steps like sharing information, praying silently, exchanging views, and putting your decision into words can help the group to stay on track.

A good meeting plan includes clear expectations of participants. Reminding everyone at the beginning of the meeting about the importance of listening and mutual respect helps to avoid having to enforce rules after they are broken. Some groups have rules about using electronic devices. It's no longer realistic to prohibit them entirely, but many groups ask participants to avoid unrelated email, web browsing, or social media.

3. Who will be responsible for next steps?

Many meetings get bogged down trying to draft language. Tedious group wordsmithing often can be avoided by appointing someone to carry the work forward after the meeting. Then, rather than attempting to write an exact statement of a decision, plan, or another outcome, the meeting leader simply asks, "Do you have what you need from us in order to take this to the next step?"

The carry-forward person (or small team) can then take the results and translate them into a motion to be voted on at the next meeting, a plan of action to be carried out, or a reflection on the conversation as a starting point for the next meeting.

4. When will we adjourn?

While it may seem a bit discourteous to ask, before a meeting starts, when it will end, believe me: it's even ruder to ask halfway through! A variation is simply to announce when you plan to go home—and say you hope the meeting can accomplish its purpose by that time. The result, as often as not, is that the meeting becomes so much more efficient that everyone heads home at the same time!

Tips for Running a Great Meeting

1. Know your board or committee's **mission statement** and how it aligns with the church's mission statement. Have your mission statement in front of you at every meeting. (*What mission statement? Don't have it? Draft it!*)
2. Always prepare an **agenda** and circulate it ahead of time.
3. Use the church **email list** (__@plymouthucclists.org) set up for your board. (Barb Gregory will have signed up all nominated members; please send Barb the names of new members as they are added during the year.)
4. **Use email** to communicate between meetings and remind about meetings.
5. Produce **minutes** soon after your meeting and circulate them via email. Using the provided **format** makes it easy to identify who is responsible for tasks to be accomplished. (Be sure to copy the office manager on all minutes and meeting times at barbara@plymouthucc.org. To request a change of room or time from your regular one, use the form at plymouthucc.org/cal)
6. Make sure that you read weekly email *Overview*, the Sunday bulletin insert, and our website (plymouthucc.org) to **stay connected** to overall happenings at Plymouth. You can find the Plymouth Calendar under "News & Events" on our homepage.
7. Use a **consent agenda**: If you have pro forma items (such as reports you already have received, approval of minutes), you can include all of those items on a consent agenda and vote to approve them all at once without discussion. A member may also ask that an item be removed from the consent agenda for further discussion and consideration.
8. Use your time together as a form of **prayer**. Meetings can be opened and closed with spoken or silent prayer, and your entire time together can be prayerful if you approach it with that intention.
9. Honor one another's time and commitments by being **punctual** about beginning and ending times and by staying on topic and being **concise** in your comments.
10. Spend a moment at the end of your meeting to **evaluate** how it went. Did we stay on topic? Was our time together prayerful and in line with our mission? Was our time together meaningful and important?
11. Remember that this is a part of the way you are a **disciple of Christ** through this community: that you have gifts to share and ways to grow through serving.

What is consensus?

Sometimes our culture opts for declaring winners and losers before hearing all of the voices in the room and before considering compassion. Consensus is a way of reaching group agreement that is sometimes unanimous and sometimes not. When faced with a particularly thorny decision, your board, committee, or council might want to strive for consensus, with members not in favor of the majority finding enough compromise to say, "I don't think this is the best way to go, but I can support the group's decision." Ensuring that all voices are heard is a great place to start.

It is really important for your group to act as a **unified body** once a decision has been reached; it serves no one to say something like, "Well, that's the way the board voted, but I really opposed the decision." It is far more useful to say "That is the decision we reached as a board," and just leave it there.

For low-impact decisions (like approving minutes or voting for small expenditures), a simple majority vote may be all that is required. But if your board is grappling with a major decision, trying to develop consensus may pay great dividends not just for that decision, but for the development of your board's working relationship and culture.

What do we do with our minutes?

Boards, committees of Council, and Leadership Council all are required to keep formal minutes. Once approved, please send a copy to Barb Gregory (barbara@plymouthucc.org) who will keep a copy in the church office.

There are different schools of thought on minutes: one group may favor a run-down just of decisions made, while another may wish to include highpoints of discussion. Do what works for your board or committee. Because of fiduciary responsibility, Leadership Council minutes generally need to follow Robert's Rules of Order (below).

60. The Minutes. The record of the proceedings of a deliberative assembly is usually called the Minutes, or the Record, or the Journal. The essentials of the record are as follows: (a) the kind of meeting, "regular" (or stated) or "special," or "adjourned regular" or "adjourned special"; (b) name of the assembly; (c) date of meeting and place, when it is not always the same; (d) the fact of the presence of the regular chairman and secretary, or in their absence the names of their substitutes, (e) whether the minutes of the previous meeting were approved, or their reading dispensed with, the dates of the meetings being given when it is customary to occasionally transact business at other than the regular business meetings; (f) all the main motions (except such as were withdrawn) and points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, and all other motions that were not lost or withdrawn; (g) and usually the hours of meeting and adjournment, when the meeting is solely for business. Generally, the name is recorded of the member who introduced a main motion, but not of the seconder.

While we don't use Robert's Rules of Order much at Plymouth, you can find them online at www.rulesonline.com

We have a board vacancy...now what?

Boards who need to replace a member between annual congregational meetings need to have a replacement member approved by the Leadership Council. If your board has an idea to fill the vacancy, please make that suggestion to your Leadership Council liaison. The process is meant to be swift and simple.

The process is similar for Committees of Council. If your Ministry Team needs members, your sponsoring Board may help you find possible members.

What do I do about a team member who is "MIA?"

Most of us at Plymouth lead busy lives, whether we are still in the working world or retired, and sometimes being part of a board, committee, or ministry team slips down the list of priorities. Members miss meeting after meeting. They stop doing the work of the team. If you are a moderator, board or committee chair, or Ministry Team coordinator, it is you who need to take the reins when a member of your team is "Missing in Action."

The first step is to touch base informally...a conversation at coffee hour or phone call to inquire if everything is okay. "Hey, I haven't seen you around lately, and I'm calling just to be sure that things are well with you and your family. How's it going?" More than likely, they will apologize for having been less active, and you can follow through with a reinforcement that affirms what is happening in their lives and let them know your expectations in a response like this: "Wow, it sounds like work has been really tough lately, and I'm glad it's calming down. Our next meeting is Tuesday at 7:00, and I'm looking forward to having you back on board, because we really need you as part of our team." Or in a different scenario: "It sounds like life is in a pretty overwhelming stage right now. And if this isn't the right time for you to be part of the team, that's really okay! We all have different seasons in our lives, and it sounds like the time isn't right for you to continue on the board. If it's time for you to attend to other priorities, we can find someone to take your place on the board."

Ministry Teams

Ministry Teams: Grassroots

The most elemental way to do the hands-on work of ministry at Plymouth is through a ministry team: a group of persons concerned about accomplishing a task who are organized under the aegis of a board. An individual or group may approach a board with a request to form a ministry team.

Ministry teams are the hands and feet that get things done, while boards typically do the planning and coordinating. Many of us like the “doing” aspects of ministry, while others prefer the strategic work. “Doing” is what ministry teams are all about.

The thinking is that when any of us at Plymouth see a need, we as part of the community now have a mechanism to meet that need.

Ministry Teams: Top-Down

A ministry team does not have to be formed by an individual or group. Instead if a board senses a mission-critical need, the board itself may initiate a ministry team and find members to populate it.

The concept of our governance is that boards do more strategy and tactics and less execution. Forming a ministry team may be just what a board needs to do if it begins to sense that it is overwhelmed with hands-on activities. And each board functions differently. Some (like deacons and trustees) tend to be more hands-on than the rest. That’s okay! (Just as Jesus said, “The sabbath was made for human beings, and not human beings for the sabbath,” so we might say, “Boards and ministry teams were made to serve our members, and not the reverse.”) Feel free to be pragmatic!

Ministry Teams: Covenant

The process we use for approving ministry teams is to fill out a Ministry Team Covenant, which is a simple form with one side for the requesting individual or team to fill out and the reverse for the Board to fill out. *Please don’t overthink this...it’s an agreement, not your wedding vows. :) It should take you no more than 10 minutes to fill out...don’t stress!*

Ministry teams are meant to have a limited lifespan (like a ministry team that gathers around an event), though others continue on for years.

The covenant form is reproduced for you on the next two pages. And please remember: Keep It Simple!

Ministry Team Charter Covenant

(This page to be completed by the Ministry Team – PDF download at plymouthucc.org/forms)

Name of Ministry Team: _____

What is the Christian purpose of this Ministry Team?

What goal(s) and actions do you foresee yourself in fulfilling this purpose?

How will you measure your progress or contribution toward that purpose?

What duration in time do you foresee as the life of this Ministry Team?

Which Board do you request sponsor you? Do you need help from other boards?

How many members do you propose and who are initial members?

What financial resources do you request from the Board?

Do you request direct staff or Board involvement in your Ministry Team, and if so, which person(s)?
(Direct involvement means attending meetings, actively assisting you, participating in actions with you.)

Signature of Ministry Team Leader

(name)

(signature)

(date)

***The Ministry Team created is open to all in the Congregations and is charged
With advancing God's work in the world through education, spiritual development
and direct action inside and outside of Plymouth***

Ministry Team Charter Covenant, page 2

(This page completed by the Board)

Sponsoring Board: _____

Describe how the proposed purpose and actions are consistent with the ministry of your Board.

Do you agree with the goal(s) and actions? Do you wish to suggest anything additional or different from that listed by the Ministry Team?

Will you sponsor this Ministry Team: How will you support this Ministry Team with money, time and recruitment of members? (Respond directly to the request for financial resources and staff and/or Board involvement)

Any other Boards involved? How will you communicate and coordinate with them?

As the sponsoring Board, how do you want this Ministry Team to communicate with you?
How? (email, in person, by telephone . . .)

When do you want updates from the Ministry Team? (monthly or other? around big events?)

Signature of a member of the sponsoring Board.

(name)

(signature)

(date)

***This form is intentionally a two-sided single page to encourage concise answers.
However, additional pages may be added when needed.***

Ministry Team Management: Best Practices

How do boards and ministry teams work best together? Here are some ideas you might find helpful. **Communication** is critical!

- Invite your ministry teams to meet with your board on a rotating basis. (e.g., spend 10 minutes hearing from 2 ministry teams at each board meeting)
- Designate a contact person from your board to be the liaison to a ministry team.
- Ask your ministry teams to send you a periodic update of what they are doing, what challenges they face, what their financial and human needs are.
- Review your board's ministry team covenants annually to see if a ministry team has become inactive and needs to spin down and finish.
- Don't forget that **you can advertise for ministry team members**. One of the most effective efforts in recent years was Scott Houser's introduction of Faith Family Hospitality Network. Scott lined up 40 volunteers in two weekends by 1) having a display board and info at coffee hour for all three services; 2) submitting a brief, persuasive announcement and having a clear idea of what volunteers will be asked to do. If you'd like the minister to make an announcement in worship, please hand them the written announcement immediately before worship.
- During budget planning process, remember to include ministry teams and their needs in your planning.
- Keep an eye out for potential future board members among the members of ministry teams. Leaders invite and help develop new leaders!
- Look for opportunities for new ministry teams and if you are a board member, go ahead and plant seeds with people you know at Plymouth who might be looking for just that kind of opportunity.
- Don't assume that a member of staff will be there with a key...you can check one out from Barb.
- Confused about who does what? Consider writing job descriptions and set clear expectations for your members.
- Fellowship events away from meeting or do a project or event together (like a cooking class or do a physical game together)
- Have a second-in-command or a vice-chair, which encourages a succession plan, and you already have an interim leader if the chair is away.
- Have a mission statement, and review Plymouth's mission statement often.
- Post info to your team email list (rather than individual emails) so that everyone knows what is going on.
- The suffix for our listservs is "plymouthucclists.org"
- "Manage your monkeys": be sure to complete the tasks you've been assigned...otherwise they climb up the trees and someone at the treetop has to "manage the monkey."
- Sunday verbal announcements should be used sparingly and follow this paradigm: **Be bold. Be brief. Be gone.** Clergy make announcements at the 9:00 service to keep the service brief.
- "Thank you" goes a long way from chairs/leaders/staff.
- Keep position descriptions for your board members up to date.

How Things Work at Plymouth

FAQs

WHO DO I SEE FOR/ABOUT	CONTACT
Scheduling at Church	Barb Gregory, plymouthucc.org/cal
Reserve Meeting Space for Rentals	Phil Braudaway-Bauman, plymouthucc.org/rental
Forms	plymouthucc.org/forms
Something is Broken	Trustees, katheehouser@hotmail.com
Access AV Equipment	Mark Heiskanen, markh@plymouthucc.org
Getting Something on the Website	Anna Broskie, anna@plymouthucc.org
Getting Something in the bulletin insert (short)	plymouthucc.org/copy deadline: Wed. @ 5:00 p.m.
Printing on Church Copier - DIY	Barb Gregory - but please not on Fridays
WiFi Password	Posted in Rooms
Running the Dishwasher (see directions on machine), video at plymouthucc.org/kitchen	Phil Hoefer, pjhoefer@aol.com
Tax-Exempt Certificate	Wall in Front of pigeonhole mailboxes (above reimbursement forms)
Trash/Compost/Recycling	Corral at north end of building
Making Coffee, video at plymouthucc.org/kitchen	Deacons, Phil Hoefer, Dean Wallace
Kitchen Use	Reserve at plymouthucc.org/cal ; Phil Hoefer for Operation questions
Adjusting the Thermostat	Adjust up/down; please don't change settings
Procedure for Opening/Closing the Church Building	Get key from Barb Gregory. Lock 15 min. after opening. Check locks and lights when leaving
Board Document Location	Job File in Workroom
Ordering from Vendors	Get Approval from Board Chair or Staff Liaison
Getting Reimbursed for Expenses	plymouthucc.org/forms click "reimbursement"
Overview (Thurs. email...Wed 9 a.m. deadline)	plymouthucc.org/copy
Permission for Fundraising	form on our website under Members -> General Forms or plymouthucc.org/forms
Parking Gates (If you need gates open for an event, contact Bob Jeffrey 443-2428 jeffrey2co@gmail.com in advance)	Password is our street number and pound 0916# (as in 916 W. Prospect Rd.)

What do I need to know about the building and keys?

At the beginning of the year, each board and chair should contact Barbara Gregory in the church office (barbara@plymouthucc.org) to have a key checked out to you. All trustees and deacons should check out a Level 3 key (which opens everything just about everything), while other board chairs should request a Level 2 key. At the end of the year, please return your key to Barbara if you are not continuing on the board.

Locking the building is essential. With our close-to-campus location, we are easy prey for thieves...especially things like purses and laptops. Once your members have arrived for your meeting, please go out and re-lock the door you've used. And please be sure that all doors are locked and lights are off as you exit the building.

Please use **common-sense safety precautions** when meeting at Plymouth after dark:

- Turn on hallway lights that lead to your meeting room and restroom.
- Don't walk to your car alone after a meeting.
- Never hesitate to call 911 if you feel at all threatened by the presence of an unfamiliar person.
- There are fire extinguishers in the Fellowship Hall and throughout the building.
- There is an AED (automatic external defibrillator) in the Narthex. First Aid boxes are located in the Narthex, Kitchen, and North Wing near restrooms.

Need to reserve a room? (Physical or Zoom)

Whether you need a physical room at Plymouth or a Zoom meeting room, please use the form at plymouthucc.org/cal to request a room reservation with time, date, and preferred room (if physical room). Once you have a standing meeting time for your board, you won't need to make a monthly reservation, but please keep Barb informed about changes in your schedule.

How do I publicize news and events?

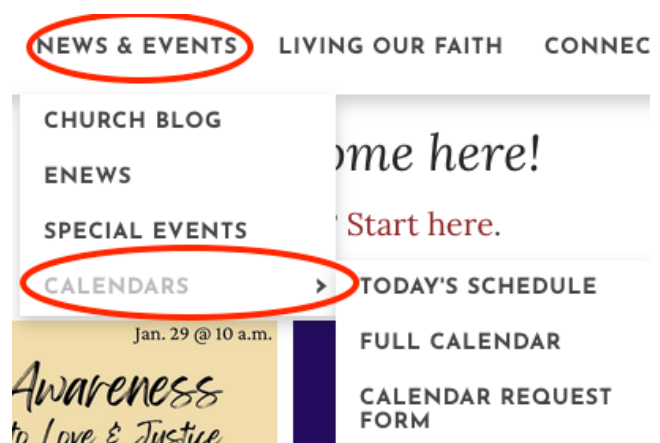
You may not realize it, but the very best way to communicate is very low-tech: it's **word-of-mouth**. If you have an event coming up, tell a friend and ask them to tell a friend; place a few well-chosen phone calls; sidle up next to a new person at coffee hour and invite them (look for blue mugs).

This is important: Every board should designate a **Communication Officer** who will be responsible for getting the board's information out. Think of it as a cross between a PR guy and Lieutenant Uhura on Star Trek. Anna Broskie, our IT/Communications Manager, will be a key contact for them: anna@plymouthucc.org.

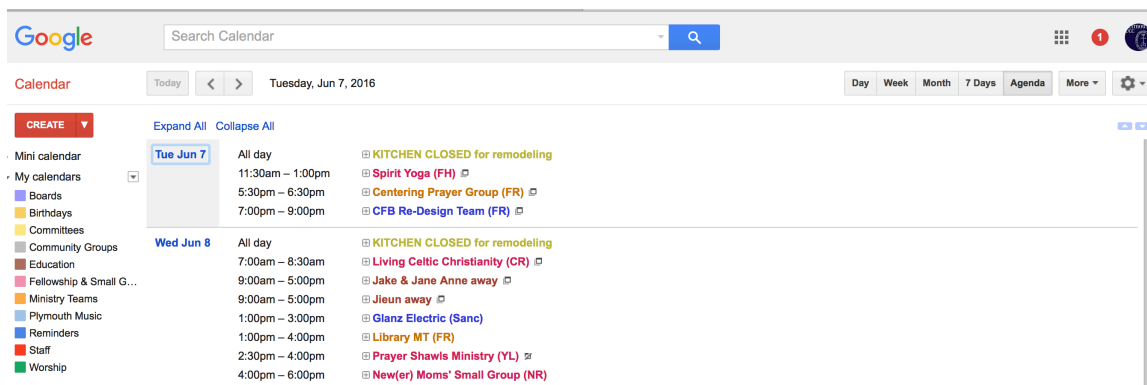
Channel	Freq.	Deadline	Contact
Sunday Bulletin	weekly	Wed. 5pm as short as possible	plymouthucc.org/copy
email Overview	weekly	Wed. 9am 3-4 lines only; photos encouraged	plymouthucc.org/copy
Facebook	Event/ ad hoc		plymouthucc.org/copy anna@plymouthucc.org
Postcard			ask your staff contact

Where is the church calendar? How do I add to it?

The official church calendar is online. It is a Google calendar that you can see either in our app, or by going to plymouthucc.org and clicking "News & Events" -> "Calendars" (image). You can also go directly to plymouthucc.org/today for the most forthcoming events, and that page has a link at the top to the full Google calendar.



You can **adjust the view** to "Agenda" for an easier-to-read listing. This type of list view is also the way the calendar displays in our app and on plymouthucc.org/today.



Want to **add an item**, including a change in your regular meeting date? Fill out the form here:
plymouthucc.org/cal

What if a ministry team or board wants to raise funds?

For a simple fund-raising effort (like a bake sale, yard sale, special offering, etc.), please fill out a **fund-raising request form** on www.plymouthucc.org and click on the “Members” menu and click on “General Forms” or go directly to this link: plymouthucc.org/forms Look for the fund-raising request form. Once submitted, it will go to the approver automatically.

The Leadership Council and Stewardship Board several years ago asked not to be involved in approving requests for fund-raisers. Instead, they asked the senior minister to consider current Plymouth fund-raising requests before approving new ones. This helps our members not to get “over-asked.” Hal will get back to you as soon as possible with a response to your request.

How do I get reimbursed?

If you have made a purchase on Plymouth’s behalf with the permission of a board or committee chair, officer, or staff, you may submit a request for reimbursement slip (along with the original receipt) to Phil Braudaway-Bauman. You can find paper reimbursement slips hanging on the wall near the pigeonhole mailboxes along the hallway east of the sanctuary.

That also is where you will find board, council, and staff mailboxes.

Additionally, you will find forms digitally at plymouthucc.org under “Members” -> General Forms (plymouthucc.org/forms) and select “Reimbursement Form.”

Reimbursement Request

(Please attach receipts)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Purpose: _____

Budget Number or Name	Amount:	
	Total:	


Approved by: (board chair or staff liaison for chair reimbursement) _____ Date _____

How do I request childcare for an event?Contact Brooklyn at brooklyn@plymouthucc.org.



How do I use Plymouth tax exemption for purchases?

You can also find our state and city tax exemption certificates on the following page. Using these when you make retail purchases will save Plymouth, so please use them whenever possible. (Some vendors, such as Office Max, Whole Foods, and Wilbur's...for communion wine...have Plymouth's tax-exempt certificate on record.)

State of Colorado		
CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FOR SALES AND USE TAX ONLY		
DR 160 (9/87) DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE 1875 SHERMAN STREET DENVER, COLORADO 80261		
THIS LICENSE IS NOT TRANSFERABLE		
PLYMOUTH CONGREGATNL CHURCH 916 W PROSPECT ST FT COLLINS CO 80526-1924		
ACCOUNT NUMBER	LIABILITY INFORMATION	ISSUE DATE
98-01365	06 031 8661 9 080179	SEP 16 1988
916 W PROSPECT ST FT COLLINS CO		



Executive Director
Department of Revenue

	TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATION
License Number 70053TE	PLYMOUTH CONGREGATION CHURCH 916 W PROSPECT RD FORT COLLINS CO 80521
Date Issued: January 02, 2018	Business Location 916 W PROSPECT RD FORT COLLINS, CO 80521
Expiration Date December 31, 2023	 FINANCIAL OFFICER CITY OF FORT COLLINS
POST IN CONSPICUOUS PLACE	

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Congregational Leadership Tools

How We Pray Shapes How We Decide **by Susan Beaumont**

www.susanbeaumont.com

A board meeting is called to order and the pastor is asked to provide an opening prayer. The pastor's offering includes a scripture verse, a poem, and a reflection on the sure and steady nature of God's presence. It is a beautiful and inspiring invocation, filled with rich phrases and evocative theological ideas. A good prayer, but does it help the board do better work in the meeting that follows?

What is the point of including prayer in the "business" meetings of the church? Is it something more than a throw-away or feel good act? Does the nature of our prayer influence how we discern and decide? It should.



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Two Forms of Prayer

There are many ways to categorize prayer. An ancient classification uses two Greek words that are clumsy, but useful in illuminating this conversation.

Kataphatic prayer is content based, built on the positive assertions we make about God. It uses words, images, symbols, and ideas to approach God. We take pieces of what we believe to be true and offer supplication based on those ideas and thoughts. Litanies, creeds, guided reflections, and spoken intercessions are all examples of this form of prayer. The pastor's opening devotion in the meeting described above was kataphatic prayer.

Apophatic prayer has no content. We empty our minds of words and ideas, simply resting in the presence of God with us. We acknowledge that God is bigger than our knowing, greater than our capacity to describe. Apophatic prayer rests on pure experience. Breathe prayers, silent meditation, centering prayer, and body prayer are all examples of the apophatic approach.

Both forms of prayer are inherently good. Each honors God and each stimulates different parts of the brain. Balancing both prayer types equips us for different kinds of work. In the mainline Protestant tradition, we tend to over-emphasize kataphatic prayer and we are less reliant on apophatic prayer. Unfortunately, because of this imbalance we limit our creative capacities and our ability to discern.

Left and Right Brain Response

Kataphatic prayers stimulate left brain responses. They engage our objective, logical and analytical skills. Groups who center their work with word-based, content prayers reinforce rational thinking in the work that follows.

Following the pastor's prayer in our earlier example, members of the board were asked to choose between two possible tenants for rental space in their building. The group discussed all that they logically knew about the rental situation. They asserted the pros and cons of each alternative. They advocated on behalf of various special interest groups in the congregation. In the end they reached a sound decision, but should we describe their process as a discernment? In other words, did board members orient themselves to the mind and will of God? Probably not. It was an amalgam of their best efforts, offered up to God. Worthy work to be sure, but not discernment.

Apophatic prayers engage the right side of the brain. The right side of the brain is where we perceive and synthesize the wholeness of things. This is also where we intuit religious experience and the movement of Spirit. If discernment is a goal, then apophatic prayer is a better introduction to the work. A group that grounds its work in apophatic prayer is more likely to open itself to the mystery and movement of God when

considering alternatives and making choices.

Introducing Alternatives

The introduction of non-content prayer takes intentionality and persistence. People may resist at first because they feel uncomfortable with the absence of words and ideas. In time they learn to value the power of the wordless experience. Consider these three practices that support the fuller integration of both prayer forms:

1. Focus on Emptying: Leaders are not good discerners when they are “filled up” with all that they already know about the state of the church, and the state of the problem they are solving. Create opportunities in the meeting for participants to shed preconceived ideas, certainties and fears. You can do this with breath prayer, body prayer or with journaling exercises. You can use the power of confession and the Ignatian practice of examen to set aside sins, wounding, agendas and the needs of personal ego.

2. Invite Stillness: Stillness is a rested state of openness and receptivity. It allows people to listen more authentically to each other and to attend the movement of Spirit within the room. Stillness often emerges naturally in a group that has done their emptying work. However, the practice of silence can help to deepen stillness.

Groups are often uncomfortable with silence because there is so little of it in our culture. You may need to begin with brief periods of silence that gradually lengthen as the group learns to appreciate silence’s power. You can use guided meditation to slowly move away from words, gradually leading a group into the quiet.

In a problem solving process the use of silence at disciplined moments in time is important. Frame the issue to be discussed, and then invite silence before further discussion begins. Invite another period of silence after alternative courses of action have been discussed and before a call for consensus or vote begins

3. Take Away the Words: Once a group has explored an issue using all of their best logic and employing all of their best words, introduce a word free experience.

Place a set of pictures at the center of the table and ask them to let a picture choose them, one that speaks to the complexity of the situation at hand. Or, provide participants with a small prayer mandala to trace/color, or a hand held finger labyrinth to engage. Introduce instrumental music and ask them to sit quietly and let the music speak to their spiritual heart about the situation under consideration. Invite the group to stand and reach upward with their hands to the “more” that is available to them through God, and to surrender downwards to what is (bending at the waist, folding into self and dropping hands to the floor.) The group can pick the discussion back up after one of these quieting exercises.

We don’t have to abandon our beautiful word prayers and litanies. However, if we want to deepen discernment and tap into creativity, we do need to balance those prayers with content free forms of devotion. With time and intention, we can teach leaders the creative power of emptying, stillness, and silence. They will come to value a pure expression of divine Presence, one that is not dependent on their best thinking.

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Cleaning Up Bad Communication Habits

by Kibbie Simmons Ruth , Karen A. McClintock



Of the several negative communication patterns congregations practice, three habits are particularly problematic: **triangulation, pass-through communication, and anonymous feedback**. While these three may be strategies for getting needs met, they all block rather than help healthy communication. Even if well intentioned, they are deadly habits that in the long run allow people to dodge accountability, gain power, and alienate others. Once everyone understands how to break these habits, those who persist will eventually have to stop or they will become so uncomfortable and isolated that they will leave the congregation. To clean up bad communication habits, congregations can do three things: reduce the triangulation, eliminate pass-through communication, and reject anonymous feedback.

Reducing Triangulation

While people often suggest that venting is good for the soul, it is actually not very productive. Venting to someone about a third person is simply an avoidance technique that creates what is known in counseling theory as a relationship triangle, or triangulation. Triangulation is talking about feelings, opinions, or personal issues regarding some person or group with a third party instead of with the person or group actually concerned. Relationship triangles usually involve three people who each take one of three roles: victim, persecutor, and rescuer. Once in a triangle, people change places among its three points. The only way to stop the triangulation is for each person to communicate his or her feelings, concerns, or opinions directly to the other.

Of course, the best communication strategy is to avoid being recruited into a triangle in the first place. But so often well-intentioned faith leaders and congregants listen to another person's concerns, feelings, or opinions, then realize they inadvertently let themselves be co-opted into involvement, sometimes even taking sides. Once in a triangle, escape may take some courage and clarity but is possible. The triangulated person can redirect the other person straight to the appropriate individual or committee—the one actually involved in the personal issues or the one that can address the concern or mend the relationship. A three-way conversation sometimes helps, but only if the third party facilitates without taking sides or having an agenda, without speaking for one of the other parties, and without adding to the emotional drama.

Eliminating Pass-Through Communication

Some congregations get in the habit of pass-through communication. To get a message to someone, you tell someone else. Like triangulation, pass-through information also involves three parties, but the content of the information is less emotional and personal—sometimes as simple as the expected outcomes of a meeting.

With both triangulation and pass-through communication, few people take responsibility for what is accurate and few people speak directly to each other. Informal channels of pass-through communication lead to misunderstandings down the road. Like the children's telephone game, the content usually becomes distorted and often the necessary action delayed. Miscommunication may occur unintentionally, but individuals or groups also can use pass-through communication to divide congregations and stir up conflict. Giving the message to whomever is close by and expecting him or her to pass it on may seem expedient, but there is no substitute for the direct message. And like triangulation, pass-through communication must be stopped for healthy congregational functioning.

Again, the individual being asked to pass something on has the power to stop the pattern. A simple statement such as "I'm not comfortable carrying that message" or "I might mix up what you've said, so

perhaps you could call him yourself” is very helpful. The intended messenger needs to clarify why that person is talking to him or her instead of the individual who needs the information. If he or she is dodging responsibility for direct communication, the intended messenger should be all the more determined to stop the pass-through effort.

Rejecting Anonymous Feedback

Why would someone give feedback anonymously? There are several reasons. Anonymity allows people to avoid accountability for the content. The individual with the complaint or accusation may also fear reprisals. Sometimes the individual simply doesn’t know whom to talk to about a concern. At other times the individual is trying to get his or her way in a conflicted situation, but stays underground to maintain the appearance of being in a harmonious relationship with other congregants.

Personnel committees and other groups that oversee pastoral ministry must be clear in their policies and practices that they will neither receive nor take seriously anonymous complaints—letters, phone messages, e-mails, or pass-through communication. Slanderous comments in particular should not be disseminated by the recipient, not even to the clergyperson or any others on a committee, unless the content contains serious threats or requires a legal response. Congregations can waste a lot of energy on slanderous static that interferes with their listening to and addressing real issues. If e-mails are sent from unknown sources, they can be stopped by a trusted leader sending a letter to the congregation asking everyone to block the anonymous sender of the “junk” information and to ignore the content.

Anonymous communication is damaging to everyone in the congregation because feelings are often expressed but cannot be resolved. Wounds are named but cannot be healed. Criticism is offered without the chance to explore the possibility of healing. To stop anonymous feedback, clergy and lay leaders need to agree that it is counterproductive. You can’t apologize to anonymous. Anonymous will remain angry or sad until he or she comes forward with the truth. Anonymous others cannot and should not be considered when making leadership decisions or resolving conflicts.

A congregation can greatly reduce negative criticism and unresolved hard feelings with these simple and clear boundaries: no triangulation, no pass-through information, and no anonymous communication. When recruited into a communication triangle or to pass information on to another person, leaders need the mantra, “Please tell the person (or committee) directly yourself.” When asked to respond to anonymously obtained information, leaders need to simply refuse to consider it substantive until the anonymous person is willing to more clearly own his or her concern. Congregational communication can sometimes hide secrets, agendas, and conflict. While clearer boundaries and transparency in communication may cause negative aspects of congregational life to come into the light, they also reveal the strength, commitment, and love that bind the congregation together—ultimately giving more courage to faith leaders to address any negative dynamics that hinder their faith journey as a community.

How to Clean Up Bad Communication Habits

- Speak directly to the person or committee that the issue concerns.
- Refuse to carry a message from one person or group to another.
- If two people talk with you about each other, offer to meet with both of them together or to find them a mediator.
- If a person complains to you about someone else but refuses to directly talk with the person to resolve the problem, ask him or her to stop talking to you or others about it.
- Reduce venting by first listening and then asking what action the person will undertake to resolve the problem.
- Refuse to take nonspecific or anonymous feedback seriously.

Adapted from [Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communication Quandaries in Congregations](#), copyright © 2007, the Alban Institute. All rights reserved.

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FEATURED RESOURCES

[Healthy Disclosure: Solving Communication Quandaries in Congregations](#) by Kibbie Simmons Ruth and Karen A. McClintock

Knowledge is power, and the way knowledge is shared in a congregation can build up or break down community. When congregational leaders are sensitive to the ways that information should be shared, the congregation can become safe and strong. *Healthy Disclosure* is filled with step-by-step ideas for handling different types of sensitive material.

[Choosing Partnership, Sharing Ministry: A Vision for New Spiritual Community](#) by Marcia Barnes Bailey
Partnership invites us on a journey that can transform us as leaders, as human beings, and as the church. Bailey invites pastors and congregations to a new understanding of ministry, leadership, and the church that challenges hierarchy by fully sharing responsibilities, risks, and rewards in mutual ministry. Partnership unleashes the Spirit to create a new vision and reality among us, moving us one step closer to living into God's reign.

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Harvard Business Review

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BEST OF HBR 1998

IQ and technical skills are important, but emotional intelligence is the sine qua non of leadership.

What Makes a Leader?

by Daniel Goleman

Follow this link to an accessible and amazing article in *Harvard Business Review*. **“What Makes a Leader” by Daniel Goleman** is a primer on emotional intelligence and a must-read for any leader.

https://acarthustraining.com/documents/What_makes_a_leader-by_Daniel_Goleman.pdf

Hard copy of the article is available by request from the church office.

Here is a quick overview video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WICq_Pj8ZUk

How will a church Plymouth's size function best?

One thing we all know is that we aren't exactly the same as we used to be...whether we're talking about our bodies, our families, our nation, or our church. Plymouth's size and complexity have changed, and as leaders, we need to understand how a **"Multi-Celled Church"** like Plymouth functions.

Leading Large Four New Size Classifications for Talking About the Large Church

Size Category Avg. Weekend Attendance -or- Annual Operating Budget	The Multi-Celled Church 250–400 \$400,000–\$1,000,000	The Professional Church 400–800 \$1,000,000–\$2,000,000
Organizing Theme	Leadership Development	Professionalization
Growth Challenges	Examine assumptions about growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The congregation must come to terms with how it understands and defines growth, whether it desires growth, and whether the culture will accommodate growth. Leaders must claim a strategic identity and define growth accordingly. 	Build capacity for growth on the staff team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas to generate growth abound but are limited by the capacity of the staff team and limitations in the facility. The church's capacity for growth is largely a function of the size of its budget.
Pastoral Challenges	Adopt a visionary leadership style <p>The senior clergy leader must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discern and articulate an energizing vision for the congregation, and translate vision into specific goals to be accomplished. Clearly describe who the congregation is and is not, and what its mission is and is not. Communicate a caring presence in the congregation while reducing the level of one-on-one care provided to congregation members. 	Adopt a managerial leadership style <p>The senior clergy leader must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let go of a purely relational style of leadership and engage the congregation from a managerial perspective. Shift the care focus from the congregation at large to the staff team and key lay leaders. Manage the collective performance of the staff team.
Staff Team Challenges	Embrace a team identity <p>The team must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add specialized program staff to grow the church when the budget may not be fully ready to support staff additions. Learn to balance the work of the generalist alongside the work of the specialist. 	Professionalize the ministry <p>The team must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assume tasks previously accomplished by volunteers Find new ways to engage volunteers. Move away from a generalist orientation to distinct areas of specialization. Accept supervision from someone other than the senior clergy leader.

Size Category Avg. Weekend Attendance -or- Annual Operating Budget	The Multi-Celled Church 250–400 \$400,000–\$1,000,000	The Professional Church 400–800 \$1,000,000–\$2,000,000
Board Challenges	Organize work around mission Board leaders must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the work of a variety of committees and groups. • Learn to say yes to ideas and activities that support the mission and no to ideas that distract the congregation from its mission. • Develop new lay leadership. 	Create management systems Board leaders must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create policies and establish a staff team performance management system. • Relinquish the daily management of the church to the staff team.
Assimilation Challenges	Expand points of entry The congregation must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add new worship venues, small group ministries, etc. • Meet emerging standards of excellence that people expect from a larger congregation. 	Watch the back door The congregation must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the anonymity that occurs in the large church. • Find new ways to keep track of members and to get members engaged. • Let the staff team take the lead in identifying and developing new leaders.

Further reading

Susan Beaumont and Gil Rendle, ***Inside the Large Congregation***. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007)

This is the go-to guide for churches Plymouth's size and larger. Beaumont and Rendle were senior consultants with the Alban Institute.

Susan Beaumont, When Moses Meets Aaron: ***Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations***.

(Rowman & Littlefield, 2007)

Beaumont's nuts-and-bolts guide for staffing in churches Plymouth's size.

Dan Hotchkiss, ***Governance and Ministry, 2nd edition*** (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016)

This is the book (first ed.) that Plymouth used in designing its current governance model.

Alice Mann and Gil Rendle, ***Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations***. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003)

Alice Mann was our consultant for Plymouth's first strategic plan in 2003. This book is a gold mine for church-based strategic planning.

John Wimberly, ***Mobilizing Congregations: How Teams Can Motivate Members and Get Things Done***. (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015)

This is a brief and helpful guide for the Ministry Team model we have adopted at Plymouth.

You can sign up for a **very useful weekly email** from these former Alban consultants at

www.congregationalconsulting.org

Plymouth Congregational UCC's Constitution

Change History

Date:	Change:	Made by:
01/27/2013	As approved by the Congregation.	Congregation
09/30/2013	As recommended by Darryl Knoblock and Jen Lowry	Governance Team
10/12/2013	As recommended by the nominating committee	Terri Schulz
10/29/2013	Following meeting with Daryl Knoblock	Terri Schulz
12/09/2013	As recommended and voted on by Leadership Council to modify definition of young adult member of council	Terri Schulz
03/10/2014	Included more inviting language around board chairs in XVI. A. III.	Leadership Council/HC
04/14/2014	Refined notice of nominations as recommended by Daryl Knoblock and the Governance Team	Leadership Council/HC
09/10/2017	Changed terms of Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Treasurer, added Past Moderator, Assistant Treasurer, and Past Treasurer, decreased At-Large LC members by one XII.B. – approved at Congregational Meeting 9-10-17	Leadership Council/Congregational Meeting
01/14/2018	Added Immigrant Welcoming Congregation Declaration XVII – approved at Congregational Meeting 01-14-18	Leadership Council/Congregational Meeting

CONSTITUTION

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
Fort Collins, Colorado

CONSTITUTION

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PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Fort Collins, Colorado

CONSTITUTION

Article I. Name

The name of this church shall be Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Collins, Colorado.

Article II. Purpose

The purpose of this church shall be to worship God and to make God's realm visible in the lives of people, individually and collectively, especially as it is made known through the life, teachings, death and living presence of Jesus Christ.

Article III. Polity

This church is in communion with all churches that follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. It acknowledges special obligation to other congregations that are part of the United Church of Christ and pledges itself to share in their communion, religious and educational work, especially as represented by the Platte Valley Association, the Rocky Mountain Conference and the General Synod of The United Church of Christ. The government of this church is vested exclusively in its members.

Article IV. Faith and Covenant

A. Faith:

This church recognizes the Holy Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice and holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of Christian character. Members shall have the undisturbed right to follow the Word of God according to the dictates of their own conscience, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The most recent Statement of Faith adopted by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ shall serve as a guide to faith and worship for the members of this church.

B. Covenant:

The covenant of this church shall be recited by new members upon the occasion of their entrance into the faith community:

In the presence of God and these witnesses, I give myself unreservedly to God's service and take this to be my church. Ever mindful of the welfare of my brother and sister members, I promise to walk with them in faithfulness and Christian love. I promise, so far as I am able, to attend the services of this church, observe its sacraments, support it financially, and endeavor to make it a fruitful body of Christian people.

Article V. Open and Affirming Declaration

The members of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Collins, Colorado, affirm their belief that all persons are created by God and are equal in worth and dignity. We recognize, celebrate and give thanks for the many diverse gifts of God among us. We declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation, welcoming into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ persons of every race, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic origin, physical and mental ability, economic status and nationality. We joyously pledge ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation, providing a safe welcome for a diverse people.

Article VI. Peace with Justice Declaration

The members of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Collins, Colorado, 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.

Article VII. Immigrant Welcoming Congregation Declaration

The members of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Collins, Colorado hear God's Call to care for and welcome with compassion and justice the widowed, the orphaned and the alienated who are living in our community. We follow Jesus, the Christ, who lives among the "least of these" in our communities. We affirm that each and every person is a Child of God welcome in the Realm of God's Love. Our refugee-immigrant ancestors fled persecution; upon arriving in Colorado they established the German Evangelical Congregational Church that laid the foundation for Plymouth Congregational UCC. Therefore, Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Fort Collins, CO declares itself an "*Immigrant Welcoming Congregation*" to encourage the development of policies and activities within Plymouth UCC dedicated to facilitating respectful, compassionate welcome and inclusion of immigrants in our midst.

Article VIII. Membership

Membership in this church is open to all who acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, who wish to journey in faith with others of this fellowship, and who are willing to share in the work of the church and contribute to its support in proportion to their means.

Persons shall be received as members in one of the following ways:

- The rite of confirmation

- Presentation of satisfactory letters of transfer from other churches

- Reaffirmation of faith

- Confession of faith

Persons desiring to join the church shall meet with a minister for one or more periods of instruction. An appropriate ceremony recognizing their affiliation with the church shall be conducted during a worship service.

A. Classes of Membership

The membership of the church shall be classified in three ways: (1) Active, (2) Associate and (3) Inactive.

1. Active Membership

An active member is one who covenants with the congregation to attend the services of the church, cooperates in its work and contributes to its support. All active members are eligible to vote in congregational meetings and to engage in the ministry, mission and governance of the church. Plymouth's congregational polity relies centrally upon those persons who have covenanted together to be the church; therefore those participating in church government (Leadership Council or boards), shall hold active or associate membership in the congregation.

2. Associate Membership

Upon application to and upon recommendation by the Board of Deacons, a person who holds membership in another Christian body may be received as an associate member. An associate member shall be considered equivalent to an active member, with the same privileges and responsibilities. A letter of transfer will not be requested from the other congregation or ecclesiastical body in which the person holds membership.

3. Inactivity

A member who, for a period of two years, has not communicated with the church, attended worship or contributed to the church's support is considered inactive. At the recommendation of the Board of Deacons, after consultation with the Clerk and the Senior Minister, persons may be removed from the roll of active or associate members. An effort shall be made to make personal contact with members prior to action on membership status. Persons designated as inactive may, upon renewal of their membership obligations, be reinstated as active or associate members.

B. Termination of Membership or Change of Status

1. Active members may, at their own request

- a. Be granted a letter of transfer to another Christian church
- b. Be declared inactive
- c. Be released from church membership

2. Active and associate members may be released from membership by action of Leadership Council for the well-being of the congregation. This is a serious step and is intended to be rarely used, yet for the well-being of the congregation it may occasionally be necessary. In order for this step to be taken, the following conditions must be met:

- a. The release of any active or associate member must be approved by at least 60% of the members of the Leadership Council.
- b. No more than four members may be released during any four-week period.

Article IX. Worship and Christian Formation

A. Worship: The primary purpose of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ is to worship God. Services of worship shall be held each Sunday. The sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion shall be celebrated.

- B. Christian Formation: The church shall conduct and support a program of Christian Formation to equip and enable persons of all ages to make the Christian faith their own and to participate in God's continuing activity in the world. This program shall include faith development opportunities, such as Sunday morning classes, confirmation classes, and other programs as determined by the Board of Christian Formation.

Article X. Congregational Meetings

A. Meetings

1. Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the congregation shall be held each year on a date determined by Leadership Council. Prior to this meeting, the ministers, all church boards, and committees of Leadership Council, as requested, shall submit their annual reports in writing. Church officers, At-Large members of Leadership Council, and members of boards and the Nominating Committee shall be elected at this meeting, and the budget for the ensuing year shall be submitted to the congregation for its approval. The election results shall be announced in the next newsletter of the church. Any other matter affecting the religious, financial or social welfare of the church may also be addressed at the annual meeting.

2. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the congregation may be called by Leadership Council, at the request of a minister, at the request of the Moderator, or by petition to Leadership Council. A valid petition must be signed by not less than ten percent (10%) of the active and associate members of the church. Leadership Council must call a special meeting within three weeks of receipt of a valid request.

B. Requirements

1. Notice of Congregational Meetings

Congregational meetings shall be announced at worship services on two successive Sundays prior to the meeting and by written notice to all members at least one full week in advance of the meeting. Such written notice shall be by direct mailing or by placement in the church newsletter. Notice of special meetings shall be the responsibility of the Clerk of the church and must include a statement of the purpose of the meeting.

2. Quorum

The membership present at a duly-called meeting shall have full authority to transact business.

3. Rules of Order

In congregational meetings and where applicable, *Robert's Rules of Order* is authoritative.

Article XI. Ministers

A. Senior Minister

The Senior Minister shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the church. It shall be the Senior Minister's responsibility to enlist persons as followers of Jesus Christ by preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, and having under his or her care all services of worship. The Senior Minister shall serve as the head of staff and be an ex-officio member, with voice and vote, of Leadership Council and its committees, boards, ministry teams and all other groups and organizations within the church. He or she shall administer the activities of the church in cooperation with Leadership Council and the various boards of the church. The Senior Minister shall make an annual report to the congregation. These areas of responsibility and any others shall be defined by a job description developed by the Personnel Committee and approved by Leadership Council. Full authority and control of the pulpit is vested in the Senior Minister. In his or her absence, it is vested in an associate minister designated by Leadership Council. In the absence of all ordained and called ministers, the authority and control of the pulpit shall be vested in Leadership Council.

B. Associate Minister(s)

Associate minister(s) shall work under the supervision of the Senior Minister and in cooperation with Leadership Council. Each associate minister's areas of responsibility shall be defined initially by a job description and shall be subject to modification by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Senior Minister and approval by Leadership Council. Each associate minister shall be an ex-officio member, with voice and vote, of all boards, ministry teams, groups and organizations she or he staffs and shall make an annual report to the congregation.

C. Duration of Ministry

All ministers of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ shall be called for an indefinite period. The relationship between the church and a minister may be dissolved by either party through written notice of intent sixty days prior to the effective date. Notification of such action shall be sent by the Moderator to the Conference Minister and to the chair of the Church and Ministry Committee of the Platte Valley Association.

D. Pastoral Search Committee

In the event of a pastoral vacancy, a Pastoral Search Committee of nine (9) persons shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee and presented by Leadership Council to the congregation for election. In filling the vacancy, the committee shall seek the counsel of the Church and Ministry Committee of the Platte Valley Association and the Conference Minister of the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ. Working closely with Leadership Council, the committee shall select one candidate to be presented to the congregation and formulate the terms of call. Further responsibilities of a Pastoral Search Committee are detailed in a policy of Leadership Council.

E. Interim Ministry During a Pastoral Vacancy

1. Senior Minister Position Vacancy

In the event of a vacancy in the senior minister position, an interim minister may be called for a period of time to be determined by Leadership Council in consultation with the Conference Minister. The duties of the interim minister shall be defined by Leadership Council in consultation with the Personnel Committee. Nominations for an Interim Minister Search Committee shall be presented by Leadership Council to the congregation for election.

2. Associate Minister Position Vacancy

In the event of a vacancy in an associate minister position, Leadership Council has discretion to meet temporary staffing needs in the manner deemed most appropriate. If an Interim Associate Minister is to be called, an Interim Associate Minister Search Committee will be formed through a process similar to that for an Interim Senior Minister Search Committee.

3. Further detail regarding Interim Minister/Associate Minister Search Committees and their responsibilities will be outlined in a policy of Leadership Council.

XII. Additional Staff

The church shall employ additional staff members as needed. Their areas of responsibility shall be defined by job descriptions developed by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Senior Minister and approved by Leadership Council.

A. Program Staff

1. Program staff are staff members who have areas of responsibility relating to worship, congregational nurture and Christian Formation. They include but are not limited to such positions as choir director, organist and director of Christian Formation for youth or adults.
2. The hiring of program staff shall be the task of Leadership Council, working closely with the Senior Minister and the Personnel Committee. Ad hoc committees may be appointed by Leadership Council to aid in the hiring.
3. Program staff may be terminated by majority vote of Leadership Council upon recommendation of the Personnel Committee and/or the Senior Minister.

B. Administrative and Building Staff

1. Administrative and building staff are staff members who assist the ministers and the program staff or who maintain the church building and grounds. They include but are not limited to such positions as administrative support staff and custodian.
2. Administrative and building staff shall be hired by the Senior Minister in consultation with the Leadership Council. It shall be the Senior Minister's responsibility to keep the council informed when positions need to be filled.
3. Termination of administrative and building staff shall be done by the Senior Minister after consultation with Leadership Council. If an administrative or building staff member disagrees with a termination decision, he or she may appeal to Leadership Council.

Article XIII. Leadership Council

A. Duties of Leadership Council

1. The Leadership Council shall be the executive body of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, with fiduciary, legal, personnel, and strategic planning responsibilities. Leadership Council is responsible for setting church policy. The Leadership Council can create and appoint permanent or ad hoc committees to develop and carry out elements of its work, such as planned giving, personnel, and budget and finance.
2. It shall be the duty of Leadership Council to visualize the mission of the church and to advise and support the ministers and boards in incarnating that vision in the life and ministry of the church. Leadership Council is responsible for filling board vacancies and for the removal or replacement of sitting board members when they are deemed to be acting outside the church mission or policies, or when a board is not being accountable to its mission.
3. Each year, Leadership Council shall present to the congregation, for election at the annual meeting, a slate of three persons to fill open positions on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will be made up of the six persons herein identified, each serving two-year terms plus the Senior Minister.
4. Between annual meetings of the congregation, Leadership Council has the authority to establish or reorganize boards, including adjusting the number of board members that will be voted on at the next congregational meeting.
5. Leadership Council shall transact the business of the church. It shall arrange the program for all congregational meetings, shall present a comprehensive annual report, and shall present recommendations to the congregation aimed at fostering effective church programming and administration in the coming year(s).
6. Leadership Council shall oversee the budget planning process and present a budget to the congregation at the annual meeting. It shall also recognize the church's responsibility for support of Our Church's Wider Mission and other benevolences.
7. Leadership Council shall provide for the adequate support of all church staff and shall accept and complete all other duties as provided throughout this constitution.
8. Leadership Council shall keep accurate minutes of all its meetings.
9. Leadership Council shall meet at least once each calendar quarter. Special meetings may be called at the request of a minister, the Moderator, or a minimum of five Leadership Council members. Leadership Council members shall be individually notified of special meetings.
10. Meetings of Leadership Council shall be open to all church members, although only members of the council shall be entitled to vote. Allowance of comments by church members at Leadership Council meetings shall be at the discretion of the Moderator.
11. Leadership Council shall select lay representative(s) to attend meetings and conferences of the United Church of Christ on behalf of the congregation.

12. All acts and deliberations of the Leadership Council are subject to revision by the congregation.

B. Composition of Leadership Council

1. Members of the Leadership Council shall include:
 - a. Officers of the Leadership Council
Moderator
Vice Moderator
Clerk
Treasurer
 - b. The Senior Minister
 - c. Past Moderator
 - d. Assistant Treasurer
 - e. Four At-Large members, at least one of whom must be a young adult as defined in the Leadership Council Operating Policy, to be elected from the congregation.
2. Terms of Service
 - a. Moderator: The Moderator shall serve for a term of one year as Moderator and one year as Past Moderator and a member of Leadership Council. The office of Moderator shall be assumed by the past Vice Moderator at the first Leadership Council meeting following the election of new officers
 - b. Vice-Moderator: The Vice Moderator shall serve for a term of one year before assuming the office of Moderator. However, in the event of a vacancy, the Vice Moderator shall assume the office of Moderator regardless of time served as Vice Moderator. A new Vice Moderator shall be nominated and elected at the next congregational meeting
 - c. Clerk: The Clerk shall be elected for a one-year term and may be re-elected for up to three consecutive terms.
 - d. Treasurer: The Treasurer function shall be composed of three positions: Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, and Past Treasurer. Each year the congregation shall elect an Assistant Treasurer who shall serve one year in each of these positions over a three-year term. The Assistant Treasurer and Treasurer shall serve as members of the Leadership Council. The Past Treasurer shall serve as mentor to the Treasurer but will no longer serve on the Leadership Council during the year served as Past Treasurer.
 - e. All officers shall be ineligible to serve on the Council for two years after their stated terms of service on the Council.
 - f. At-Large members of the Leadership Council: The four At Large members of the Leadership Council shall be elected for two-year terms and may not serve on Leadership Council for a period longer than two full consecutive terms. After a second consecutive term, one year must transpire before a person is eligible to be re-elected to Leadership Council unless he or she is nominated to a named office. Vacancies that occur between annual meetings of the congregation will be filled by Leadership Council. The terms of the At-Large members of Leadership Council shall be staggered so that two members are elected each year.

C. Duties of church officers are detailed in job descriptions, which are policies of Leadership Council.

1. The Moderator shall be the chair of Leadership Council and shall conduct all meetings of the congregation.
2. The Vice Moderator shall preside in the absence of the Moderator.
3. The Clerk shall keep an accurate record of all proceedings of Leadership Council as well as annual and special meetings of the congregation.
4. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements and give a detailed financial report to Leadership Council monthly and to the congregation annually.
5. At-Large members of Leadership Council shall represent the congregation and may be assigned by the council to particular liaison roles to staff, Leadership Council committees, boards or ministry teams to aid in communication and understanding.

Article XIV. Nominating Committee

1. The Nominating Committee shall be made up of the Senior Minister and six persons, each serving a two-year term. These terms shall be staggered so that three full-term members of the Nominating Committee are elected at each annual meeting. The Nominating Committee shall elect a chair, which cannot be the Senior Minister, whose responsibility it will be to convene the committee at least four months before the annual meeting.
2. The primary role of the Nominating Committee is to develop, each year, a slate of persons to fill the open positions of Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, At-Large members of the Leadership Council, and members of boards. This slate shall be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting as the basis for the election to fill those positions.
3. The Nominating Committee shall also be responsible for nominating a Pastoral Search Committee as described the Ministry Article of this Constitution.

Article XV. Election Process

As described in their duties, the Nominating Committee shall present a slate of nominations to fill all open elected positions on the Leadership Council and boards. The Leadership Council shall present a slate of nominations to fill all open elected positions on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall utilize the following steps in the development of its yearly slate:

- At least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, notices shall be provided to the congregation which identify the open positions and invite church members to come forward to make their interest known for any open elected position in writing to the Leadership Council or Nominating Committee as specified within each notice.
- The final slate will include those recommended by the Nominating Committee as well as any additional names of those who expressed interest in the position.

Additional nominations for any office may be made from the floor, provided that the person nominated has given consent to serve if elected.

Those receiving the most votes of the members present for each position shall be declared elected.

All active and associate members shall be eligible for election, even if not present at the meeting. At-Large member, Treasurer or Clerk vacancies on Leadership Council which shall occur between annual meetings shall be filled through appointment by Leadership Council. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall assume the position of Moderator. Appointees shall serve until the next annual meeting of the congregation and shall not be precluded from nomination to the same office.

Article XVI. Boards and Ministry Teams

A. Boards

1. Board terms: No person may serve on a board for a period longer than two consecutive terms of two years. After a second consecutive term, one year must transpire before he or she is eligible to be re-elected to the same board.
2. Duties of board members and chairs are detailed in job descriptions that are policies of Leadership Council.
3. Meetings of elected boards shall be open to all church members, although only board members shall be entitled to vote. The board chair may extend voice without vote to any person present.

B. Ministry Teams

1. Ministry teams are created by the development of a covenant between a board of the church and the person(s) who wish to be part of the proposed team. When the covenant is agreed to, the ministry team will be supervised by the board, which reports to the congregation on behalf of all ministry teams related to it.
2. The governing rules for all ministry teams shall be maintained as a policy of Leadership Council.
3. The governing rules for all ministry teams shall be maintained as a policy of Leadership Council.

Article XVII. Pastoral Relations Committee

A. An ongoing Pastoral Relations Committee will operate to support the pastoral staff and to facilitate communication and understanding among the pastors and between the pastors and the congregation.

B. The Pastoral Relations Committee will consist of at least four members, two appointed each year, serving for two-year terms that are renewable by renomination. Nominations to the committee, which require approval by vote of Leadership Council, shall be provided by the following stakeholders so that, during each year, there is a committee member nominated by each of them:

The Senior Minister
Associate Minister(s)
Church Officers (Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer), and
The collective pastoral staff, if required to obtain at least four members

C. The Pastoral Relations Committee is not a part of church government. To this end:

- It is not represented on Leadership Council
- It makes no decisions involving pastoral staff members, and

- Any committee member who is also a member of a church government (board or Leadership Council) must abstain from voting on motions that uniquely pertain to pastoral staff members
- D. Pastoral staff members will be invited to all meetings of the Pastoral Relations Committee. Participation by others will be by invitation only. Although it is expected that meeting dialogue will be shared with pastoral staff members who are not present, comments made at the meeting will otherwise be held in confidence.

XVIII. Accountability

Leadership Council has authority over all groups and employees operating in Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ and shall be accountable to the congregation. Leadership Council shall maintain a list of job descriptions or charters for all boards, committees and positions. Boards shall maintain covenants with each of the ministry teams to which they relate. It shall be the responsibility of Leadership Council to determine the form and frequency of each group's reporting to it.

Article XIX. Church Policies

While this document covers essential elements of church governance, it is intended that Leadership Council will maintain a collection of policies as necessary to fully cover the needs of the church. This collection will be maintained and kept up-to-date by the Clerk. All such policies shall require the approval of Leadership Council.

Article XX. Amendments and Revisions

Amendments to this constitution may be made at any duly-called congregational meeting or at the annual meeting by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members present. The proposed amendments must be made known and discussed at a previous congregational meeting and then again be made known at the calling of a congregational meeting for their final adoption.