

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

Third Sunday in Advent: Love



December 17, 2023

9:30 am

We Practice Just Peace: doing justice, seeking peace
We are Open and Affirming: welcoming LGBTQ+ people
We are an Anti-Racism church
We Listen for the Still Speaking God
Our faith is 2000 years old; our thinking isn't.

Please inquire with people before assuming they are okay with physical contact.

GATHERING

Prelude

Tessa Kelsey, piano

Welcome & Announcements

Please sign the red friendship pad as it is passed to you and return it to the center aisle noting your neighbor in the pew. You may leave your email if you would like to receive our weekly newsletter.

If you want to know more, email the office at office@uccplymouth.org.

Sunday School for all ages begins after the Message for All Ages on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays. Children are welcome to fill a bag with books and toys, which are in the narthex, to use during worship.

Introit I Am Sending My Messenger Before You. Alleluia John Ferguson

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Anna & Natalie Boyer

Unison Advent Prayer

O God, we thank you that Jesus showed your love for every person –

Babies and children, old people and young,

sick people and those who were strong,

rich people and those who were poor.

Come to us in this Advent season, and give us love in our hearts for all people. Amen.

*Those who are able may stand.

***Call to Worship**

Liturgist – Megan Magrauth

One: Come, all you who are brokenhearted, and hear the good news.

All: We seek liberty from the woes that plague our hearts.

One: God proclaims liberty to the captives, and comfort to all who mourn.

All: We seek healing for the devastation of our world.

One: God plants seeds of righteousness within us and will repair all that has been broken.

All: We seek the light of love to lead us and walk beside us on life's journey. May we find it in God's promise today.

***Hymn**

All Earth Is Waiting

NCH (black) #121

***Passing of the Peace**

If you are at home, we invite you to send someone a note of peace today.

One: God be with you

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Unison Gathering Prayer

God of Promise, we gather to await your coming. We have opened our hearts to our family, friends, community, and world – and sometimes it leaves us ragged. Show us how to keep loving when injustices seem to prevail. Teach us a new way of self-preservation that does not build walls between us and our neighbors. We pray that you bless our gathering, and that we feel your love move among us this hour. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Moment of Confession including Silence for Personal Reflection

God's Promise of New Life

One: As the sun's light becomes fainter, as the world's news becomes more dire, God reminds us that the dark is also a place of invisible growth, wondrous mystery, and rejuvenating rest.

All: May we find peace in the softness of night and trust in God's unending love as we await the coming of dawn.

Response

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

NCH (black) #122

**Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set all people free;
From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.**

Children's Anthems

Joy to the World

Feliz Navidad

NCH (black) #325

**Child of love, our love's expression, love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits, into joy and laughter lead.**

HEARING THE WORD

Scripture

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Luke 1:46b-55

One: The Word of God for the people of God. May we feel the Spirit stirring our hearts and uniting us as one in Christ.

All: Amen.

Message

“Blessed and Beloved”

Alison Thatcher

*Hymn

My Soul Gives Glory to My God

NCH (black) #119

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Offertory

We invite you to remember your support for the ministry of PCUCC.

Now Hear the Glad Tidings

From *Christmas Oratorio*

J. S. Bach

Text and arr: Hal H. Hopson

Now hear the glad tidings;

Soon comes the Lord Jesus!

He's coming! Oh, sing and rejoice!

*Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God, all creatures here below

Praise God above, you heavenly host:

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Unison Offertory Prayer

Loving God, you have done great things for us. May our gifts this morning do great things for others according to your will. May they bring liberty to the captives, comfort to those who mourn, food for the hungry, and hope to the downtrodden; just as Mary foretold. Amen.

Prayers of the People

You will also be invited to offer your personal prayers from the silence of your heart.

Pastor: O God, in your grace and mercy . . .

Response: Hear your people at prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer *(debts/debtors)*

All: Our Father**, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.

**We believe that God is revealed in persons of all genders and sorts; we also honor tradition.

SENDING

***Hymn** Now Bless the God of Israel NCH (black) #110

*Pastoral Benediction

Choral Benediction Alleluia John Ferguson

Postlude O Sanctissima Anthony Giamanco

The Postlude ends our gathered worship and sends us into the world where our true service begins.
Feel free to let the music lead you out, or stay to listen, however the Spirit moves you.

Please join us downstairs after worship for refreshments and fellowship!
Coffee Hour today is sponsored by Sunday School and Faith Formation

Keeping in Prayer:

Prayers for Alice Carey, friend of Alice O'Connor, who will be undergoing radiation therapy
Prayers for Kristin, friend of Alice O'Connor, who has recently been diagnosed with cancer
Prayers of healing for Beverly McClain, longtime friend of Eleanor Spencer
Prayers for Paulette Brace's son, Shawn Cassington, for ongoing medical issues
Prayers for Claire Pirnie, daughter of Diane Arsenault and Peter Pirnie and her son Micah as
she continues through the process of divorce

Prayers for Tony Amodeo, friend of the LaPrads, who is undergoing cancer treatment
 Prayers of comfort and strength for Ruth & Dale Mosher
 Prayers for Sage Pirnie and her family, granddaughter of Diane Arsenault and Pete Pirnie
 Prayers for Ellen who struggles with cancer, family member of Ruth & Dale Mosher
 Prayers of healing for Sue Switaj
 Prayers for our partner church in Zimbabwe, Masvingo UCCZ

*If you have a prayer request please write on the yellow card in the pews and place it in the offering tray,
 or send an email to plymouthpastor@uccplymouth.org.*

This Week and More at PCUCC

Today, December 17	10:45 am Music Committee Meeting
Monday, December 18	10:00 am Book Group
Tuesday, December 19	7:00 pm AA Meeting
Wednesday, December 20	11:00 am Lectio Divina
Thursday, December 21	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Friday, December 22	8:00 pm AA Meeting
Sunday, December 24	7:00 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
Friday, January 5	6:00 pm Coffee House: Elizabeth Brochu of CADY

CHURCH LIFE

Book Group is reading Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston during the month of December. Join the discussion on Monday December 18 at 10am. Contact Kathy Henning for more information: henkat52@gmail.com.

Coffee House: Please join us for coffee, snacks, and an informal talk presented by Elizabeth Brochu of Plymouth's Communities for Alcohol- and Drug-free Youth (CADY). Elizabeth will talk about what restorative justice looks like at CADY as well as all the wonderful things they do for our community. Bring a snack to share if you can! We understand that evening winter driving is not fun. Please email the office if you'd like to arrange to carpool: office@uccplymouth.org.

Lectio Divina: All are invited to gather Wednesday mornings from 11 a.m. to noon for a Bible study modeled on Lectio Divina, the sacred reading of scripture. We'll begin with the Gospel of Mark, the first gospel written, and read through it listening for God's Still Speaking voice. Please join us. Rebecca Larson will lead us.

Sunday School focuses on Bible lessons, outreach projects, and family activities. The children will learn how to use the gifts God gave them to positively impact their community. Volunteers are always welcome! Please contact Jennifer for more details at faithformation@uccplymouth.org.

FROM MISSION & OUTREACH

THE CHRISTMAS FUND for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund 9:30 am Sunday Worship, December 24

“Grace upon Grace.” John 1:16

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. United Church of Christ congregations and members have blessed the Christmas Fund with their generosity for many years. This year, your care and compassion will be especially appreciated by those servants of the church who are facing a time of need. Thank you! Please make your check out to PCUCC, with “Christmas Fund” in the memo line.

Special Mission Offering: PEMI VALLEY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

7:00 pm Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve Worship Service

Seeking to put God’s love into action, we bring people together to build homes, communities, and hope.

Pemi Valley Habitat for Humanity has been serving Plymouth and the surrounding area for 35 years and plans to continue its mission forever. We are a non-profit organization that partners with financial donors, local families, and community volunteers to build and sell affordable homes in 27 towns. Habitat homebuyers help build their own homes alongside volunteers and pay an affordable mortgage. Through our efforts, families have achieved the strength, stability, and independence needed to build a better life for themselves and their children. Please make your check out to PCUCC, with “Habitat” in the memo line.

Request from Pemi Valley Habitat for Humanity: Dale Mosher has asked if any church members or groups would be willing to bring a hot lunch for the volunteers working at 61 Pleasant St, Plymouth. The volunteers work on Thursday, Friday (max: 8 people), and Saturday (max: 4 people). Suggestions are a hearty soup, stew, pasta, chili, chicken pot pie... Lunch should be delivered between 12 and 12:30 p.m., along with paper plates, plastic utensils, and napkins. “Cooks” are welcome to stay for lunch with the crew. The students at Holderness Academy have volunteered to bring a hot lunch on Sat. Dec 9, and each Saturday in January. Please sign up by contacting Ruth Martz (ruthm.joy@gmail.com or 603-630-7936). Thank you!

Star Child Christmas Giving Program: Once again, this year you can help children and youth in need through our Star Child program. Choose a gold star from the Christmas tree in the Narthex and on it find the sex, age, and sizes of a child in need of warm winter clothing. Then use the star as the gift tag for your gift. To be fair to all please value your gift at approximately \$50. We are also collecting cash donations to supply high school youth a gift card. We know that the gift cards and clothing make a real difference in their lives and make their Christmas a little brighter.

FROM FINANCE

Support PCUCC with no cost to you! Purchase a **Hannaford Gift Card** in the amount of \$100, \$250, or \$500 by contacting Linda LaPrad or Ann Thurston. For every card purchased from the Finance Committee, the church receives 5% with no additional cost to you.

We will offer the option of meeting digitally indefinitely. You may also catch our services (one week delayed) on Sunday nights on PBTv at 7:00 pm. (Local channel 1302.) Please check Constant Contact and the Facebook page for ongoing updates.

Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday 9:00-2:00

If you have a family emergency and want to talk with a pastor, please call Rev. Ruth Martz at 603-630-7936 or you may call Eileen Torrey at 603-252-7513.

Alison Thatcher, Office Administrator	office@uccplymouth.org
David A. Williams, Director of Music	musicdirector@uccplymouth.org
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Ann Thurston, Treasurer	treasurer@uccplymouth.org

Guest Speaker: Alison Thatcher
Guest Musician: Tessa Kelsey, piano

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Celebrating Birthdays and Anniversaries in November in our Community

If you have an upcoming birthday or anniversary, please email office@uccplymouth.org

Tucker Magrath	December 9	David Williams	December 25
Eileen Torrey	December 15	Natalie Boyer	December 26
Frank Tedeschi	December 19	Robert Stewart	December 27

