

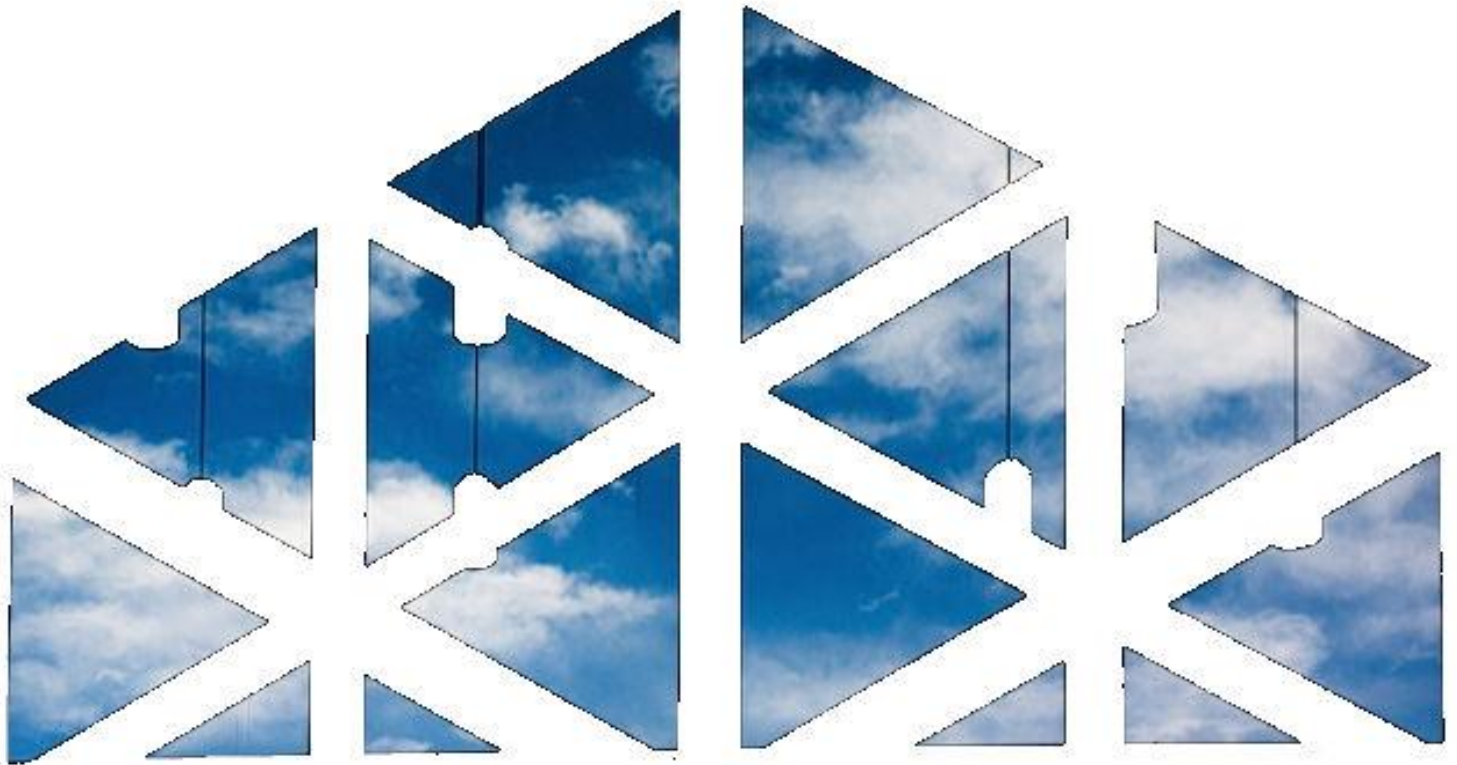
Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

Epiphany of the Lord

January 7, 2018

9:30 a.m.

A Just Peace Church
An Open and Affirming Congregation
A God is Still Speaking Congregation



Our faith is 2000 years old; our thinking isn't.

A compassionate community, intentionally inclusive, openly searching, joyfully serving in the way of Christ

Welcome to Worship!

We are grateful for your presence this morning. If you are new to Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, the following information may be helpful.

- We are an Open & Affirming congregation where all people are valued and accepted regardless of sexual identity or orientation.
- We are a Just Peace church that affirms that peace is possible in human history and prays ceaselessly that peace may prevail on Earth.
- We celebrate our Christian heritage and seek to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

A Special Word to our Visitors

- Please fill out the fellowship pads the ushers will hand out at the beginning of the service. We would love to get to know you better and keep you up-to-date on all the programs, events and activities offered throughout the year.
- Families with infants and children are especially welcome to our service. Childcare is available during the worship service in the nursery. Please speak with an usher if you need assistance to find our nursery.
- Children's bulletins, activity bags (to be returned after worship) and toys are available in the Narthex. To find out more about our Sunday school program, we may talk to our Faith Formation Director Cindy Bjerklie or visit our website.
- Our service can be heard in the parlor, library and nursery.
- Our sanctuary is equipped with the Telecoil Loop System for the hard of hearing. For assistance on how to connect to the Telecoil, please speak to one of our ushers.
- Our building is fully accessible to all people. A small parking lot on the south side of the church is available only to persons with limited mobility or physical disability. The entrance to the parking lot is located immediately behind the Post Office, off Highland Street. An elevator connects all three levels.
- Join us for Coffee Hour in the fellowship hall immediately after the service.

Help us to protect the environment by dropping your bulletin in one of the recycling baskets at the two main entrances to the sanctuary. You may also download your bulletin from our website and follow the service on your own mobile device.

Large print bulletins are also available.

Transcripts of our Sunday Sermons and videos of the worship services are available on our website, www.uccplymouth.org.

Our worship service is live-streamed on our Facebook page every Sunday.

GATHERING

Prelude

Song of India

Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov

*The beginning of the prelude is an invitation to silent,
personal preparation for the worship of God.*

Welcome & Life of the Church

Centering Music Woke Up this Morning with my Mind Stayed on Jesus Traditional

*Call to Worship

**Indicates congregation standing*

One: This is a day of new beginnings!

All: Today is God's gift to us!

One: As we step into a New Year,
we gladly come together to bring
our prayers and our dreams before God.

**All: Gladly we come together
to seek the light that opens our eyes
to God's Presence among us
and that empowers us to step into this New Year with gratitude
for what has been and with openness to the journey ahead of us.**

*Hymn

"This Is a Day of New Beginnings"
(use the alternate fourth stanza for Holy Communion)

Blk#417

Prayer of the Day

One: May the God who redeems our past, gives purpose to our present, and
lightens up our future with the light of hope be with us as we pray, saying:

**All: God of our yesterday, tomorrow and today, we gather in your
Presence to pray for the courage to make a fresh start for
ourselves and for our church in this New Year. Keep us from
looking back at the past in anger, fear or regret and free us from
being paralyzed by our anxieties about the future. May we find a
sacred place in our hearts and minds where hope can flourish, love
can grow, and faith can give us glimpses of the path that leads to
a deeper communion with God. Amen.**

Silence for Personal Reflection

God's Promise of New Life

One: Brothers and sisters, hear the Good News: the old has passed away and, behold, the new has come.

All: In Jesus Christ, we are a new creation! Thanks be to God.

Prayer Response

"Glory to God"

Dm Gm C F (chords continue)

Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, glo - ry in the high - est!
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, in ex - cel - sis De - o!

Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!
Glo - ri - a, glo - ri - a, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

The musical notation is in 6/8 time, G major, and consists of two staves. The first staff has four measures with lyrics underneath. The second staff has four measures with lyrics underneath. Chords are indicated above the first staff: Dm, Gm, C, F, and (chords continue). Asterisks are placed above the first and third measures of both staves.

*Sign of Peace

One: On the first Sunday of this New Year, may the peace of Christ inspire us to be peacemakers.

All: May the peace of Christ be always within us, between us, over us, and all around us.

One: Let us greet one another with the sign of peace.

HEARING THE WORD

Scripture Lessons

One: Listen for the Word of God

New Testament Lesson Ephesians 3:1-12

NT p.1018

Gospel Lesson Matthew 2:1-12

NT p. 835-836

One: May God bless our reading, hearing, and doing of God's holy word.

All: Amen

Sermon

“A Year of Gift-Giving”

***Hymn**

“What Star Is This, With Beams So Bright”

Red#144

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Offertory

Gift of Music

Steal Away

African-American Spiritual

***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.**

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

All: Holy God, Maker of stars and Giver of life, we thank you for your gift of love that became flesh and blood in the Child in the manger. Let your Christmas gift strengthen our resolve to give more generously, to love more passionately and to serve more faithfully. Help us to begin this New Year with a deep sense of gratitude for the privilege of having enough to give to make the world more hopeful. Amen.

Celebration of Holy Communion

Invitation to the Table

One: Come to this table, not because you must, but because you may; not because you are worthy, but because you are hungry; not because you are ready, but because you are thirsty. Come, because Christ invites us, saying, “I am the bread life.”

All: Whoever comes to Christ will never be hungry. Whoever believes in Christ will never be thirsty. Whoever comes to Jesus, he will never drive away.

One: As Jesus took the bread and cup and gave thanks before sharing them, so we also give thanks before God at this table.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: People of Christmas, the Lord be with you.

All: God's Spirit is present in us and among us.

One: People of the Star, open your hearts to God.

All: We open our hearts to the One who is always with us.

One: People of faith, offer joyful songs of thanksgiving to God.

All: We will sing songs of praise to God who revealed the depth of love in the Child of Bethlehem.

One: We give you thanks, God of mercy and grace, for creating our beautiful planet and raising us from the humus of the Earth by the breath of your being. We rejoice that you have called the entire human family to this table of hope. We come here in remembrance and celebration of the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you sent to bring light into the darkness of human history. We bless you, gracious God, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church gathered here. With your sons and daughters in faith in all places and times we praise you with joy, singing:

SANCTUS

"Holy, Holy, Holy"



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly. My heart, my heart a - dores you!
San - to, san - to, san - to. ¡Mi co - ra - zón te a - do - ra!



My heart knows how to say to you: you are ho - ly, Lord!
Mi co - ra - zón te sa - be de - cir: ¡San - to e - res, Se - ñor!

One: O God, we thank you for the gift of Jesus Christ. At our Savior's birth, the angels sang a message of peace on earth. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus proclaimed that he had come to bring good news to the poor, release to the outcaste, and recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free. He taught that those who work for your peace will be called your children. He prayed for unity among all who would follow him. He wept over people's failure to know the things that make for peace. He suffered and died for the sins of the world. Through our Lord's resurrection, you broke the powers of oppression, sin and death. Our risen Savior greeted his followers with the word of peace. We thank you that Christ reigns with you in glory and continues to bring your peace into our lives. Grateful for this gift of peace, we name all our concerns and worries that trouble our spirits and disturb our peace:

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

(You are invited to say your prayer aloud or in the silence of your heart)

One: As we give thanks for His birth, as we prepare to journey with Christ in this New Year, we boldly affirm the mystery of our faith:

**All: Christ came on Christmas Day.
Christ died on Good Friday.
Christ will come again.**

One: Blessed are you, Lord God of the universe,
You are the Giver of this bread,
Fruit of the earth and of human labor,
Let it become the bread of Life.

All: Blessed be God, now and forever.

One: Blessed are you, Lord God of the universe,
You are the Giver of this grape juice,
Fruit of the vine and of human labor,
Let it become the wine of the eternal Kingdom.

All: Blessed be God, now and forever.

One: As the grain once scattered in the fields
And the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
And now reunited on this table in bread and in the cup,
So, Lord, may your whole church soon be gathered together,
From the corners of the earth into your kingdom.

All: Blessed be God, now and forever.

One: Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, O God, now and forever.

All: Amen.

Breaking of the Bread and the Pouring of the Cup

Sharing of the Bread & the Cup

Prayer of Gratitude after Communion

All: We thank you, God-with-us, for nourishing our faith in this sacrament, uniting us in Christ, and for giving us a foretaste of the feast we will enjoy in your Kingdom. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to bring hope to broken lives, warmth to frozen hearts, and light to those living in the darkness of hopelessness. Hear us as we pray for your Kingdom to come, saying:

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

SENDING

***Hymn**

"As with Gladness Those of Old"

Blk#159

***Benediction**

Postlude

Voluntary

Samuel Jackson

The Postlude ends our gathered worship and sends us into the world where our true service begins.

Keeping in Prayer

Stephanie

Lynn Anderson

Doug Grant

Jesse Armstrong

Pat Andrews

Peggy Suntum

Rick Bogin

Bob Chase

Ginny Arsenault

Bill Bonney

Ron Decker

Jane

Amy Barber

Jack & Vicky Meyers

Nancy Pirnie

Bob Feeney, our Chicago Seminary Student

If you have any prayer requests, please fill out a prayer card located in the pew rack and drop it in the offering plate.

Save these dates
Church Council Meeting- January 24th at 7PM

Announcements

From the Hospitality Committee

Please help the Hospitality folks in providing an assortment of snacks and goodies for Coffee Hour following the service each Sunday. Suggestions are: Cheese and crackers, cut-up fruits and vegetables with savory or sweet dip, salsa and tostitos, quick bread and creamed cheese, cookies, brownies, munchkins, mini-muffins, mixed nuts, and pretzels. Please label any gluten-free foods. We also welcome anyone to help with setting up at 8:45 am or cleaning up at the conclusion of the Coffee Hour. Thanks for your help.

Faith Formation

Watch for news in Constant Contact about upcoming activities in the first few months of 2018. We're planning an Ice Skating Party and a Movie Night at the church! And, we're going to be making a special offering of food to Feeding Our Children Together in the coming weeks.

Kids with a Mission are planning their next service project and getting ready to repaint and furnish their special room. If you have any extra lamps, tables, chairs, rugs or board games that you'd like to donate, please let us know.

Thank you to all of our hard-working volunteers. We're always looking for energetic fun-loving volunteers to work with our children on a regular or temporary basis. We especially need chaperones for some of our upcoming activities. If you're interested in skating with the kids and/or helping out on Movie Night, please contact Cindy Bjerklie at faithformation@uccplymouth.org. Happy New Year!

KIDS WITH A MISSION-ROOM REFURBISH

One of the projects the kids identified in our initial meeting was to make the KWAM room a bit more comfortable, with a new coat of paint and a few furnishings. This seems like the perfect time of year to do a little cleaning out, maybe making room for new furnishings in your home? If you have any of these items kicking around your house, or collecting dust in the attic or closet, perhaps you would consider donating it to their interior decorating project:

- ❖ Stools: to use for seating at the counter in the Room
- ❖ Floor lamp
- ❖ Desk or table lamp
- ❖ Games (Monopoly, Uno, Sorry)
- ❖ Surge strip (outlets are few and far between)
- ❖ Small Regular height table and chairs (they have outgrown the little table)

We are accepting donations at any time. Please contact Deb Boyer with any questions or offerings. Thank you.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION **AT PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST (UCC)**

"Do this in remembrance of me." Luke 22:19c (NRSV)

The United Church of Christ (UCC) recognizes two sacraments, which we believe were instituted by Jesus Christ: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Almost all other Christian traditions also celebrate these two sacraments.

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The Lord's Supper, also known as "The Eucharist," "Last Supper," and "Holy Communion" is a sign of God's love and grace manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In eating the bread and drinking from the cup, Christians are united with the Living Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. The sacrament of Holy Communion is a reminder of what Jesus did in the past, a symbol of our present relationship with him and a promise of what he will do in the future. And so, during the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving we often proclaim the mystery of our faith: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

During his earthly ministry, Christ shared meals with his followers and sat at dinner tables of sinners and outcasts to show the world the reality of God's unconditional love. On the night before he was crucified, Jesus broke bread and shared the cup with his disciples. He spoke of these elements as his body and blood given for humanity. Just as humans need food and drink for nurture and sustenance, the Holy Meal that Christians

share at Communion is spiritual nourishment for those who believe. Those who partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine are renewed and empowered to be the Body of Christ in today's world.

Holy Communion is more than just a memorial celebration. We believe that the elements maintain their substance during communion, but we affirm that the Living Christ is present with us in the breaking of bread and sharing of the cup. In the act of receiving communion, we are united with the Living Christ and with one another.

The invitation to the Table is not just for members of this church; all people of faith, including children, are welcome to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion. It does not matter if you have much faith or if your trust in God is wavering; if you are a strong believer or if you have doubts, you are welcome to experience God's grace, love and extravagant welcome at the Table.

At Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC), we celebrate Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month. The elements are either served in the traditional manner with the congregation seated or offered by intinction. When intinction is used, you are invited to come forward, take a piece of bread, dip it into the cup and immediately partake of the elements. Please, use the center aisle to come to the Communion Table and return to your seats by way of the side aisles.

May the peace and grace of Christ be with you.



*An Open & Affirming, Just
Peace, Global Mission Faith
Community joyfully serving
in the way of Christ*



The Coffee House at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, presents:



At the first Coffee House of the New Year, Rev. Andy Jepson and Lindley Kinerk will take us on a trip to Sri Lanka - the Southeast Asian nation where they spent the last two years as Global Mission volunteers.

Friday, January 19th at 6:30 PM

The Reverend Paulo G. França, Minister
Shannon Wharton, Church Office Administrator
Cindy Bjerklie, Director of Christian Education
Claire McIver, Director of Music
Colin McIver, Organist
Larry Spencer, Church Treasurer
Celia Woolverton, Grace Counseling

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John Anderson, liturgist

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