

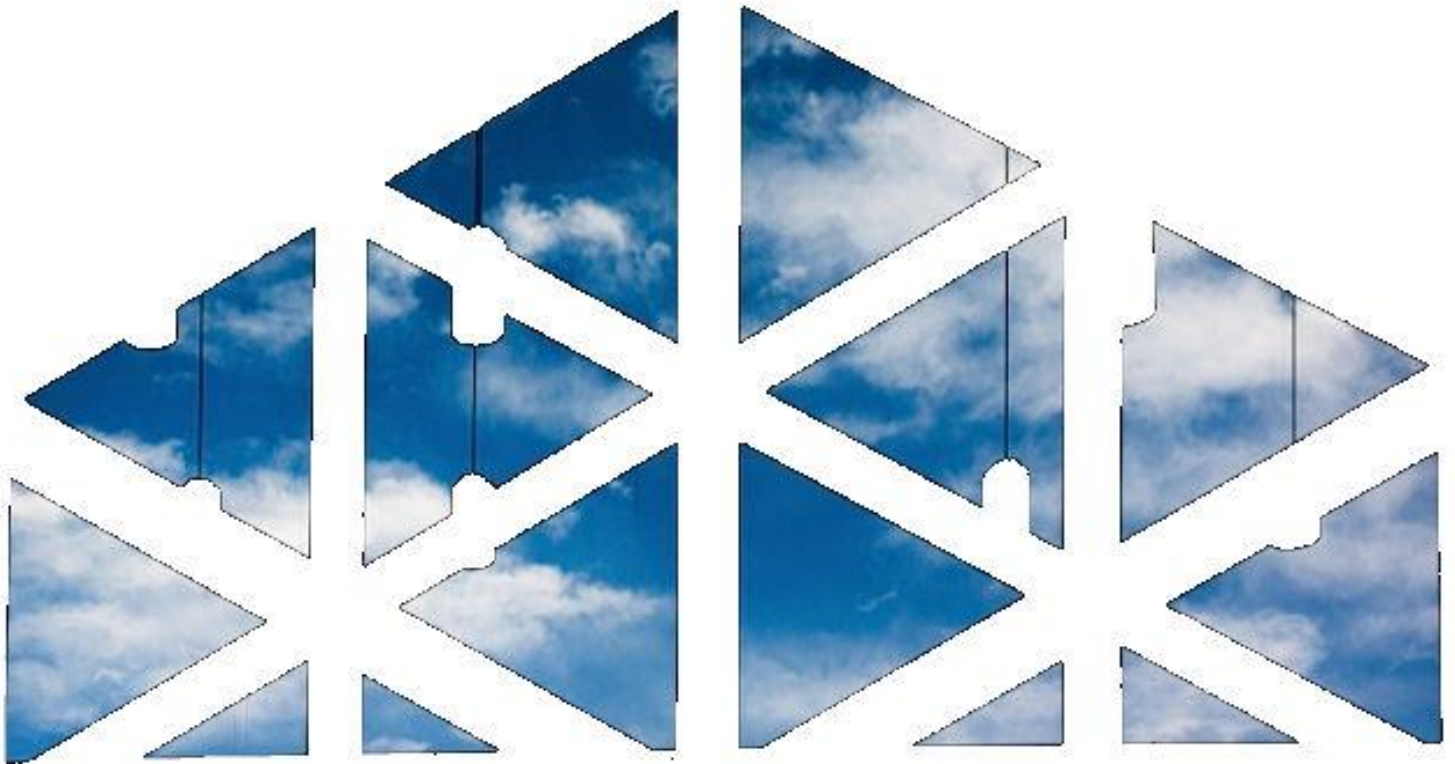
# **Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ**

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**May 6, 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](http://www.uccplymouth.org).

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

# GATHERING

## Prelude

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

## Welcome & Life of the Church

**Centering Song**     Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

### \*Call to Worship

*\*Indicates congregation standing*

One: We are people of faith, gathered in God's holy presence.

**All: We come together in hope to pray and listen.**

One: We are seekers of a truth greater than ourselves.

**All: We come together in wonder to ponder and meditate.**

One: We are followers of the Risen Christ.

**All: We come together in peace to worship the Holy One.**

### \*Hymn

"Beautiful Jesus"

Blk#44

## Prayer of the Day

One: Gathered together in this house of prayers, let us open our hearts and minds to the Spirit of the Living God as we pray in one voice, saying:

**All: God our Maker, we are grateful for the lavish gifts you so generously shower on us. For spouses and children and friends, we give thanks. For laughter and music and people that gladden our hearts, we give thanks. For sacred moments and mystery and faith that hallow our lives, we give thanks. For your insistent call to love our neighbors and care for the environment and follow Christ, we give thanks. We are grateful, O God, for your love that saves us from selfishness and puts in our hearts the longing to give thanks always. Amen.**

## Silence for Personal Reflection

### God's Promise of New Life

One: Friends, our Holy Scriptures declares that God knows us by name, loves us, and gives us infinitely more than we could ask or hope for. Join me in proclaiming the Good News!

**All: Our lives have been transformed by the extravagant love of God made known to us in Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God for God's Word, which keeps alive among us God's wild goodness, redeeming grace and all-embracing love. Alleluia!**

**Prayer Response**

**"We Are Forgiven"**

G Am D7 Gsus G C  
 We are for - giv - en. We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to  
 G Am7 Dsus D G Am  
 God. Thanks be to God. We are for - giv - en.  
 D7 Gsus G C G Am7 D G  
 We are for - giv - en. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God.

To sing, rather than simply say, a response to the Declaration of Forgiveness has the effect of making the moment both more affirmative and more corporate. The musical repetition of the two sentences also strengthens awareness of what it means to be assured of God's pardon.

TEXT: Trad. liturgical text  
 MUSIC: Hal H. Hopson, 1995  
 Music © 1995 Hal H. Hopson

WE ARE FORGIVEN  
 10.8.10.8

**\*Sign of Peace**

One: Let us put the peace of Christ into action this morning.

**All: Let us dare to put peace into a hug, into a handshake, and into words of welcome and friendship.**

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

# HEARING THE WORD

**Scripture Lessons**

One: Listen for the Word of God

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Epistle Lesson | 1 John 5:1-6 |
| Gospel Lesson  | John 15:9-17 |

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

**All: Amen**

**Sermon**

"Odd Love"

**\*Hymn**

"Jesus, The Joy of loving Hearts"  
(sing vv. 1-3)

Blk#329

## **RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

**Offertory**

**Gift of Music**

*O Taste and See*

Richard Horn

**\*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.**

**\*Dedication of Gifts and Pledges**

**All: Giver of all good gifts, we dedicate these offerings and pledges to the community, the mission, and the hopes of this church. May our planning be wise. May our spending be faithful. May our giving be always joyful. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, who opens our hearts and hands for the sake of abundant life in this place and in this time. Amen.**

## **CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**Invitation to the Table**

One: Come to this table not because you believe, but because you seek a deeper communion with Christ; come not because you are a member of the church, but because you are follower of Christ; come not because you can, because you must. Come because God's love has touched your life, has claimed you, and has made your heart larger to love the Lord.

**All: We come to this table to be nourished by Christ's Presence and to be bound in solidarity and faith with all who follow the Risen Lord.**

## The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: The God of love be with you.

**All: God's loving Spirit is among us.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Living God.**

One: Let us give thanks to our God, our hope and strength.

**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

One: As we travel the path of Eastertide, we remember that you, O Holy One, loved us first by wresting life out of the grips of chaos. When we desired the deathly reality of the world more than life itself, you sent prophets to give us hopeful words; but humanity wandered along the dusty ways of death. Then, as an everlasting sign of your abiding love, you sent Jesus to be among us, the True Vine who would bear the fruits of redemption and grace.

So, with those who have gone down to the dust, and with all the generations yet to come, we embrace all that is holy throughout all time and space as we sing:

### 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: When we gather at this table, O God of love, we remember our hope and faith in Jesus Christ. We share our stories. We keep alive the memory of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Because we believe Christ gave his own life so that we might live more fully, we dare to bring to you our prayers, petitions and supplications:

#### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

One: As we remember all Jesus did and taught, as we celebrate the wonder of his new life, we affirm the mystery of our faith:

**All: Christ died, that death would be defeated.**

**Christ is risen, that God would be glorified.**

**Christ will come again, that we would be led to life.**

One: Gracious God, may this bread and cup, the gifts of your creation and the work of human hands, be blessed by your faith-inspiring love. May they be for us the signs of Christ's presence with us.

**All: Praise be to God, now and forever. Christ is risen and he is present in our midst. Alleluia!**

### **Breaking of the Bread and the Pouring of the Cup**

#### **Sharing of the Bread & the Cup**

#### **Prayer of Gratitude after Communion**

**All: God of love, may the spiritual food from this table inspire us to follow in the Way of Christ now and always. Hear us as we pray with the words Christ taught his disciples to pray, 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**

"Community of Christ"

Blk#314

**\*Benediction**

**\*Choral Benediction** *Dismiss Us with the Blessings of Thy Peace*

## Postlude

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

### Keeping in Prayer

Jack & Vicky Meyers  
Lynn Anderson  
Pat Andrews

Eilene Greenwood  
Nancy Pirnie  
Bethany

The Jaeubowski Family  
Ginny Arsenault  
Penny Colgan-Davis

Bob Feeney, our Chicago Seminary Student

Prayers for Sam Lovett, a member-in-discernment in the Merrimack Association

*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

May 7<sup>th</sup> – Adult Education Walter Brueggemann's Book  
May 13<sup>th</sup> – Sunday Niters with Wayne and Peggy Martin  
May 18<sup>th</sup> – Coffee House: Smuggling Hope into America  
May 20<sup>th</sup> - PCUCC Annual Meeting following worship service  
May 27<sup>th</sup> – Sunday Niters with Bob and Carol Stewart

### Announcements

**Sunday Niters** Although not an official arm of the church, Sunday Niters has been a part of this congregation since the time of Revs. Michael and Jane Henderson who were pastors at Plymouth UCC in the 1980's. It has endured ever since. With an occasional exception, we meet second and fourth Sunday evenings during "the off season" meaning not from mid-June into September. A potluck dinner is hosted by various members or friend of the church often accompanied by a program and at other times just for the sociability. All are welcome. Host venue volunteers and those to present programs are always being sought. And thanks to Philip Wei for all his past efforts on behalf of the Niters, For more information about Sunday Niters, contact Tink Taylor. On **May 13<sup>th</sup>**, we will meet at Wayne and Peggy Martin on Route 3 in Campton, ½ mile North of the Sunset Grille on your right. Peggy will lead us to a nearby vernal pond. It's a springtime wonder of nature. Come with appropriate footwear. On **May 27<sup>th</sup>**, we meet at Bob and Carol Stewart at the usual time with a high altitude dish. Take Route 49 into Waterville Valley, pass Sandwich Notch, turn-off is on right, take



next left at bridge (Upper Mad River Road) to Orris, go to top of road, take left to #262. Look for other cars.

**Adult Education** Walter Brueggemann's new book is an invitation to reflect on the gift of the Christian faith in today's world. In the book, Brueggemann - a Beloved and respected scholar, teacher, and preacher offers penetrating insights on Scripture and prophetic diagnoses of our culture. Instead of maintaining what is safe and routine, *A Gospel of Hope* encourages readers to embrace the audacity required to live out one's faith. This must-have volume gathers Brueggemann's wisdom on topics ranging from anxiety and abundance to partisanship and the role of faith in public life. We will meet on Monday, **May 7<sup>th</sup>**, in the Church Parlor from 4:00 to 5:30pm, chapters 5 and 6.

**PCUCC Annual Meeting** Our meeting will be on **May 20<sup>th</sup>** following church. These reports will be available on our church's website. To save church paper resources please consider reviewing them on the website ahead of our meeting or bring your electronic device to review at the meeting. If you are willing to do this, please let the church office know so we won't need to print as many report booklets! There will be a hard copy of the budget proposal available May 6<sup>th</sup> and at the meeting.

**Calling All Bakers!** Food for Finals at PSU is **May 12<sup>th</sup>** and is asking interested parishioners to provide homemade goodies-cookies or squares free of nuts please-for the residence halls the first night of Finals Week. Please contact Debbie Healey in the front office at 536-2626 if you are able to volunteer as a coordinator for PCUCC.

**Groceries and Raising Money for PCUCC** Everyone has to eat and many of you shop at Hannaford's. Have you thought about using a Hannaford gift card. For the next couple of months, the Finance Committee will be offering Hannaford Gift Shopping cards in a variety of denominations to see how this program works as a fund raising effort. The cards will be available in a variety of denominations (\$50, \$100 and \$200). For every one hundred dollars you spend on the card, we will get back five dollars. See either Linda LaPrad, Chair of Finance, or Larry Spencer, Treasurer. You can either supply us with cash or a check made out to PCUCC with Hannaford gift card in the memo line.

**Kitchen Clean-up Mornings** On **May 16<sup>th</sup> and May 21<sup>st</sup>**, we will be tackling various projects in the kitchen to keep all areas clean. Please join us on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> or Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:00AM to 11:30AM. There is much to do from wiping away drips on cabinet doors to refilling salt and pepper shakers. Sign up for an hour or two on the list by the Will You poster. Let's get this done so that we can enjoy working in a squeaky-clean kitchen! Thank you, The Hospitality Committee!

**Faith Formation** We are seeking volunteers to help with our children's programs, particularly with teaching Sunday School and music. If you're interested in working with our great kids, please contact Cindy Bjerklie at [faithformation@uccplymouth.org](mailto:faithformation@uccplymouth.org).

#### COFFEE HOUSE

**SMUGGLING HOPE INTO AMERICA** Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm. Polish Poet, teacher and translator Ewa Chrusciel will read some of her poems and speak about her journey to America as a Polish immigrant. Bright, funny and captivating, Ewa Chrusciel uses her love of words and personal experience to talk about the ways immigrants smuggle hope and dreams into America. Ms. Chrusciel is an Associate Professor of Humanities at Colby-Sawyer College

Rev. Paulo G. França  
Deborah Healey, Church Office Administrator  
Cindy Bjerklie, Director of Christian Education  
David Williams, Interim Director of Music  
Ashley Paine, Interim Accompanist  
Larry Spencer, Church Treasurer  
Celia Woolverton, Grace Counseling

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Wayne Martin, liturgist

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# **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.

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.

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