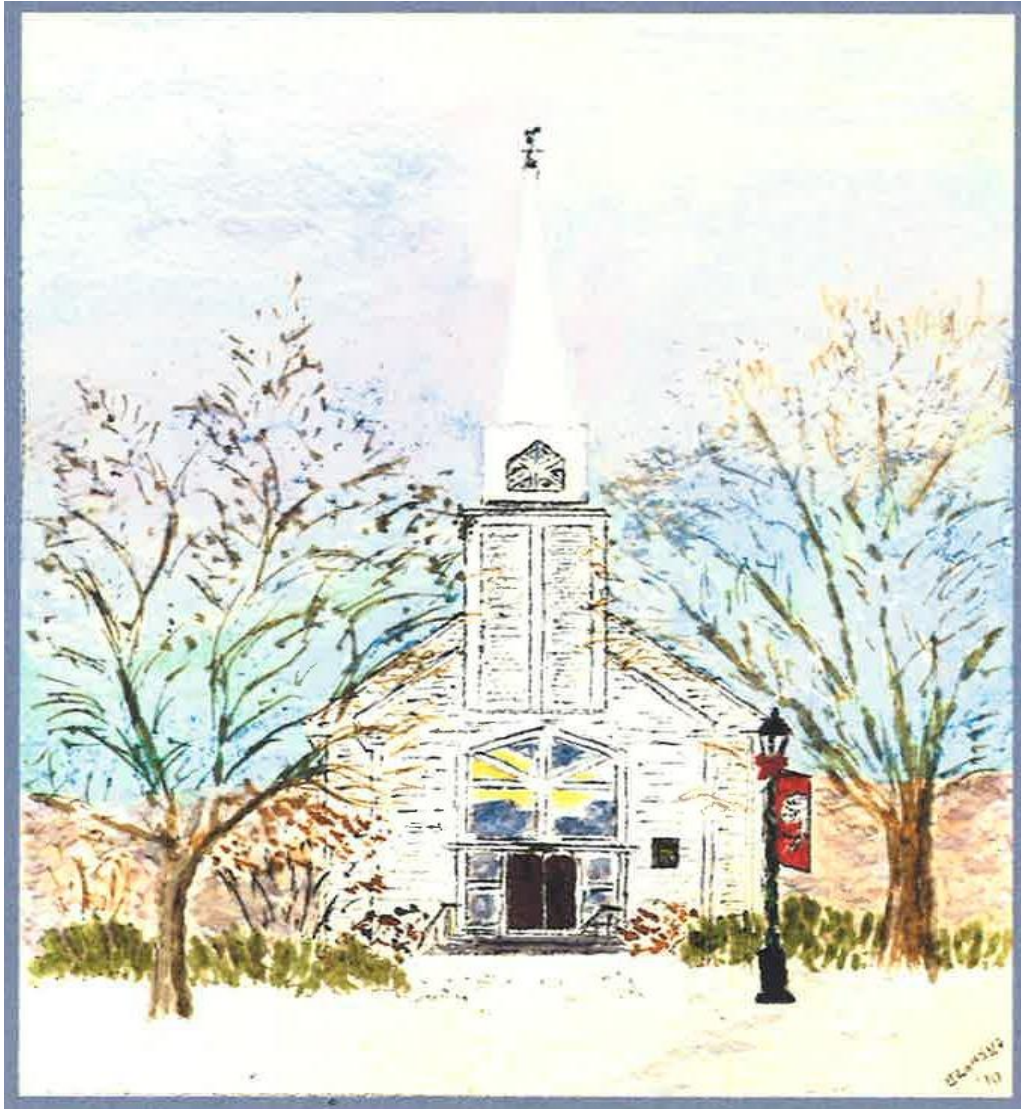


Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

Second Sunday of Christmas

January 5, 2020

9:30 AM



courtesy of Eleanor Lonske

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

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
A Just Peace, Open & Affirming, & God Is Still Speaking Congregation

"An inclusive spiritual family shaping a better you for creating a better world.
A place to make a difference."

Second Sunday of Christmas

January 5, 2020

Sacred Fellowship 9:30 AM

We are delighted that you are here today! We hope you will find us an affirming, uplifting, and committed family of faith. Here we work to make everyone, without any exceptions, to feel accepted, inspired, and encouraged in their spiritual journey. In dialogue, we seek to understand. In encouragement, we seek to heal. In all things we yearn to live by love, for peace, with joy. This is a place where your intellect will be challenged, your heart will be nurtured, and your spirit refreshed. Varying beliefs are expressed openly and freely, and your doubts will not be suppressed. We trust that we are all, every person and part of creation, continuing to be blessed by God's grace; and that in community we can help each other to see this grace alive in our lives and relationships. We hope to share our gifts with you, even as we pray that you will want to share your gifts with us. Whoever you are and wherever you may be in your life's journey, we invite you to be a part of our lives and our spiritual home. Welcome!

CALLED TOGETHER AS SPIRITUAL FAMILY

Gathering Music

Welcome and Announcements

Please sign the registration pads when they are handed out
by the ushers and pass to your neighbor in the pew.

We ask that you please shut off cell phones and practice quietness during the service.
Please join us for fellowship and refreshments after the worship in the Fellowship Hall.

* = You are invited to stand as you are able.

Prelude

Welcoming the Light of Love in Our Midst (acolyte lights altar candles)

We prepare ourselves for communing with the sacred as love's light is brought into our awareness. The light of love burns within and among each of us, and we carry that light into our sanctuary; visually reminding us of the image of the divine that lives in our hearts, minds, and souls – and that we nourish through our faith-filled fellowship.

Choral Introit

We Come to Sing Praise

Affirming God's Presence in Us All

"You Matter!"

***Hymn of Christmas Wonder** "What Child Is This"

#148

***Centering Our Souls**

Creative God, in whom is the Logos, the creating Word that is the light of all people:

We are thankful for the Life that is Light – not just to us, but to everyone.

We are amazed by how this light shines through the darkness, and is not overcome.

It gives us hope and assurance that our faith in your ways are indeed blessing to us and others.

Help us to testify to the Light of the World – not simply by sharing the gospel message, but by living it by our personal practices and social behavior.

For those whose lives are overcome with darkness, prod us to be Light that brings them Life. Now and always, may it be so.

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

Prayers

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns, and Acts of Compassion or Kindness

Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer Jesus Taught

Unison

Please feel free to do the version you know, or the one below.

"Our heavenly Creator, sacred be your name: your kin-dom* come, your will be done, on earth as if in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen"

*"Kin-dom" is an inclusive, non-authoritarian, and egalitarian term that reminds us that we are all "kin" as the children of God.

***Hymn of Christmas Surprise**

"Who Would Think That What Was Needed" #153

Scripture Lesson

John 1.1-18

WE AFFIRM & CELEBRATE OUR UNITY AS GOD’S CREATION

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

(As God calls all people to the table of forgiveness, peace, and loving fellowship, Plymouth Congregational UCC affirms an inclusive and open Communion Table. **All** persons (all ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations/identities, dis/abilities, religious affiliations, and other distinguishing features) are welcome to partake of this sacrament which affirms that we are all part of God’s family and are to commune together in sacred relationship. Love and peace are the uniting virtues of this spiritual meeting place. Therefore, all who wish to join in this ritual of unity are invited to do so providing that you do so in the spirit of peace and mutual love for one another.)

The Purpose of Holy Communion

God seeks to be in communion with us, and wills that we be in communion with one another. Through the Christ in Jesus, God drew closer to us by living among us with all the desires and temptations of being human, and showed us that we each have the power to overcome wrongdoing by the inspiration of our spiritual lives and the discipline of our physical lives; thereby effecting the Christ in us. Jesus represented the individual model of how we each can do this; and in calling to his side the disciples and followers in his way of love and peace, many of whom were ostracized by the wider society, he revealed how to model this in our community here on Earth.

Reminding us symbolically of this union of body and spirit, Jesus took a loaf of bread, broke it like we are often broken in our relationships with one another, and showed us the way to reconciliation by asking us to share our bread with one another in remembrance of his own example. Through the broken bread, we participate in and become the body of Christ in the world.

In like manner, Jesus took the cup filled with the fruit of the vine, the vine that sustains us and links us to one another, and the fruit that nourishes the spirit of virtue that abides within and between each of us, and asked us to drink of that same spirit of loving-kindness and uniting harmony that was in him. Through the cup of blessing, we participate in and become the new life of Christ in the world.

The bread and fruit we partake nourishes us that we may nourish others. Through this sacrament of Holy Communion, we affirm that we are committed to Christ's way of love and peace by our motives, thoughts, actions, and practices in this world. We acknowledge that we are one community made by God, and that we must consciously choose, day by day, to be in right relationship with God, each other, and our sacred values. We therefore dedicate ourselves, individually and collectively, to make the Body and Spirit of Christ real in this world, here and now, and throughout our life as a community of the faithful. What we symbolize here in this holy space, we make real by our service when we go forth from this place.

Invitation

Christ invites "all" to the table of reconciliation – those who affirm their intrinsic worth, and those who are yet to do so...those whose hearts and minds are admirable, and those still struggling to make them so...those who are most like us, and those who are least like us. In the spirit of Christ, we at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ welcome you to share your spiritual journey with us as we share ours with you in a sacrament designed to bridge all differences in a spirit of extravagant welcome, of heartfelt openness, and of mutual loving-kindness. In coming together, let us recognize our responsibility in living in love and peace with one another and all creation so as to be joined together as one Holy Communion of Body and Spirit throughout this good earth.

Partaking of the Bread and Juice

(Please come forward by rows down the center aisles, taking a piece of bread, dipping it in the cup, eating, and returning to your seats by the side aisles. You may take additional elements with you to bring to those in your row unable to come forward, or we will have a server to bring the elements to any who cannot come forward. Grape juice and gluten free bread is used.)

Commissioning

Go forth with forgiveness, courage, faith, hope, love, peace, justice, kindness, and gentleness. May these virtues, representing the image of God in each one of us as was also manifested in Jesus, strengthen you to reach out in compassion as you nurture and aid others within this worldwide community. May the Spirit and grace of God be with you and among you. Blessings be.

WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO GOD'S SERVICE THROUGH FAITHFULNESS

Giving of Our Tithes and Offerings

"Generosity arises from gratitude like heat arises from fire. Like fire, gratitude is lovely to see; but when it warms others with generosity, that is when it becomes a true blessing."

Gift of Music: Choral Anthem

Lullaby

Polish Carols arranged by Patrick M. Liebergen

***Song of Dedication**

Tune: Old Hundredth; p. 7

The light of love does shine most bright

when all are siblings in our sight;

We are one fam'ly on this earth;

We are God's children from our birth.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

O Light of Love that lives in every person and throughout creation: We have been blessed as the recipients of your goodness, and now we offer a portion of that goodness back to replenish and nurture our world. Multiply the sum of these gifts we present by the sincerity and joy of our giving that they may bring forth a harvest of compassion and justice. May our thoughts and prayers we have raised today inspire us to go forth more caringly and kindly for all our tomorrows. Be born in us that we may carry on and create stories of love to all peoples and to all the earth. May we always be the gift of being givers. Now and always.

***Choral Benediction**

Go In Peace

***Encouragement for the Journey**

Go to be a blessing! This is your calling.

Do not worry whether your task is difficult, or your efforts are successful.

Life is serendipitous; so what you may think will or has failed may actually renew a life.

Advocate for justice for those unlike you.

Work for peace with those opposed to you.

Kindness offered and love delivered can transform relationships.

Trust in this! Live by this!

Let God be responsible for the outcome;

just commit yourself to the journey of sacred living.

If you do, you will find that you will have not only been a blessing to others, but that the synergy of life will have created a blessing for you.

Postlude

The Light of Love Goes into the World

Love's light is not extinguished from our worship, but is transferred from the flame of the candles to the passion in our hearts that we may go forth to let the light of love shine through us as we go to serve in the world.

WE GO FORTH AS PEACEMAKERS TO CREATE JUSTICE FOR ALL

Our worship is fulfilled, and our purpose is confirmed,
through our service as God's stewards to the world and all creation.
Use the blessings God has given you as you share
the joy in your heart, the wisdom in your mind,
the love in your spirit, and the peace in your soul.

Thank you for sharing sacred fellowship with us.

Plymouth Congregational UCC is an open and affirming church, embracing diversity in our congregation and community, and affirming the dignity and worth of every person. We are an inclusive community of faith that celebrates God's presence through shared stories and experiences of sacred meaning on Sundays, and through the nurturing of divine values and virtues manifested in active practices in our daily lives. We welcome all persons into the full life and ministry of the church, regardless of race, ethnic background, gender/sexual identity, sexual orientation, physical or cognitive capabilities, nationality/citizenship, or circumstance of life. We are also a Just Peace church, emphasizing peace and nonviolence in all our relationships, personally and collectively, because we see the sacred worth of every person throughout this good earth. We are a Progressive Christian family of faith. We invite you to hear our experiences of the divine even as we are curious in learning about your own spiritual journey. We hope our values may intersect as together we strive to make our corner of the world a better place. Get to know us! We'd like to get to know you!

Keeping in Prayer

Ralph Reynolds	Mike & Michele Ettelston	Dick Brace
Jesse Armstrong	P.V. George	Marilyn Mason
Cassie & Kevin	Sheri Stanley	Barbara

Pastor Bret's Mom, Ruth Ann Myers

The family of Rev. Myers as his aunt, Judy Myers, passed away on December 31st

Bob Feeny and Sam Lovett,
members-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

February 26th – Ash Wednesday
March 9th – New Hampshire Master Chorale Concert
April 15th – New Hampshire Chamber Singers at 7:30 PM

Announcements

Coffee Hour – Today, everyone is invited to Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall following the Service for a beverage, snack and conversation. Perhaps a mug of hot chocolate would be nice on a chilly morning? This will be our first Coffee Hour of 2020. Please plan to join us every Sunday!

There are many opportunities to help in the kitchen by setting up prior to the service, cleaning up afterwards or bringing in snacks or other foods to share. There is a sign-up page on the bulletin board next to the pass-through window. You may use one of the dated tags on the Will-U poster at the entrance to Fellowship Hall if you are bringing a snack. Please contact Chris Pollock at 603-674-8590 or e-mail at rpollock@metrocast.net to sign up or if you have any questions.

Thank you from the Hospitality Committee.

The Rev. Bret S. Myers, Interim Pastor
Deborah Healey, Church Office Administrator
David Williams, Director of Music
Ashley Paine, Organist/Accompanist
Larry Spencer, Church Treasurer
Celia Woolverton, Grace Counseling

pastor@uccplymouth.org
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musicdirector@uccplymouth.org
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Liturgist, Linda LaPrad

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Plymouth, NH 03264

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*Please make an appointment with Rev. Myers if you would like to meet with the pastor.
You may call the church office at 603-536-2626,
email him at revbmyers@yahoo.com, or call/text his cell at 608-370-9472.*

*Bret's office hours are Sunday 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM, Tuesday 1:00-7:00 PM,
Wednesday 1:00 – 8:00 PM, Thursday 2:00-5:00 PM and other hours by appointment.*