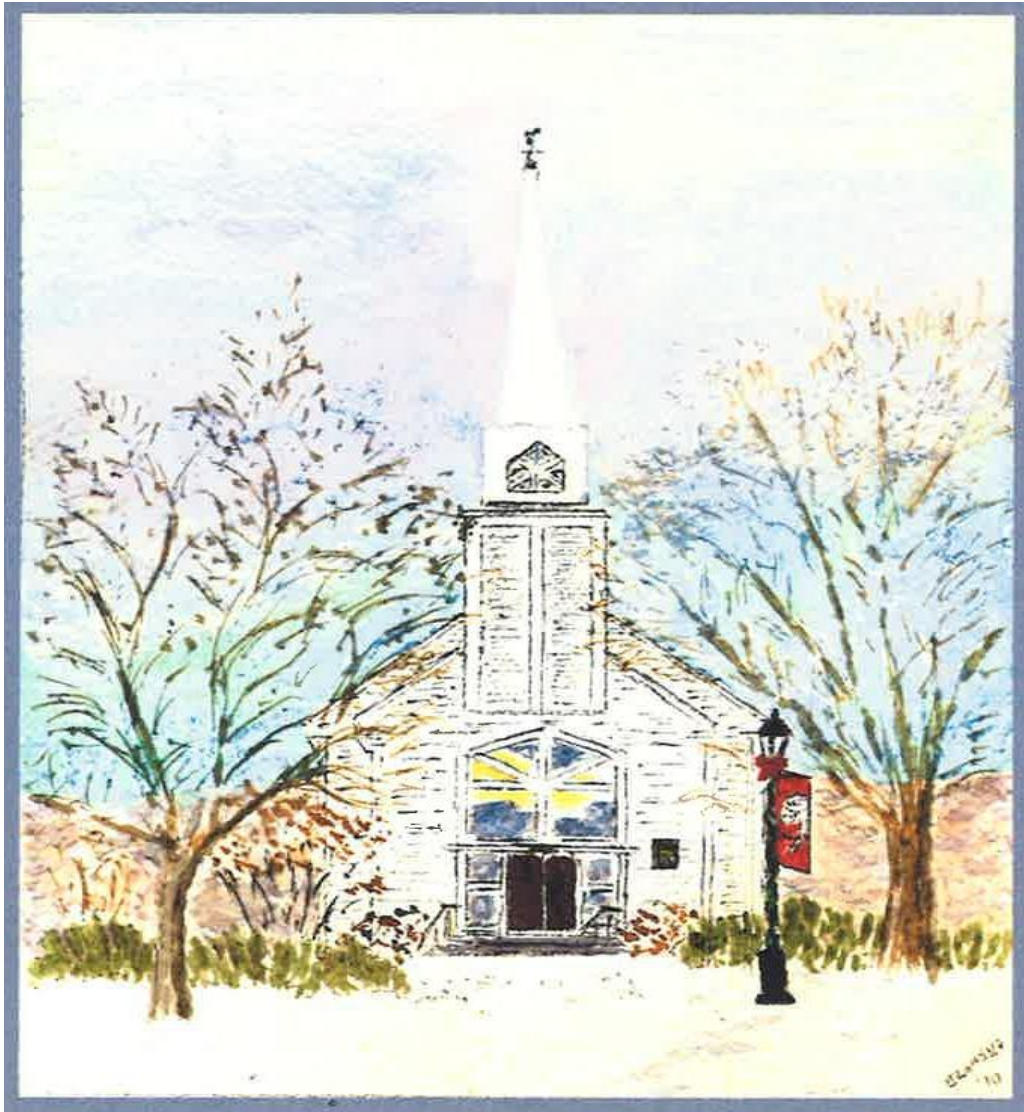


Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

The First Sunday after Epiphany

January 12, 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."

The First Sunday after Epiphany

January 12, 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 Come, Let us Praise the Lord William Boyd (1542-1623)

Affirming God's Presence in Us All

"You Matter!"

Sharing Christ's Peace

As a sign of our reconciliation with God and one another, greet and welcome those around you and share "the peace of Christ."

***Hymn of the Wise Ones' Homage** "We Three Kings" Pilgrim #143

***Centering Our Souls**

O God of New Beginnings, who rises amidst our darkness and shines your creative Spirit on our lives:

We are thankful for the opportunities of new beginnings: for the start of a new year, for the glory of each new day, and for the trust you have in us to do a new thing in our lives.

Let your light dawn on our understandings and illuminate the way you would have us to go.

Let us not live in the shadows of our past, but relish the rays of our tomorrows.

Let us live radiant lives of love and peace -- following the star of your divine guidance.

Like the wise ones of old who were led to the babe, may we too walk the path that leads to Christ.

Grant us a vision of how our lives may become beacons to the world and people around us.

Grant us the faith to hold tightly to the candle of courage and the lantern of loving-kindness.

Teach us perseverance and resolve that we may nurture your virtues and values within our own hearts and souls, no matter the obstacles that we may meet.

In helping us to be light, grant us also the wisdom to elicit the light in others. Shine in us. Shine through us. Shine among us now and always. May it be so.

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

A Time for All God's Children

Prayers

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

Silent Meditation: The Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

Unison Prayer

“Prayer from the New Zealand Book of Common Prayer”

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. May it be so.

***Hymn of Epiphany’s Light**

“As with Gladness Those of Old”

#159; vss. 1-3

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 2.1-12

Message

“A Birth Story Understood as Political & Religious Theater”

***Hymn for Life Lived Brightly**

“Arise, Your Light Is Come”

#164

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

Saw You Never In the Twilight

Austin C. Lovelace (1919-2010)

***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 God of Love and Illumination: Let our offerings given today cast light on a world in need. May our lives be a beacon of hope and our actions a floodlight of faith that overpowers the darkness. Bless us to be the blessings of light you have created us to be – lights of truth, goodness, joy, wisdom, virtue, love, and peace. In the name of the Light of Lights, more brilliant than the sun, the moon, and the stars, may it be so.

***Choral Benediction**

The Lord Bless You and Keep You
Peter C. Lutkin (1958-1981)

***Encouragement for the Journey**

When life brings you loss, sadness, or suffering, may the hope within you rise like a cool, refreshing stream. When circumstances are disillusioning, painful, or despairing, may the faith by which you sail be persevering and bring you back safely to the harbor of peace. In all your life, remember that you are born to give wings to love. Be thankful for the love you have received, and be generous in the love that you give. May your life be laced with grace.

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
Jesse Armstrong
Cassie & Kevin

Mike & Michele Ettelston
P.V. George
Sheri Stanley
Helen Robinson

Dick Brace
Marilyn Mason
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

January 31st – Coffee House at 6:00 PM

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 Fellowship Hall following the Service for a beverage, snack, and conversation. Bringing in a special treat or snack is always appreciated. 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 rpollack@metrocast.net to sign up or if you have any questions.

Thank you from the Hospitality Committee.

Book Group - Happy New Year, Happy readers! Just a reminder that our first meeting will be Monday, **January 27th**. Our book will be River of Doubt by Candice Millard. Hope to see you all then.

A Message from Susan Wei - The beautiful quilts on the sanctuary walls were created by Alison Anderson. Enjoy them and ask her any questions you have about them. She is glad to talk to individuals who have questions or comments.

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
office@uccplymouth.org
musicdirector@uccplymouth.org
organist@uccplymouth.org
treasurer@uccplymouth.org
gracecounseling@uccplymouth.org

Liturgist, Donna Castor

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
4 Post Office Square, PO Box 86
Plymouth, NH 03264

(603)536-2626 • office@uccplymouth.org • www.uccplymouth.org

*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.*