

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
February 9, 2020 **9:30 AM**



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 Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 9, 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 candle.
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 Pray the Lord

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 for Learning** "Praise the Source of Faith & Learning" #411

***Centering Our Souls** "The Compatibility of Religion and Science"

Open our minds, O God, to the consideration of the expanse space and the realm of the neutrino; and also to the theological complexities of transcendence and immanence.

We are thankful that we are created with minds to think, reason, intuit, and imagine – with the capacities to both develop scientific knowledge and religious understanding.

Grant us the wisdom to see how religion and science can both be beneficial to our humanity and search for truth, each serving to shed light on differing aspects of our existence.

Teach us not to be dogmatic or exclusive in our understandings of reality, but to invite dialogue between the languages of faith and fact.

We are grateful for the discoveries of science in explaining our natural world and universe, and for the insights of faith to offer us the meanings and purposes of our lives within our universe.

Together, science and religion can help us distinguish between truths – those that have to do with the physical world, and those that have to deal with the spiritual world.

Encourage us to cultivate the faculties that will enable us to be both logical and imaginative, rational and intuitive, deductive and mystical.

We need to be good learners of all we can come to understand.

When we speak in the language of faith, help us to not mistake it for the language of science.

And when we speak in the language of science, help us to not mistake it for the language of faith.

For each is necessary for our broader vision of reality, but needs to be relegated to its own domain.

And yet, each can inform the other, as when the discovery that the DNA of every living thing is more similar than dissimilar, a testament to our unity with all creation.

Or when the poetic words of faith express the awe and mystery of inner and outer space that give rise to theories and hypotheses that can only be explained symbolically.

In all our learning, O God, remind us to consider the ethical implications of our investigations, experiments, theologies, and technologies.

Make us mindful of how we can use religion and science for the advancement and betterment of our human communities and relationships with creation.

And may we see the destructive potential we have in both our use of faith and technology that may prove harmful to ourselves and others.

In our quest for knowledge and wisdom, remind us to be humble so that we may be inspired by that which we still do not know.

In our quest for meaning and purpose, grant us grace that we can both see our own value and worth, and also that of your creatures and creation everywhere. Now and always.

WE LISTEN FOR THE SACRED IN THE MIDST OF OUR LIVES

A Time for All God's Children

"God's Evolving World"

Dr. Larry Spencer

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 Mystery & Awe "God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens"**

#556

Scripture Lesson

Psalm 139.1-18

Message "What Is It to Be Human?"

Dr. Larry Spencer

*Hymn for a Language for God

"Transcendent, Ineffable, Great Mystery" Tune: St. Denio

Music: Adapt. from a Welsh ballad; Words: Rev. Bret Stuart Myers, 7/21/2010

Transcendent, ineffable, great mystery

**No words can describe your whole meaning to me.
You're real without being, beyond all compare;
Your presence I feel it whenever I care.**

Creative, instructive, example to all

**I pray without seeing, though hear your faint call.
Forgiving and healing with kindness sublime,
A love never-ending, yet still beyond time.**

You're mythic, poetic, you're truth beyond facts

**Creation reveals you when we are relaxed.
No science can prove you, no logic discern
The mind is unable, but spirit does burn.**

We sometimes will pray as though you are like us.

**We know that you are not, but still make a fuss.
We ask you for things as though you'll intercede
Yet it's our own actions by which we are freed.**

When we love a neighbor as we love ourselves

**Your power lives in us, your grace in us dwells.
We give you the thanks for the blessings we find
When virtue meets practice then with you we've dined.**

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

For the Beauty of the Earth
John Rutter (1958-)

***Song of Dedication**

Tune: Old Hundredth; p. 7

O God of Creatures great and small:

May we as stewards hear your call!

Let us live with loving grace

With all life on this earthly space.

***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**

Let Us Go Forth Gladly

***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	Mike & Michele Ettelston	Dick Brace
Jesse Armstrong	P.V. George	Cassie & Kevin
Sheri Stanley	Barbara	Rob Stewart
Vickie Flener		

Wayne Myers, uncle of Rev. Myers,
who is in the hospital and will be undergoing surgery in early February.

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

Today– Meet & Greet, The Clarinet Family at 3:00 PM
February 23rd – Pot-Luck Luncheon Sunday
February 26th – Ash Wednesday
March 9th – New Hampshire Master Chorale Concert
April 15th – New Hampshire Chamber Singers at 7:30 PM

Announcements

Coffee Hour – It's time to plan ahead for our Pot-Luck Luncheon on Sunday, **February 23rd**. To provide a "balanced diet" of food, we ask that those whose last names begin with the letters A-H to bring a main dish; those with I-P bring a salad or vegetable dish; and those with Q-Z bring a dessert. Thanks for making this an enjoyable event.

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.

Music - Paid Singing Positions – PCUCC is seeking 1 tenor, 1 bass and 1 soprano to sing with an open-minded group of passionate singers during Spring semester. Choir is open to all regardless of faith background. Rehearsals are Thursdays between 7:00-8:30 PM and Sundays between 8:30- 9:15 AM plus 9:30 AM Service. For more information contact David Williams at musicdirector@uccplymouth.org

Book Group - Our new book will be "The Nightingale" by Kristin Hannah. Our discussion dates are Mondays, February 24th and March 9th. February 10th will be our second discussion of "The River of Doubt."

The Rev. Bret S. Myers, Interim Pastor
Deborah Healey, Church Office Administrator
David Williams, Director of Music
Ashley Paine, Organist/Accompanist
Gale Adams-Davis, Co-Director of Faith Formation
Julie Kelsey, Co-Director of Faith Formation
Larry Spencer, Church Treasurer
Celia Woolverton, Grace Counseling

pastor@uccplymouth.org
office@uccplymouth.org
musicdirector@uccplymouth.org
organist@uccplymouth.org
windygla2@yahoo.com
faithformation@uccplymouth.org
treasurer@uccplymouth.org
gracecounseling@uccplymouth.org

Guest Pastor, Rev. Al Mather
Liturgist, Rev. Al Mather
Guest Preacher, Dr. Larry Spencer

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.*