

# Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

First Sunday in Advent: Hope  
Communion Sunday



**December 3, 2023**

**9:30 am**

We Practice Just Peace: doing justice, seeking peace  
We are Open and Affirming: welcoming LGBTQ+ people

We are an Anti-Racism Church

🎵 We Listen for the Still Speaking God

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

*Please inquire with people before assuming they are okay with physical contact.*

# GATHERING

**Prelude**                    O Come, O Come, Emmanuel                    arr. Wayne L. Wold

## Welcome & Announcements

*Please sign the red friendship pad as it is passed to you and return it to the center aisle noting your neighbor in the pew. You may leave your email if you would like to receive our weekly newsletter.*

*If you want to know more, email the office at [office@uccplymouth.org](mailto:office@uccplymouth.org).*

*On Communion Sunday the children begin downstairs in Sunday School and come up for Communion.*

**Introit**                    Show Us Your Steadfast Love. Alleluia                    John Ferguson

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath**                    Sue Gontarz & Marilyn Wixson

## Unison Advent Prayer

**O God, we thank you that Jesus brought hope into our world. By the good news of the Bible, you are still bringing hope to people. Help us to be ready to welcome Jesus Christ so that we may think good thoughts and do good deeds and so that we may be a people of hope in our world. Amen.**

\*Those who are able may stand.

**\*Call to Worship** *inspired by Isaiah 64*                    Liturgist – Carol Stewart

**One:** Tear open the heavens and bring forth your presence. We watch and we wait for the glory to come.

**Many: We gather with hope, remembering your mercy. Lead us in love; shine from above.**

**One:** Awaken the earth, enflame and en flesh. We watch and we wait for what's birthing ahead.

**Many: We gather with hope, remembering your justice. Revive us, restore us; shine from above.**

**One:** Make us your love wave to broaden your reach. We watch and we wait for your deeds to appear.

**Many: We gather with hope, remembering your handiwork. Make us, mold us; shine from above.**

**\*Hymn**                    O God, Our Help in Ages Past                    NCH (black) #25

## Passing of the Peace

*If you are at home, we invite you to send someone a note of peace today.*

One: God be with you

**All: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts

**All: We lift them up to the Lord.**

## Unison Gathering Prayer

El Shaddai – God of the mountains who quake at your presence, You meet us in our memory of you. We'd invite you to come down and dwell among us, yet we know that you are already and always with us — Emmanuel, in our collective memory from ages past — God beside us, God before us, God behind us, and God within us. Let your face shine so that we might remember you more clearly. Give us life and we will call on your name as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Amen.

## Moments of Confession including Silence for Personal Reflection

### God's Promise of New Life

One: God, remind us that we have gotten through a lot of things we didn't think we could—that you have not left us nor forsaken us—that our individual and collective ancestors still sang new songs in the valleys of death. And so, we still sing, too.

**Many: Embolden us as we try to show the world that we can find hope even when it seems impossible to bear. Hope must be there. Fear never wins. The work begins in us. Amen.**

### Response

Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

NCH (black) #122

**Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set all people free;  
From our fears and sins release us; grant us your true liberty.**

## HEARING THE WORD

### Scripture

Isaiah 64:1-9

Mark 13:24-37

One: The Word of God for the people of God. May we feel the Spirit stirring our hearts and uniting us as one in Christ.

**All: Amen.**

**Message**                    “Finding Hope in Chaos”                    Rev. Rebecca Larson

**\*Hymn**                    Keep Awake, Be Always Ready                    NCH (black) #112

## **RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

### **Holy Communion**

Invitation to the Table

Communion Prayer and Words of Institution

Sharing Communion (by Intinction)

*This morning Communion will be by Intinction, which simply means “dipping in.” Please come forward in a single line down the center aisle and receive the elements then return to your seat by the side aisles.*

*\*The bread is gluten free and nut free: the grape juice is non-alcoholic.*

Communion Music

### **\*Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Holy Creator, Bread of Life, Everlasting Salvation, a light shines in the night and the night will not overcome it. In this meal we have been replenished and strengthened, the light of your love rekindled within. We will be bold to carry this light into the world. Thank you for recharging our batteries and reviving your ambient glow within us. You are the power source that never gives out — eternally renewable and sustainable. Thank you God! Thank you Christ! Thank you Spirit! Amen.**

**Offertory Anthem**                    The Annunciation Carol                    Eric H. Thiman

*We invite you to remember your support for the ministry of PCUCC.*

### **\*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. Amen.**

## **\*Unison Prayer of Dedication**

**Holy One, for the wondrous ways this offering will breathe hope into community we dedicate these gifts. For the ways it'll help us live out God's mission we dedicate these gifts. Let these gifts strengthen our call to carry out God's justice and mercy. Amen.**

## **Prayers of the People**

You are invited to offer your personal prayers from the silence of your heart.

## **Pastoral Prayer**

### **The Lord's Prayer** (*debts/debtors*)

**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.

\*\*We believe that God is revealed in persons of all genders and sorts; we also honor tradition.

## **SENDING**

**\*Hymn**                      O Come, O Come, Emmanuel                      NCH (black) #116

## **\*Pastoral Benediction**

**Choral Benediction**                      Alleluia                      John Ferguson

**Postlude**                      In the Bleak Midwinter

The Postlude ends our gathered worship and sends us into the world where our true service begins.  
Feel free to let the music lead you out, or stay to listen, however the Spirit moves you.

Please join us downstairs after worship for refreshments and fellowship!  
Today's Coffee Hour is sponsored by the Mission & Social Outreach Committee.

### Keeping in Prayer:

Prayers and condolences for the family of Shirley LaShier, Jim & Linda LaPrad's sister-in-law, who recently passed away  
Prayers of healing for Beverly McClain, longtime friend of Eleanor Spencer  
Prayers of healing for Bob Dion, friend of Alice O'Connor  
Prayers for Paulette Brace's son, Shawn Cassington, for ongoing medical issues  
Prayers for Claire Pirnie, daughter of Diane Arsenault and Peter Pirnie and her son Micah as she continues through the process of divorce  
Prayers for Tony Amodeo, friend of the LaPrads, who is undergoing cancer treatment  
Prayers of comfort and strength for Ruth & Dale Mosher  
Prayers for Sage Pirnie and her family, granddaughter of Diane Arsenault and Pete Pirnie  
Prayers for Ellen who struggles with cancer, family member of Ruth & Dale Mosher  
Prayers of healing for Sue Switaj  
Prayers for our partner church in Zimbabwe, Masvingo UCCZ

*If you have a prayer request please write on the yellow card in the pews and place it in the offering tray, or send an email to [plymouthpastor@ucplymouth.org](mailto:plymouthpastor@ucplymouth.org).*

### This Week and More at PCUCC

Today, December 3	"Let's Talk" following Fellowship Hour
Monday, December 4	10:00 am Book Group
Monday, December 4	11:30-3:30 Red Cross Blood Drive in Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, December 5	7:00 pm AA Meeting
Wednesday, December 6	11:00 am Lectio Divina
Thursday, December 7	7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal
Friday, December 8	8:00 pm AA Meeting
Sunday, December 10	Advent Workshop after Worship
Sunday, December 10	5:00 pm Sunday Nitters Yankee Swap
Wednesday, December 13	7:00 pm Council Meeting
Thursday, December 14	1:00 pm Knitting Group

### **CHURCH LIFE**

**Let's Talk:** Please join us for our third discussion session held in the chapel after fellowship hour. Rev. Ruth Martz will facilitate.

**Book Group** is reading *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston during the month of December. Join the discussion on Monday December 4 and 18 at 10am. Contact Kathy Henning for more information: [henkat52@gmail.com](mailto:henkat52@gmail.com).

**Advent Workshop:** Join us for some Advent fellowship and crafts for all ages after worship on Sunday, December 10! There will be cookie-decorating and many crafts available.

**Sunday Neters Yankee Swap** will be hosted by Arline Bownes on December 10 at 5pm. If you are going to the Pemi Choral Society concert at 3pm, you are welcome to drop off your potluck dish ahead of time. And don't forget your Yankee swap gift! Arline's address is 36 Parker St in Plymouth.

**Lectio Divina:** All are invited to gather Wednesday mornings from 11 a.m. to noon for a Bible study modeled on Lectio Divina, the sacred reading of scripture. We'll begin with the Gospel of Mark, the first gospel written, and read through it listening for God's Still Speaking voice. Please join us. Rebecca Larson will lead us.

**Sunday School** focuses on Bible lessons, outreach projects, and family activities. The children will learn how to use the gifts God gave them to positively impact their community. Volunteers are always welcome! Please contact Jennifer for more details at [faithformation@uccplymouth.org](mailto:faithformation@uccplymouth.org).

## FROM MISSION & OUTREACH

**Star Child Christmas Giving Program:** Once again, this year you can help children and youth in need through our Star Child program. Choose a gold star from the Christmas tree in the Narthex and on it find the sex, age, and sizes of a child in need of warm winter clothing. Then use the star as the gift tag for your gift. To be fair to all please value your gift at approximately \$50. We are also collecting cash donations to supply high school youth a gift card. We know that the gift cards and clothing make a real difference in their lives and make their Christmas a little brighter.

**Christmas Eve Special Offerings:** At morning worship on December 24, we will collect a special offering for the Christmas Fund, which helps the UCC care for retired clergy, with special help for lower-income retirees. At the Christmas Eve service our special offering will go to Habitat for Humanity, with 1/3 of the offering to Habitat International and 2/3 to Pemi-Valley Habitat for Humanity.

**Our HOPE Fund can always use your help!**

The HOPE Fund supports families at risk who need assistance paying for rent, electricity, and medications. Send your check to PCUCC and write HOPE Fund in the memo.

**Our Little Food Pantry** in front of the church is always in great need of being filled. You can put items right in the pantry or bring them to the church office.

## FROM FINANCE

**Support PCUCC with no cost to you!** Purchase a **Hannaford Gift Card** in the amount of \$100, \$250, or \$500 by contacting Linda LaPrad or Ann Thurston. For every card purchased from the Finance Committee, the church receives 5% with no additional cost to you.

**We will offer the option of meeting digitally indefinitely.** You may also catch our services (one week delayed) on Sunday nights on PBTv at 7:00 pm. (Local channel 1302.) Please check Constant Contact and the Facebook page for ongoing updates.

**Office Hours**

Tuesday – Friday 9:00-2:00

If you have a family emergency and want to talk with a pastor, please call Rev. Ruth Martz at 603-630-7936 or you may call Eileen Torrey at 603-252-7513.

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Guest Preacher: Rev. Rebecca Larson	
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Celebrating Birthdays and Anniversaries in November in our Community

If you have a birthday or anniversary this month or next,  
please email to: office@uccplymouth.org

Tucker Magrauth	December 9	David Williams	December 25
Eileen Torrey	December 15	Natalie Boyer	December 26
Sylvia Shaw	December 17	Robert Stewart	December 27
Frank Tedeschi	December 19		

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