

The Herald

Plymouth UCC Dodgeville

SEPTEMBER
2025

From The Pastor...

Thank you, Plymouth folks, for your grace these past months as I've taken some time for personal needs. It is good to be back among you on a regular basis.

Council has renewed my interim contract for 4 months, which takes us through the end of the calendar year. At that point, I anticipate that you will be ready to take the next step towards long-term pastoral leadership, and I will be ready to move on to another congregation in transition. The nature of interim ministry is that our pastoral relationship is part-time, though I do look forward to continued relationship with you through the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC (and perhaps the occasional visit for Sunday pulpit supply).

Over the next few months, we will continue the logistical work of clarifying policies and role descriptions, as well as "cleaning out the closets" as I've mentioned in a previous newsletter article. Additionally, we will begin the process of considering what long-term pastoral ministry at Plymouth looks like. We'll decide whether to go through a traditional call process, or to find another solution, such as contracting with a local pastor who is available for part-time work.

I look forward to continuing this journey together during the next few months, and I am hopeful for Plymouth's future! Blessings to us all as we undergo this important work.

Peace,
Pastor Katya



OUR VISION "To be a welcoming and thriving Christian Community, living our faith through reflection and action, while remaining grounded in God's love."

OUR MISSION "To grow and share our faith, worship God, and follow Jesus Christ in the ways of love, peace, compassion, justice and the nurturing of God's creation."

Church Office:

Office Administrator Hours

Tuesday & Thursday

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Wednesday

8 am - 2:00 pm

Pastor:

Pastor Katya Ouchakof

puccdodgeville@gmail.com

608-616-5075

Office Administrator:

Mary Haag

935-5727

plymouth@mhtc.net

Organist:

Marilyn Dunn

Meeting Minutes

To keep our congregation informed, we'll be including brief summaries from each Church Council meeting in our newsletters. These highlights will share key discussions and decisions. Full meeting minutes are available by request after they're approved at the following Council meeting.

No matter where you are on your journey, there's always a place for you here. We hope these Council updates help you feel connected.

Plymouth UCC Council Meeting Summary

August 20, 2025

Members Present: Lisa Pepelea, Moderator; Steve Pieroni, Treasurer; Mary Stellick, Clerk; at large members Chuck Roethe, Denise Whitish, Pastor Katya Ouchakof
Absent: Shirley Barnes

The meeting was called to order by Lisa at 7:05. Pastor Katya read a passage from Radical Hospitality and offered a prayer.

The minutes from the July council meeting were reviewed and approved.

Old Business:

ICE Policy/training – Steve agreed to be the contact and training person for Plymouth. Still need to hear back from M&M re their contact person (Rachel is currently on vacation). Steve's phone number and the number for the M&M contact will be on signs both inside and outside of the Private rooms.

Reports

Committee reports are available on request. No Pastor's report as Katya has just returned.

New Business:

Pastor Katya presented a proposal to extend her contract for the

Usher/Reader/Communion

September

7 - Mary and Rick Stellick
14 - Steve and Jenny
21 - Chuck and Jill Roethe
28 - Mary and Rick Stellick

October

5 - Mark and Lisa Pepelea
12 - Steve and Jenny
19 - Chuck and Jill Roethe
26 - Mark and Lisa Pepelea

*If you would like to volunteer to help with Worship, please contact Mark Pepelea or the church office.

Joyful Noise

September

Food Pantry

October

5 - Neighbors in Need
12, 19, 26 - Hodan Center

Fellowship

September

7 -
14 -
21 -
28 -

October

5 -
12 -
19 -
26 -



Watch Worship online via
our Facebook page,
Sundays, at 10 am.

next four months (through December). Chuck moved and Steve seconded to accept the proposal, motion carried.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund - Mary moved and Denise seconded to authorize the Missions/Outreach Committee to access the fund as appropriate in the absence of a contracted pastor. Motion carried.

Chuck will inform members of the Missions/Outreach Committee of this change.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12.

Next meeting Wednesday September 17, 2025, 7:00 pm

Mary Stellick, Clerk

***NOTE: The official minutes of the meeting will be available after they are approved at next month's meeting. Any additions or corrections will be noted.**

CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator

Lisa Pepelea

Treasurer

Steve Pieroni

Clerk

Mary Stellick

At Large council members

Shirley Barnes

Denise Whitish

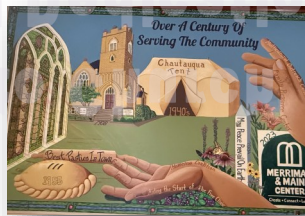
Chuck Roethe

Meetings

Council and Diaconate meet on the 3rd Wednesday monthly. Diaconate meetings start at 6 pm, and Council meetings start at 7 pm.

Welcome Back to Church With History Wall Dedication

Fall is the perfect time to recommit to your dedication to Sunday worship at Plymouth. A special Welcome Back is scheduled for September 21st at 10 am. Following the worship service, Pastor Katya will be dedicating the beautiful, new history wall in the overflow room. Artist Lisa Humke will be present for the dedication. Then we'll join together in Fellowship Hall for a potluck lunch with brisket prepared by Mark Pepelea. Please bring a dish to pass and invite your friends to celebrate our history wall.



If your address, phone/cell number, or email have changed, please contact the office so that we may update our records . You may call the office at 935-5727, or email the office at plymouth@mhtc.net.

Newsletter submissions are due the Sunday following council meetings.

Update on Worship Leadership

For the past several months, when a pastor has not been present in worship, a Diaconate member has led Communion using pre-blessed bread, wine, and juice. Over the summer, Mark Pepelea and Jill Roethe were certified as authorized lay ministers within the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC.

In our denomination, lay members are sometimes authorized to perform pastoral duties in a specific congregation, at times when a pastor cannot be present. Thanks to their participation in an extensive online course last fall, followed by personal discernment, and taking into consideration their extensive experience as worship leaders, Jill and Mark are now officially authorized ministers for Plymouth. In the eyes of the UCC, having them preside at Communion is no different than a pastor presiding, for our congregation.

Given their authorization by the Conference, on Sundays when there is not a pastor present in worship, Mark and Jill will simply preside over Communion. We will no longer use pre-blessed elements. Diaconate will still work to find pastoral coverage whenever possible, but Jill and Mark are able to fill in as needed to celebrate Communion.

If you have any questions about this change in practice, please reach out to one of the members of Diaconate.

Faithfully,

The Diaconate Committee

Mark Pepelea (chair), Mary Stellick, Jill Roethe, and Pastor Katya Ouchakof

Support the Pantry!

The **Little Free Pantry** is always in need of donations. Please bring in donations of shelf-stable food items that are not expired, to support our neighbors in need!

A Note From the Moderator

You may have noticed signs around the church labeling certain rooms as "Private". Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) was recently granted authority to enter places of worship in search of the undocumented, however they cannot enter private areas without consent or a judicial warrant. We want everyone who attends worship or events at Plymouth to feel safe, so we have designated several areas as private so that in the unlikely event of a raid everyone has a place to wait while we ensure that ICE indeed does have the necessary warrant. Both Plymouth and Merrimac & Main will appoint a spokesperson whose contact numbers will be posted; and we ask that everyone else move to the nearest open private area and close the doors so that only a trained spokesperson interacts with government agents. There will be additional information posted inside these private areas. We are still working out some of the details. More to follow soon.

Lisa Pepelea



Offering for worship in the park was designated to the Iowa County Food Pantry, and we collected \$654.