

the Herald

July 2016

God is Still Speaking

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Dodgeville, Wisconsin



From the Pastor's Pen...



In her book, "An Altar in the World," Barbara Brown Taylor opens by referring to Jacob's dream in the dessert of bright-winged angels ascending and descending from a ladder while God stands with Jacob promising to always be with him. When Jacob awoke, still half in and half out of his dream, he exclaimed: "surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it!" He then grabbed the stone that had served as his pillow, planted it in the sand, poured oil on it, and proclaimed it Bethel, House of God. Somehow, we have come to believe that only certain altars in certain places are acceptable to God, but in Jacob's time, as Taylor points out, "Without one designated place to make their offerings, people were free to see the whole world as an altar." Imagine, the whole world as an altar...that would make the whole world and everything in it, well, Holy...

Altars and offerings are at least as old as Cain and Able, and standing in the presence of the Holy almost always make us want to do something, anything to mark the place of encounter. We encounter God in all sorts of places, on mountain tops, in prairie grasses, on long stretches of open beaches, even in the ICU, the face of the newborn baby or the homeless man looking for a bottle of cheap wine to help him get through the night. God shows up in dessert storms, starry skies, and burning bushes, and when asked about God, even Jesus directed our attention to the lilies of the field, birds of the air, women kneading dough and workers lining up for pay.

Everything is Holy; everything is sacred, yet humans have this strange tendency to want to confine God to certain places, certain religions, certain genders, and certain practices so we know where to find her when we want him. And that's a problem because if God resides here then God can't live there. If God is male, then God can't be female. If God is Catholic then God can't be Protestant, and if God is Baptist then God can't be Methodist.

What I have experienced to be true is that God doesn't separate into neat little piles, nor does God come running just because we ring a bell. We cannot summon God any more than we can summon an instant rainbow, but, once we learn that encountering the Holy is more a matter of paying attention rather than invoking, we free ourselves to experience God wherever we are. God is already everywhere, all we have to do is notice and decide how we will respond to God's presence. Will we talk ourselves out of the experience, or will we build an altar? Because "surely the Lord is in this place and we did not even know it."

Once we understand that holiness cannot be confined to a building or a particular religious practice, everything has the potential for being divine. Coming together to worship and say our prayers is necessary and sacred because it reminds us like nothing else of who and whose we are, but that is only one facet of the holy diamond.

As we go our separate ways this summer, vacationing and spending time with friends and family, let us remember to notice the divinity contained in all that we do. And if you think about it, maybe in a quiet moment alone, take time to build an altar, because surely God is there...

*Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Joy*

A New Altar at Plymouth

If you weren't here last Sunday, the next time you come to church you will see a new offering altar in the sanctuary. The purpose of the altar is to give us the chance to make our offerings to God personally, rather than just having our gifts collected from us. How often do we consider our offering a Holy act of worship? We include the offertory in our worship service, but do we see it as a sacred moment between ourselves and God?

Biblically, offering is an act of worship, and from the earliest times the offering of sacrifices and the burning of expensive incense made the giving of an offering the most sacred part of the service. The law of the first fruits in Deuteronomy (26:1-11) is an act of thanksgiving for God's provision and rescue from Egypt. Acts describes the early church giving to share in a communal life. Paul writes of the interplay of financial and spiritual blessing and of churches sharing their gifts and skills as well as food and money, and in the New Testament, offering always seemed to be tied directly to the communion liturgy.

Our offering will be made after we receive communion and will give us the space to say thank you for all that God has done for us. Immediately after you are served, you may go to the altar to offer your gifts. On the left side of the table is our joyful noise offering. I have made a new joyful noise offering basket; it is not a can, but it still makes a joyful noise because there are bells on it. On the right side of the table is the collection plate for our church offering. It is important that we not neglect our church offering because we all depend on these offerings as an important part of our budget. And finally, in the center of the altar is a large basket for our personal offerings. This is special because anything can go in this basket. Maybe you have a poem or a painting that you would like to offer to God. Perhaps you found a special rock while out hiking or you have a bouquet of flowers to offer. Maybe you would like to give God a card, or offer your services to the church in some way. This is your place to offer as your heart directs you, but you are not limited to this basket. Perhaps you would like to sing a song, or play some special music. That's okay too; just let me know ahead of time and we will adjust accordingly.

The intention is to make offering a sacred space in our worship, where we bring forward our own unique gifts to place directly on an altar as a holy offering to God. Make your offering; say a prayer, and let us watch together as our altar unfolds into our own unique Gift to God.



Moderator's Report

Summer is upon us. Vacations are being planned. Family gatherings are happening. Cabin fever has receded. Plymouth's garden is in full bloom. The work of the church continues. We've a lot to accomplish this summer. The outside of the church continues to get a makeover. We also need to attend to what's inside. As we move through the summer we will be readying for the Wacky Wednesday program in the fall. That will take some creative rearranging as we ponder a viable solution to our main storage areas rehab needs. The trustees are working hard on that issue. We are greatly appreciative of other adjustment that has been made to allow for better adherence to building codes. You'll notice the exit area and hallway adjacent to the kitchen and Sunday school room has been cleared of garbage cans and recycling bins. Let's all do our part to help maintain that.

We will also continue experience changes within the sanctuary. As we continue to explore our core values through our community conversation, we will likely see that reflected in our Sunday service. Pastor Joylynn has worked hard to change our Sunday experience to reflect those values. Try to enjoy yourself this summer but don't be a stranger. Let us know what you think of the changes, good or bad.

A hardy thanks is due for Orville and Gretchen James. The James's were Gracious enough to contribute the financial resources that allowed for the purchase of a new PC for our office administrator. This will help Sherry gain greater efficiency in her daily work.

I would be remiss if I did not mention that a few faces are missing on Sunday or will be soon. Life changes happen. We all miss Marie Fry and wish her well. The same will soon have to be said of Jayne Harrison. Make sure to thank Jayne for her joyous presence.

Enjoy your summer. Rest up a bit. Get ready for a busy fall.

Thanks, Bill Duwell

Plymouth Church Council Minutes **Plymouth UCC Council Minutes** **June 21, 2016**

Present: Pastor Joylynn Graham, Gretchen Pearson, Gary McHone, Bill DuWell, Steve Freeman, Chuck Roethe, Earl Barnes, Dave Pearson

Opening Prayer-Pastor Joy

Agenda Changes & approval:

Corrections and Approval of Council Minutes of May 17th, 2016 Gary moved, Dave seconded to approve the minutes. Approved

Mission: Chuck – Farmer’s appreciation day – Pamphlets are being printed and will be distributed to within three blocks and at the parade offering free popcorn and an invitation to our open house.

Financial Report: Steve, Dave, Earl

- Dave went over the assets and liabilities. There will be a change next month as the windows have been paid in full.
- Earl went over the pledge and stewardship accounts. Earl discussed a comparison of our year-to-date offerings – stewardship offerings combined with loose offerings has increased 19% compared to 2015. Joyful Noise contributions compared to last year show an increase of 20%. How many donors are supporting our church? Counting a family unit as one donor and single person as one donor, there are 28 donors. Half are over the age of 70. Something to note for future planning.
- Register report was presented.
- All financial records for the current year are kept in a brown accordion folder in the office and budget reports from the accountant are in the 3 ring binder.
- Budget reports look like we are on track.
- Dave moved and Chuck seconded to accept the financial reports. Approved.

Committee Reports

Diaconate: Gary – The committee is planning the services while Pastor Joy is on vacation.

Trustees: Steve - Building Maintenance Updates.

- Stained glass windows are finished and are beautiful. The lower level windows need to be finished.
- Several people have looked at repairing the storage unit walls off of Fellowship Hall. The outside of the building may need to be repaired first and then the inside. There are challenges with moisture.
- There is a bid in for the bell tower painting.
- More information regarding the round tables is still on hold.
- Projector is still being looked into.

Other Business:

- After School Program: Bill – the committee will meet on Thursday. There will be more to report next month.
- Office Computer: Bill – thanks to Orville and Gretchen James, the office now has a new computer and thanks to Bill & Lisa Duwell, we have a new printer.
- Office Copier and Printers: Bill – Sherry is getting more information and cost comparisons for a new copy machine
- Midyear Touch-base with Pastor Joy: Bill and Pastor Joy met to talk about church services and getting in touch with members. Pastor senses that we need to concentrate on focusing on our member’s spiritual health to then carry out into our ministry.
- Iowa County Emergency Management: Bill – A letter from the director was presented asking for updating information for Plymouth use in an emergency situation.

Pastors Report: Pastor Joylynn

- Pastor and Bill looked at the UCC Stewardship materials for 2017 and they will be ordered.
- Re-imagining the offertory - Pastor Joy proposed that we re-imagine the offertory and make it a joyous event by giving worshippers the opportunity to give an offering without passing a plate. This will provide opportunities for additional offerings along with money, i.e., art, a poem, food for the pantry.
- Chuck commented that there is a mechanism for direct deposit in place already which some members may wish to use.
- Outdoor inter faith service. Pastor has not received much feedback from other churches so we may not do it, but instead have an outdoor service with our own congregation.

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Pearson, Clerk

Next meeting July 19th at 7pm

Plymouth Community Conversations

The point is to communicate and give everyone a voice. See you at the next **Community Conversation on Sunday, July 17th**. Please mark your calendars for these very important conversations!

“Our lives begin to end
the day we become
silent about the things
that really matter.”

Martin Luther King Jr.



Plymouth will have an entry in the **Farmers Appreciation Day Parade on July 10!** Chuck & Jill Roethe are organizing the Open House at the church from 10am to 1pm and the parade entry!

Please contact Chuck or Jill or the church office if you are interested in helping that day.

Check out the website at
plymouthuccdodgeville.org

There is an area on the website to submit
emails & events to the church office.

Feeding Friends Community Meal

It will be **Plymouth's** turn to host the Feeding Friends dinner on **Wednesday, July 13th at 5:00pm**. The meal will be a **Stroganoff, Bread, Corn, Watermelon, Salads & Dessert** and the coordinators are Gretchen, Jill & Chuck.

Please call or email the church office if you can help out with set-up, serving or cleanup.

Volunteers are still needed to make a salad or a dessert (cookies, bars, cake) for this meal. Food donations are more than welcome since the number of people attending the meal is close to 100 people.

Food prep time is from 3:30pm-5pm with meal serving at 5:00 pm until 6:30pm. Joyful Noise offerings help with the purchase of food for this community meal.

You are always invited to come and eat a great meal *every* Wednesday at the Methodist Church in Dodgeville and enjoy the company of around 120 other people from the community.

Parking for Feed Friends is getting hard to find and people that are working the event should park in the gravel lot next to the fitness center.

Needed for Feeding Friends: Cottage cheese, Cool Whip and large yogurt cartons to store leftovers or use for carry out meals. Also any 4 or 5-quart ice cream buckets with lids. *Please put any of these clean containers on the kitchen counter near the sign & box for "Feeding Friends containers". Thank you.*

We are short on volunteers to serve & clean up in July. Contact the church office if you can help.



Food Pantry Wish List

Jelly/jam, Peanut butter

Pancake mix, Syrup

Ketchup, Hamburger Helper

Boxed potatoes, Canned meals

Boxed desserts, Jello/pudding

Cake Mix or Muffin Mix

Cash donations are also welcome



New Office Equipment

The James's were gracious to contribute the financial resources that allowed for the purchase of a new PC and Bill & Lisa Duwell were generous and purchased a new desktop printer for the church office PC.

Thanks for your generosity!!!



Calling All Gardeners,

Please assist us in getting the gardens ready for the church open house on July 10th.

A special Thanks to Gary McHone for pulling a large pile of weeds in the Plymouth garden!

SAVE THE DATE



Centennial Park on August 21st in Shelter #2

MORE INFO COMING SOON

Wacky Wednesday After-School Kids Club Update

Plans are moving forward for the Wacky Wednesday After-School Kids Club which will start in September, 2016. As many of you may know, the Dodgeville schools release their students an hour early on Wednesdays so that teachers can have an extended time for professional development. This offers parents a special challenge and offers us a special opportunity to work with young students in the arts. Invitations have been sent, timelines have been submitted and monthly plans are being crafted to give students engaging experiences involving art, theater, music, and storytelling.

Want to be a part of something special? Sign-up sheets will be posted for donations of healthy snacks. We are also looking for volunteers to serve the snacks, listen to children read, and help with homework. We would LOVE to have you be a part of our group and sign-up sheets will be posted if you have some free time and would like to work with younger students. If you have a special talent to share, please contact Judy Campbell to discuss the possibilities.

Thank you to Plymouth Church, The Family Resource Center, and Kiwanis for their donations which will make this program possible.

Judy Campbell

campbelljudith13@gmail.com

608-574-1266



Confirmation



Max, Joy & Gretchen on Confirmation Sunday

Missing Tablecloths from the church: One white tablecloth which matches the other tablecloths that we use for special occasions, one white round tablecloth, one light green tablecloth with a cut-out design and two blue print tablecloths used for fellowship. Please return these to the church if you have them. Thank you!

Pastor Joy's Schedule & Vacation

Pastor Joy will be on vacation from July 11th to the 25th and in case of an emergency during the first week you can contact Pastor Jim: (920) 279-1107 and during the second week that Joy is out you can contact Pastor Mark: (608)574-4412.

Joy's availability while not on vacation is; Tuesday through Thursday for Pastoral visits or Pastoral care. Please feel free to drop by the office or you can call for an appointment. Pastor Joy may be reached at: 553-0149, or the church office at 935-5727 or plymouth@mhtc.net



Plymouth Tee Shirts

Be sure to get your ***Plymouth UCC Tee Shirt*** before the July 10th Farmers Appreciation Day Parade. We'll all be decked out in red to show the community how much we love being here.

The shirts run a bit small, so larger sizes have been ordered. We have plenty of shirts for everyone. Stop by during office hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday from 8-12 or after Sunday service to pick one up at the totally reasonable price of \$15.

This picture from 1909 was shared on Facebook by David Shedlock.





Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5		7	8	9
10 FA Parade and church open house 10-1	11 Joy on vacation till July 11-July 25th	12	13 Feeding Friends 5 pm	14	15	16
17 Plymouth Community Conversations - after worship	18 Joy on vacation till July 25th	19 11:30 Ruth Circle to meet at Plymouth and review historical content Diaconate at 5pm Council Meeting 7pm	20	21	22	23
24	25 Deadline to send content for the August Newsletter	26	27	28 Trustee Meeting 7pm	29	30
31						

**Plymouth Congregational
United Church of Christ**
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Dodgeville, WI 53533

Phone: 608-935-5727

E-mail: plymouth@mhtc.net

Website: plymouthuccdodgeville.org

TV Broadcast Schedule

Pastor

Reverend Joylynn Graham

Cell 553-0149

pastorjoylynn@gmail.co

Office Administrator

Sherry Miess

Office 935-5727

Email Plymouth@mhtc.net

Maintenance

Keely Thomas

Home 935-9259

Organist

Marilyn Dunn

Choir Director

Lisa Duwell

Council Moderator

Bill Duwell

Vice Moderator

Chuck Roethe

There will not be a broadcast this summer and this schedule will resume in the fall.

Sunday worship is on Dodgeville Local Access channel (MHTC channel 10). The schedule is as follows:

- Sunday at 4 pm
- Tuesday at 7 pm
- Thursday at 8 am

Sermons are available for viewing on our website, plymouthuccdodgeville.org and on YouTube.com

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

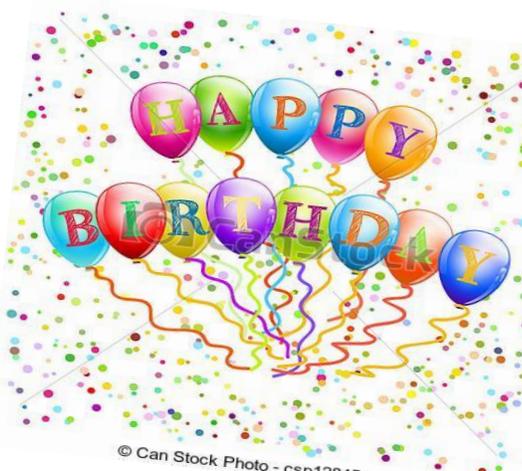
Jacob Hulbert – 3rd

Pastor Joylynn – 14th

Harry Zelhofer-McHone
– 23rd

David Neal – 24th

Bill Fitzgerald &
Marilyn Dunn- 26th



Church Council

Bill DuWell, Moderator

Chuck Roethe, Vice
Moderator

Steve Freeman, Trustees

Gary McHone, Diaconate

Chuck Roethe, Mission

Gretchen Pearson, Clerk

Julie Neal, Christian Ed

Dave Pearson, Treasurer

Earl Barnes, Finical
Secretary

