

The Herald

PLYMOUTH UCC DODGEVILLE
JANUARY 2020



Plymouth Congregational
United Church of Christ



Beloved Community,

Five years ago when I first came to Plymouth, I was approached by Harry who had recently formed a friendship with some orphan children in Africa. He wanted us to consider making these children a mission of the church, yet we hesitated because we knew nothing of the organization, or who was running it, or if indeed the money we sent would be used to feed hungry orphans.

But over time, as Harry's relationship with the orphanage developed, our hearts grew bigger than our hesitations and many of us began slipping money to Harry to send to the children. The orphanage has never been an official mission of Plymouth, yet I would venture to guess that we have donated more money to these children than we have to any other of our local causes – unofficially. And this "unofficial" mission has been going on for five years!

During my recent vacation, one of the tasks that I had assigned myself was to plan my upcoming Sabbatical. The purpose of a Sabbatical is Clergy Renewal. The very nature of being an effective pastor involves continual spiritual growth, but sometimes that is hard for us to attain as we navigate the day-to-day demands of servant leadership. Periodically, we need to get away for extended periods of time so that we can work on our own spiritual development which in turn translates into being a better pastor.

I had no idea what I wanted to do for my Sabbatical. I wanted to do something that would help me to better use my art in my ministry, but I did not know what that was or even how it would contribute to my spiritual growth. I thought of things other pastors have done like visiting Ireland and immersing in Celtic spirituality, or staying with the Iona community in Scotland. All nice ideas, but expensive, and none of that felt right anyway. On the last day of my vacation I was listening to one of our musical meditation pieces that we use for centering – Maranatha, Come Lord Jesus – and I was thinking about Advent and how we reflect on what's already happened (the incarnation), while at the same time anticipating what is yet to come (the return). Suddenly the orphans popped into my mind, and I realized with a sudden flash of insight that what is yet to come is already here. Jesus said, "I am with you always," he also said that whenever you encounter one of the "least of these" there you will find him. I thought to myself, year after year we wait on the Lord, but what if he is waiting on us to realize that he is already here? And what if that is how the new kingdom is to be ushered in – through our recognition of him? I started looking at photos of the orphans, and sure enough – there he was! Right in front of me where he had been all along. And suddenly I knew in my heart where I needed to go for my sabbatical.

So at the end of May I will be heading for Sierra Leon in Africa. I want to meet these orphans and reassure them that somebody cares about them – that we care about them – and I want to deepen our relationship with these children. I also believe that this is the intersection where my art and my faith will meet because it is my intention to come home and paint this experience, and sell the paintings to raise more money for the orphanage.

I don't know where this will take us as a community of faith. All I know that I am being called to do this; and I trust in that calling. I trust that it will be good for us, and I trust that it will open us to the Christ that is within us all.

I hope that you can trust in it with me, and I hope that you are as excited as I am!

Blessings and Peace,

Pastor Joy

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:

Pastor Availability Hours:

Tuesday & Thursday
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Wednesday

2:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Office Administrator Hours

Tuesday-Thursday
8:00 am - 12:30 pm

Pastor:

Joylynn Graham
Cell 553-0149
pastorjoylynn@gmail.com

Office Administrator:

Mary Haag
935-5727
plymouth@mhtc.net

Maintenance:

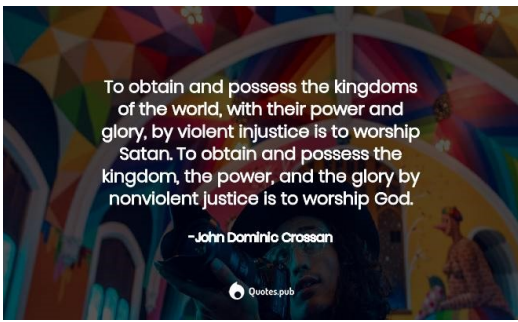
Keely Thomas
Home 935-9259

Organist:

Marilyn Dunn

Choir Director:

Joan Bettner-Steele



The Faith Explorers had a second delightful conversation over Skype with Dominic Crossan, the foremost scholar of Jesus and his times. Much of our conversation dealt with Dominic's book that we have been examining, [How to Read the Bible and Still Be a Christian](#). According to Dominic, Jesus was only one of many who advocated non-violence in that period. Why then did Jesus become so celebrated? Jesus, unlike others, traveled to the populous city of Jerusalem where he came to the fore and, with a crowd to protect him, made a striking protest. His vision of a God wanting to collaborate with humanity to bring about a kingdom through non-violence and compassion had great appeal.

As for our current situation, Dominic stressed that the future of the human race depends on adopting non-violence as a way of dealing with conflict. Issues of climate change and overpopulation threaten our existence and God's world as well. Committing our lives to Jesus' vision of non-violence and distributive justice should be essential to Christians and non-Christians alike if we are to move beyond the perilous attitudes of civilization as it is currently structured.

Contributed by Earl Barnes

DIACONATE NEWS

The Diaconate Committee met December 17th.

Those present were Gary McHone, chairman, Pastor Joylynn Graham, Harry Zelhofer-McHone, Jill Roethe and Jan Helmich.

Discussions of the following were held:

Joylynn's Sabbatical Leave - After five years as a pastor of a church in our association a pastor qualifies for a 12 week Sabbatical. Pastor Joy will be taking her sabbatical from May 3rd - July 25th. Her tentative plans are to spend part of that time in Sierra Leone visiting an orphanage our church helps support. She plans to use her talents in photography and painting to photograph the orphans and their life in Africa and then make paintings to be sold with all profits to go toward supporting the orphanage. While she is gone our church will have a pulpit supply pastor filling in.

Our church will be hosting the Annual Meeting of our association on May 2nd. More information will be coming regarding this.

With a new year starting the Diaconate Committee is looking for at least one new member. Any volunteers for this position? Please talk to any Diaconate member if you are interested.

Harry reported that White Rose will continue to take care of the plantings in the urns in front of the church.

We are beginning to have more children in our church services. If we consistently have children in attendance we will start including a children's sermon in our service.

As January appears to be a fairly quiet time for our church there will not be a Diaconate Committee Meeting in January but we are looking forward to planning a Fat Tuesday Pancake Brunch in February and a St. Patrick's Day Dinner in March.

Submitted by Jan Helmich, Secretary

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

December 17 at 8 am.

ATTENDANCE

December 1	30
December 8	26
December 15	47
December 22	24
December 24	72
December 29	

Watch our Sunday Worship Service on our website www.plymouthuccdodgeville.org or on Youtube.com search for Plymouth UCC of Dodgeville.

JOYFUL NOISE

Thanks to your generosity in November

Homeless Coalition	\$311.06
Wacky Wednesday	\$75.00

January Joyful Noise Offering is designated for:

Food Pantry
Wacky Wednesday

January Birthdays:

January 4	Jayne Harrison
January 4	Gretchen Bruegger
January 4	Max Bruegger
January 9	Jeanie Bettner
January 20	Gretchen James
January 29	Jean Brown

Coming up...

January 5 - Taking down the Greens

January 8 - Feeding Friends

January 11 - Pasty Sale

January 23 - Plymouth Circle

January 26 - Annual Meeting

Meetings

January 9 - Monthly Trustee meeting at 7 pm.

No Meeting - Monthly Diaconate meeting at 5:30 pm.

January 21 - Monthly Council meeting at 7 pm.

Schedules

Usher

January 5 -

January 12 -

January 19 -

January 26 -

Reader

January 5 -

January 12 -

January 19 -

January 26 -

Communion

January 5 -

January 12 -

January 19 -

January 26 -

Joyful Noise

5, 12, 19 - Food Pantry

26 - Wacky Wednesday



Every weekend is a good time to bring a guest with you to Sunday Worship.

Mission

Would you like to get involved? Volunteer for one of our missions.

Feeding Friends - Volunteers are needed for Feeding Friends. Plymouth UCC hosts Feeding Friends the 2nd Wednesday of the month beginning at 5 pm. Salad and dessert donations are always needed if you cannot help with the preparation, serving, or cleanup. Please contact the office or Jill Roethe and let us know how you would like to help with Feeding Friends.

Pasty - Pasty season is here. Pasties are on the minds of members of the community and even those outside of the community who have heard about Plymouth's pasties. Workers are needed to make this successful each month. Please sign up to work one or more Saturdays through the entire season. Call into the office or contact Denise Whitish. Please let us know how you can help. Let's keep the best pasties in town available. Pasty dates - January 11, February 8, March 14, and April 18.

Wacky Wednesday - The Wacky Wednesday after-school program is in need of volunteers. Please sign up to help with the activities or in areas where an extra hand from an adult is needed. If you have a special talent you would like to share with the after school participants or you would just like to help where needed, please contact the office or Judy Campbell.

Be a part of the Church

Faith Explorers - Wednesdays, 10:30 am, CrestRidge, 219 Grace Street, Dodgeville. If you have questions or doubts, you are in the right place. If you want to meet with others who have questions and doubts, then this group is for you.

Plymouth Circle - Fourth Thursday of the month, noon, at Country Kitchen. "Plymouth Circle (or as we call ourselves sometimes "The Out For Lunch Bunch") this is the week! Open to all, men, women, couples, singles, everyone. We always have fun and good conversation.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator

Chuck Roethe

Vice Moderator

Harry Zelhofer-McHone

Trustees

Mark Pepelea

Diaconate

Gary McHone

Mission

Lisa Pepelea

Clerk

Denise Whitish

Christian Education

Treasurer

Dave Pearson

Financial Secretary

Earl Barnes

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.

