

10:30 AM SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2024

WELCOME!

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*“Whether you are a seeker, skeptic, believer
or somewhere in between on life’s journey, you are welcome here.
We are grateful for your presence and invite you to participate
in worship and service of Plymouth Church.*

PLYMOUTH UCC PURPOSE

Growing people of faith who participate in God’s work in the world.

PLYMOUTH UCC VISION

Plymouth Church UCC is a Christian Community open to the transforming Spirit of God.



Thank you for worshipping online with us today. Please like and send us a greeting on
Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



The church office will be closed during concerns about the coronavirus.

Check PlymouthChurchSeattle.org for updates.

All pastoral care will be via telephone or other electronic means.

If you have personal concerns, you may contact a minister or member of the Pastoral Care Team
via e-mails below, or call the pastoral care line, **206.639.7739**, checked daily.

KBrown@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

KBechtold@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

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JHayakawaFung@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

For administrative needs, or other non-pastoral care questions, please email:

DJacobsen@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

RTurner@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

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EPIPHANY SUNDAY

*When you enter Plymouth Church UCC,
may you feel the peace, intimacy, belonging,
acceptance and refuge of Sanctuary.*

*Worship with Plymouth Church UCC begins with meditation.
The quiet of this place is meant to encourage and deepen your own inner work.
Thank you for entering this place, this hour, by honoring the spirit of worship.*

PRELUDE *Little Melody in Eb* Florence Price
Joe Williams, piano

CALL TO WORSHIP June Hayakawa-Fung
(Inspired by Psalm 29)

One: Ascribe to Creator glory and honor!

**Many: The Voice of the Holy One hovers over the
waters and speaks creation into being.**

One: Ascribe to the Holy One strength and peace!

**Many: The Voice of the Sovereign One calls for
justice, love, and righteousness.**

One: Ascribe to the Omnipresent One power and gentleness!

**Many: The Voice of the Gracious One gives life
and reigns forever and ever.**

HYMN *Morning Has Broken* as sung by Yusuf Islam

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world
Sweet the rains new fall, sunlit from Heaven
Like the first dewfall on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where Her feet pass
Mine is the sunlight, mine is the morning
Born of the one light, Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day
Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing, praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world

WELCOME. Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown

Plymouth Church acknowledges that we occupy the unceded land of its first stewards, the Duwamish of the Coast Salish people. We vow our solidarity with the Duwamish in their honorable quest to become a federally recognized tribe.

Plymouth Church also offer a labor acknowledgement for the African American enslaved upon whose backs this country gained much of its wealth, as well as the work and lives of other minoritized peoples who emigrated to this country. In our journey to become more fully the church, we honor our social location of power and privilege, and our position to do justice within our church and in the world, and recognize that such a statement is only the beginning of the work to which we are called.

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Everyone is welcome at our table to share the bread and the cup, whether you are a believer, a seeker, a skeptic, doubter or somewhere in between.

INVITATION

COMMUNION PRAYER

Afghan Family (Supported by Plymouth), Michelle J. Bennett (Sister of Dawn Bennett), Walter Bethel (Friend of Karen Clark), Susan Carter (Mother of Heather Banks & Kathleen Bernard), Bruce Chittick & family (Friend of Karen Clark), Mike Correy (Friend of Karen Clark), Sue Ellen Daniel (Friend of Barb Laski), Mykesha Davis (Daughter of Michael & Elizabeth Gordon), Mark & JT Edwards, Diane Folkert (Mother-in-law of Ara Lawrence), Sally Galliher (Cousin of Doug Stultz), Marni Good (Friend of Ricky Powell), Floyd Gossett, Carrie Gossett (Mother of Floyd Gossett), Lucian Guthrie, El Harp (Friend of Bill & Marilyn Bumpas), Allie James (Friend of Dawn Bennett), Joanna Lemly and Family (Sister of Hayden McManus), Dr. Maxine Mimms, James McDowell (Cousin of Jerry Rice), Barbara Miller (Friend of Barb Laski), Ian Nelson (Son of Diane Nelson), Paula Orrego, Mary Margaret Pruitt, Jose Robles and Family, Shirley K. Shelley (Aunt of Ricky Powell), Jaime Rubio Sulficio, Beta Utu Malae (Sister of Robert Malae), Irene Wall (Friend of Ruth Williamson), Charon Washington (Sister of Michael & Elizabeth Gordon)

Our hearts are with the family and friends of Rev. Tom Stiers, on the one-year anniversary of his passing.



A variety of faithful addresses for God (Creator, Mother, Holy One, Father) are welcome at Plymouth UCC, including in the Lord's Prayer.



PRAYER OF JESUS

Holy One, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

Thy Kindom 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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kindom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

COMMUNION HYMN *Let Us Break Bread Together*

Let us break bread together on our knees;
let us break bread together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
My God, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees;
let us drink wine together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
My God, have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees;
let us praise God together on our knees.

When I fall on my knees,
with my face to the rising sun,
My God, have mercy on me.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING Rev. Kevin Bechtold

**Loving God, we thank you
that you pour into the empty spaces,
and fill the hungry with good things.**

**May we long for community made at your table so
that through our living, our working, and our joy, we
may make real the kingdom of God here and now.**

Amen

SHARING OF PEACE **“Peace be with you”**

Those online are invited to put greetings in the chat on the website or on YouTube.

CALL TO OFFERING Ms. Hayakawa-Fung

Let us return a portion of our abundance to the creative and liberating energy and work of God in the world. May our resources be used for the glory of the Holy One and in the name of the One who modeled abiding generosity.

OFFERING MUSIC *By An' By*

African American Spiritual, arr. by H. T. Burleigh
Stephanie Anne Johnson, voice; Joe Williams, piano

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Rev. Donene Blair

**Holy One, receive our offerings as gifts of ourselves.
Increase the gifts and uplift our generosity to new heights.
May our giving bear fruit that sustains, nurtures, and
feeds a new world into being. Amen.**

CONTEMPORARY VOICE

“Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every “superstar,” every “supreme leader,” every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there — on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.





Carl Sagan was an astronomer and science communicator.

The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot.

Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known."

—Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space*

READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW Matthew 2:1-12
(Dr. Wilda Gafney Translation) read by Dr. Brown

Now Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, suddenly sages from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the one born king of the Judeans? For we have seen his star at its ascent and have come to reverence him." When King Herod heard this, he was shaken, and all Jerusalem with him; then calling together all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah would be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
by no means are least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the sages and learned from them the time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go, search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word so that I may also go and reverence him." When

they had heard the king, they left, and there suddenly was the star that they had seen at its ascent going before them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they rejoiced; their joy was exuberant. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and revered him. Then, opening their treasure, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

ANTHEM. *Behold That Star*
Christmas Spiritual arr. by H. T. Burleigh
Stephanie Anne Johnson, voice; Joe Williams, piano

MESSAGE *Behold!*. Dr. Brown

HYMN *O Little Town of Bethlehem (vss. 1-3)*

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see you lie!
Above your deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
Yet in your dark streets shines forth
the everlasting light;,
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in you tonight.
For Christ is born of Mary,
and gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing, and voices ring
with peace to all on earth.
How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the glorious love of heaven.
No one discerns God's coming,
but in this world of sin,
Where yearning souls long to be whole,
the dear Christ enters in.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTIONDr. Brown

POSTLUDE

When You Wish Upon A Star from *Pinocchio*
Joe Williams, piano



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Join Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown at Seattle's 41st MLK Day Rally and March January 15. Gather at Garfield High School (400 23rd Ave, Seattle 98122). Indoor Rally at 11 am, with Dr. Brown speaking. March at 12:30 pm. Read more in the news article at PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

Sound Medicine Meditation Tory Trujillo offers deeply healing monthly sessions. Next opportunity is January 14, 12:30 pm in Hildebrand Hall. Suggested Donation \$20. Read more in news article at PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

Stand in Solidarity with Immigrants Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network urges you to join Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Day in Olympia February 7, 2024. Info and link to register (by Jan. 12) in news article at PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

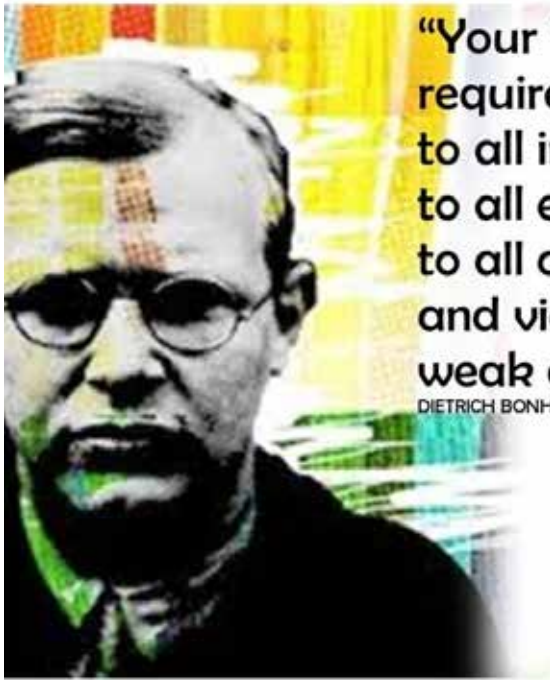
Plan Now to attend Plymouth's 154th Annual Meeting Sunday, January 28, 2024. The Annual Report will be reviewed, and your vote is needed to install new lay leadership and approve the 2024 budget for our church family.

Support Our Pantries The former reader signs outside our building are now pantries filled with food and other items for those experiencing homelessness or who are under-resourced. Feel free to add food, or even notes to remind the reader that they are beloved.

Put Faith in Action Faith Action Network's Interfaith Advocacy Day, 9 am-3 pm February 8 in Olympia. Meet with your legislators to bring voices of compassion and justice to our elected leaders. Read more and register at FANwa.org.

Be The Church You are invited to volunteer at Plymouth Church! Remember that covenant giving also includes your time and using your gifts. There are many tasks that you can do. Training provided if needed. Contact Toni Arthur: TArthur@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

The Plymouth Church Library is open before and after worship every Sunday morning.



**"Your 'yes' to God
requires your 'no'
to all injustice,
to all evil, to all lies,
to all oppression
and violation of the
weak and poor..."**

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

**Believing that God's love transcends all human distinctions,
Plymouth welcomes people of all races and cultures,
of varied social and economic conditions
and regardless of sexual orientation.**

**We are open and affirming of all people,
and we call all people to the cost and joy of Christian discipleship.**