

10:30 AM SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 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.

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10:30 AM SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2024
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

*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 *Portrait of an Angel* Robert Glasper
Joe Williams, piano

CALL TO WORSHIP Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown

One: Listen, people of God, for the voice of God is calling:
“The ultimate measure of a [person] is not where
[they] stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but
where [they] stand at times of challenge and controversy.”¹

**Many: In difficult times, God calls us to join the
movement of courageous truth-tellers.**

One: In comfortable times, God calls us to join the
movement of silence-breakers.

**Many: In times of struggle, God calls us to join
the movement toward freedom.**

One: In times of peace, God calls us to join the
movement toward justice.

**Many: In all times, God calls us to join with the
movement of the Spirit.**

One: Listen, people of God, for the voice of God is calling:
“Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the
noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person
of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world
to live in.”²

**All: Let us worship God, listening for the voice that calls
us to join the movement of love.**

1. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Strength to Love*, 1963.

2. Martin Luther King, Jr. *March for Integrated Schools*, April 18, 1959.

HYMN *In Christ There is No East or West*

In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one great fellowship of love
throughout the whole wide earth.
In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere
their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
close binding humankind.
Join hands, then, people of the faith,
whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God
are surely kin to me.
In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north.
All Christly souls are joined as one
throughout the whole wide earth.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION. Rev. Kevin Bechtold

Holy God, 1 Corinthians 6:12 reminds us that “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.” You have created us in your holy and divine image. We pray to reflect your goodness in the world. We confess that we have engaged in actions and attitudes contrary to your kingdom, and we ask for wisdom, guidance, and fortitude to be the people you have called us to be.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE. Rev. Bechtold

Beloved creation of God, the Holy One knows you fully, completely, and affirmative from the secret places of your innermost parts. Receive the knowing as a gift of assurance that God's grace is sufficient for new life. God will abide with us as we strive to follow the way of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WELCOME.Dr. 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.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayer by W.E.B. DuBois

Give us grace, O God, to dare to do the deed which we well know cries to be done. Let us not hesitate because of ease, or the words of [people]’s mouths, or our own lives. Mighty causes are calling us—the freeing of women, the training of children, the putting down of hate and murder and poverty—all these and more. But they call with voices that mean work and sacrifices and death. Mercifully grant us, O God, the spirit of Esther, that we say: *I will go unto the King and if I perish, I perish.* Amen.

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), Janice Knight (Sister of Jerome Robinson), Joanna Lemly and Family (Sister of Hayden McManus), James McDowell (Cousin of Jerry Rice), Barbara Miller (Friend of Barb Laski), Dr. Maxine Mimms, Ian Nelson (Son of Diane Nelson), Paula Orrego, Mary Margaret Pruitt, Jose Robles and Family, Kathy Rood, Shirley K. Shelley (Aunt of Ricky Powell), Jamie Shilling, Jaime Rubio Sulficio, Beta Utu Malae (Sister of Robert Malae), Irene Wall (Friend of Ruth Williamson), Charon Washington (Sister of Michael & Elizabeth Gordon)



PRAYER OF JESUS

**Our parent, who is among us, blessed be your Creation.
May your loving presence be a reality here on earth.
May we become more interested in building your kingdom
here and now than in waiting for it to come down from above.
Let us share our bread with those who hunger.
Let us learn to forgive as well as to receive forgiveness.
Help us through the time of temptation, delivering us from all evil.
For ours are the eternal blessings that you pour upon the earth. Amen.**

SONG OF REFLECTION

Reverend King John Coltrane
Joe Williams, piano

CALL TO OFFERINGRev. Donene Blair

The generous life rests on gratitude and trust in God's
abundance. As we give, we acknowledge that we have
communally received more than enough to meet our collective
needs. Our offerings serve to realize the reign of God's kingdom
on the earth.

OFFERING MUSICJoe Williams

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 DEDICATIONRev. Blair

**Generous God, cultivate and nurture gratitude and trust
in us. May our gifts be used for the benefit of the kingdom
and all creation in your name. Amen.**

“I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish [siblings]. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro’s great stumbling block in [their] stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to “order” than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action;” who paternalistically believes [they] can set the timetable for another [person’s] freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a “more convenient season.” Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.” —*Martin Luther King Jr.*

Transcript of video:

But in recent years, I have come to see that these are often the people who stand in the way of progress, because they are committed only in a lukewarm manner... and, every time you move to try to solve the problem, they will respond by saying you’re moving too fast you ought to cool off you should put on brakes and they end up more devoted to order than to justice and more devoted to maintaining a sort of negative peace which is merely the absence of tension than gaining a positive peace which is the presence of justice. And, they can always say to you that you should wait for a more convenient season... and, I’ve come to see that these are the people that often stand in the way, because they get close... close enough to you to at least discuss your plans, and they become friendly enough to talk with you. You at least have dialogue with them, but they want to stand in the way of every move forward... and, this has been my disappointment

I think, at times, it is better to have outright rejection and misunderstanding from people of ill-will than to have lukewarm acceptance from people of goodwill. It is better to have absolute misunderstanding from people of ill-will than to have partial understanding from people of goodwill... and, this is what we are seeing every day in our struggle in the South, that many of the moderates of the white South, and many of them mean well—and I shouldn't only say the South, but the moderates all over—stand in the way of progress because they refuse to understand the problem, and they live by the myth of “time,” failing to realize that time will not solve the problem and there is a danger that the moderate will live by this myth believing that if you just leave things alone, and not push too much, our time will solve the problem... and it has always been my contention that this is an invalid view, because it goes out with the idea that that is something in the very nature and structure of time that will miraculously solve all problems, and time really is neutral. It can be used either constructively or destructively.

READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MARKMark 2:1-12

(Dr. Wilda Gafney Translation)

read by Rev. Bechtold

Now when Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And so many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door, and he was speaking the word to them. Then some women and men came, bringing to him a paralyzed person, carried by four of them. And when they were not able to bring the person to Jesus because of the crowd, they uncovered the chamber above Jesus and, after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralyzed person lay. Now when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed person, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Who is this speaking? [It is] Blasphemy! Who is able forgive sins but God alone?” And at once Jesus knew in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves and he said to them, “Why do you question in your hearts? What is easier, to say to the paralyzed person, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’? Yet so that you may know that the Son of Woman has authority on earth to forgive sins”—Jesus said to the paralyzed person: “To you I say, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.” And the person stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “Nothing like this have we ever seen!”

ANTHEM

If I Can Help Somebody Alma Bazel Androzzo

Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown, voice; Joe Williams, piano

MESSAGE Coming in HotDr. Brown

HYMN

Ain't Gonna Let Nobody (Turn Me Around) FREEDOM SONG

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round, turn me 'round, turn me 'round,
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me 'round

Keep on a walkin', keep on a-talkin', Marching up to freedom land.

—Ain't gonna let injustice turn me around...

—Ain't gonna let discrimination turn me around...

CHARGE AND BENEDICTIONDr. Brown

POSTLUDE

Dreaming from In the Land O' Cotton Florence Price

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 21, 12:30 pm in Hildebrand Hall (note date change)**. 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 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.

Share and Care 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.

Music Note On February 11 at noon, Plymouth Church invites internationally acclaimed scholar and pianist Dr. William Chapman Nyaho to present a recital featuring piano works of the African diaspora. Suggested donation: \$20.

Conference Men's Retreat February 1-4 All who identify as male are invited to Pilgrim Firs to explore "Evolving Masculinities: Inter-Generational Perspectives & Conversations." Led by Rev. Dan Stern. Read more and register at PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

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

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True peace is not
merely the absence
of tension: It is the
presence of justice.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



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.