

# Longing...

10:30 AM SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2023

# 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](http://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, MARCH 19, 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

*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**

*ses yeux étaient dans les étoiles . . . . .* Mari Esabel Valverde

Joe Williams, piano

**CALL TO WORSHIP . . . . .**Rev. Donene Blair

One: When the world is no longer a paradise  
and circumstances show full power over us,  
and we are brought down to size on this small planet of ours

**Many: We worship**

One: When the memories linger of the past  
and war shapes us beyond our knowing  
and conflict becomes a story of life

**Many: We worship**

One: When the way is more barren than beautiful  
when the path is more a climb than a stroll  
when the desert expands and the horizon stretches

**Many: We worship**

One: We worship  
because we can  
we worship  
because we hope  
we worship  
because we know our vulnerability  
when things shift  
and we need to hold on

**Many: We worship**

One: It is the only strength we have for this Lenten journey

**Many: We hope; we long for belonging; we worship**

**HYMN . . . . . O God Our Help In Ages Past, vss. 1,2,4. . . . . ST. ANNE**

1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,  
2 Un - der the shad-ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;  
4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,  
Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:  
Suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.  
Short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**ASSURANCE OF GRACE (unison) . . . . . June Hayakawa-Fung**

**Gracious and loving God, forgive our resistance to trust in you; help us when we see and hear the truth, but still hesitate to evolve, and strengthen us when we know the way but don't know how to begin. Breathe your Spirit afresh into our hearts and minds — our lives — so that our longing be satisfied in you, Holy One.**

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

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

**WELCOME. . . . . Rev. Blair**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE . . . . .** Bing Tso

Let us pray to our God together saying  
Holy One, in your righteousness, **deliver us and set us free.**  
Holy God, you knew us before we took our first breath.  
You uttered your living Word and brought forth light,  
love, and life.  
You gathered us from the dust of the earth and called us  
your people.  
You sent us into the world to proclaim your mighty  
and wondrous deeds.  
You are with us even now as we live and breathe.  
Holy One, in your righteousness, **deliver us and set us free.**  
Mighty God, you have done great things; who is like you?  
You are our rock of refuge.  
You are our strong fortress.  
You are our hope and in you is our trust.  
Holy One, in your righteousness, **deliver us and set us free.**  
Gracious God, do not be far from us!  
Strengthen us that we might be givers of your grace and  
may your steadfast love be known to all of your children.  
Send your Holy Spirit to empower our hands to  
clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and love all  
as you have first loved us.  
Lord, in your righteousness, **deliver us and set us free.**  
Loving God, hear today the prayers that we lift up to you.  
Be with those of us, neighbors known and unknown.  
Give us hearts of courage and songs of your grace  
to tell others of your righteous acts and deeds of lovingkindness.  
Holy One, in your righteousness, **deliver us and set us free.**

Abundant God, be with those of us that yearn for your restoration and healing.



Today, we ask your blessing upon the many who long for you, Holy One. We who are Plymouth also lift up to you those who we bring before you with our lips or within our hearts, names that scroll before us now that stand in the need of prayer...

*Mardi (Waggoner) Abuza (Friend of Vicki Schoettle), Afghan Family (Supported by Plymouth), Susan Carter (Mother of Heather Banks & Kathleen Bernard), Sue Ellen Daniel (Friend of Barb Laski), John Daniels, Mark and JT Edwards, Doug Ryan (Brother of Mary Ryan), Susan Emerson, Diane Folkert & Family (Mother-in-law of Ara Lawrence), Marni Good (Friend of Ricky Powell), Jose Robles and Family, Michelle J. Bennett (Friend of Dawn Bennett), Irma Johnson (Friend of Toni Arthur), Shirley K. Shelley (Aunt of Ricky Powell), Concetta Lewis (Sister of Jo-Ann Guthrie), Mamadou Diakhate (Friend of Floyd Gossett), Barbara Miller (Friend of Barb Laski), Eric Minea (Cousin of Kristine Danzinger), Montecino Family, Abby Scott (Friend of Anne Mohundro), Jaime Rubio Sulficio, Beta Utu Malae (Sister of Robert Malae), Charon Washington (Sister of Michael Gordon)*

Faithful God,

Hear us, your servants, as we follow you to the day when faith, hope, and love will be upon the lips of all of us, your children.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray saying...

 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

**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.**

**CALL TO OFFERING . . . . . Rev. Kevin Bechtold**

In the midst of struggles, God is present. In times of grief and times of weariness, longing and tragedy God weeps with us. When we fail to be the people we know we should, God's grace envelops us. God beckons us to live within God's unfolding realm of love.

As you approach the offering plate, respond in openness to all we've been given. Place your financial offering in the plate but also — and more importantly — place your hand over it and silently commit to God to use your gifts, talents, and heart for furthering the unfolding realm of God on earth.

*To set up a one time or recurring donation to Plymouth Church click on the "Give" link on [PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](http://PlymouthChurchSeattle.org) or CashApp your donation to \$PlymouthUCCSeattle.  
We give thanks for your generosity.*

**OFFERING MUSIC**

*We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness . . . . . J S. Bach*  
Plymouth Singers

**DOXOLOGY**

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

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION . . . . . Rev. Bechtold**

**Spirit of Life, giver of every perfect gift, we offer our thanks for this life and its gifts. May our contributions here and in every part of our lives — our time, our skills, and our money — work toward a world of justice and peace. We pray that it be so through the ministries of this congregation and through the work we do together in faith. Amen**

## CONTEMPORARY VOICE

*Women's Voices*, by Debby Nguyen



*Debby Nguyen's first book, "Pills, Teas, and Songs: Stories of Medicine Around the World" was published when she was a Pharmacy and Data Science student. Her poetry has also appeared in the NY Times.*

During a spring as cold as this one, it is easy to miss  
Women's voices.

The very sound of their voices, it was believed, could sink the state  
Its pitch and prattle — dangerous —  
proof of their wickedness.

Women's voices

Hide under a quarter with room to spare,  
Their tongues torn out, turned into trees or animals,  
Most people never notice them.

But women's voices, during a spring as cold as this one  
Thrive below the blades,

Blooms in the poorest of soils,

Women's voices —

Wastes no time flowering.

## READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE . . . . . Genesis 31:25–27, 43–50

(Dr. Wilda Gafney Translation)

read by Rev. Bechtold

Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsfolk camped in the hill country of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, “What have you done? You have robbed my heart and herded off my daughters like captives of the sword. Why did you sneak to run away and rob me and not tell me? I would have sent you away with celebration and singing, with drumming and strumming.”

Then Laban said to Jacob, “These daughters are my daughters, these children are my children, these flocks are my flocks, and all that you see, it is mine. Now what can I do today about these my daughters, or about their children whom they have birthed? Now, come, let us make a covenant, I and you, and let it be a witness between me and you.” So Jacob took a stone, and set it up as a pillar. Then Jacob said to his kin, “Gather stones,” and they took stones, and made a gal, a heap; and they ate there by the heap. Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Gal-Ed (Heap of Witness). Laban said, “This heap is a witness between me and you today.” Therefore, he called it Gal-Ed, and the pillar Mizpah (Watchtower), for he said, “The HOLY ONE watch between me and you, when we are out of sight of the other. If you treat my daughters violently, or if you take women in addition to my daughters, though no one else is with us, see, that God is witness between me and you.”



**ANTHEM**

*Sakura (Japanese Folk Song)* . . . . .arr. by Bernard Dewagtere  
Plymouth Singers

**MESSAGE** . . . . .*A Heap of Witness* . . . . .Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown

**HYMN** . . . . .*I Got A Feelin'* . . . . . Spiritual

1.

I've got a feeling,  
everything is gonna be all right.  
O I've got a feeling,  
everything is gonna be all right.  
O I've got a feeling,  
everything is gonna be all right,  
be all right, be all right, be all right.

2.

Jesus already told me  
everything is gonna be all right.  
O Jesus already told me,  
everything is gonna be all right.  
O Jesus already told me,  
everything is gonna be all right,  
be all right, be all right, be all right.

3.

The Spirit has confirmed it,  
everything is gonna be all right.  
O the Spirit has confirmed it,  
everything is gonna be all right.  
O the Spirit has confirmed it,  
everything is gonna be all right,  
be all right, be all right, be all right.

**CHARGE AND BENEDICTION . . . . .Dr. Brown**

May we raise children  
who love the unloved  
things — the dandelion,  
the worms & spiderlings.  
Children who sense  
the rose needs the thorn  
& run into rainswept days  
the same way they turn towards sun...  
And when they're grown &  
someone has to speak for those  
who have no voice  
may they draw upon that  
wilder bond, those days of  
tending tender things  
and be the ones.

— *May We Raise Children Who Love the Unloved Things*,  
by Nicolette Sowder

**POSTLUDE**

*Spring Intermezzo, from Four Seasonal Sketches. . . . .* Betty Jackson King  
Joe Williams, piano

**THE ESOTERICS IN CONCERT AT PLYMOUTH MARCH 25**



Plymouth is excited to welcome The Esoterics to perform *Villains & Heroes*, two new choral works by composer Rex Isenberg. Please join us **8 pm Saturday, March 25 at Plymouth UCC**. Saturday's performance will also be livestreamed. Links to purchase tickets or access to livestream in news article at [PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](http://PlymouthChurchSeattle.org).

For his first piece, *If We Have Wisdom*, Isenberg sets the text of a letter written by George Washington to the Hebrew

Congregation in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1790.

In *Messiahs False and True*, Isenberg explores the perennial predicament of the “messianic leader” in human history. This work is composed for choir with organ and percussion, as well as spoken narration to be performed by **the Reverend Dr. Kelle Brown**. We are pleased to welcome Rex to the Pacific Northwest for these premieres. Please join us!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

***We Cry Justice*** The Kairos Center for Religions, Rights, and Social Justice will host a teach-in for Lent around their devotional “We Cry Justice,” 6-7:30 pm Thursday, March 23 at Plymouth. Also streamed live online. Read more in this week's Herald and in the news section at [PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](http://PlymouthChurchSeattle.org).

***Plymouth Immigration Ministry Team*** urges you to comment immediately to prevent a proposed rule set to take effect in May that will deny many fleeing oppression the right to seek asylum at our southern border. Learn how to help in the news article at [PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](http://PlymouthChurchSeattle.org). Make your voice heard for the cause of justice!

***Lenten Special Offering*** this year will be evenly divided between One Great Hour of Sharing and Plymouth UCC Scholarships. Your faithful giving is vital to maintaining the ministries of Plymouth. We give thanks for all you contribute to our community. Read more in the news article at [PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](http://PlymouthChurchSeattle.org).

***Spread Easter Joy*** Each Easter, Plymouth encourages folks to visit and deliver a cheerful flower to members who are isolated and who have suffered a loss. Please be a part of this important tradition and look for the cards and take a plant on Easter Sunday. You can support this ministry by donating in the name of loved ones. Names of donors and those honored will be listed in the *Herald*.

***Undoing Institutional Racism*** Workshops are designed to educate, challenge and empower people to "undo" the racist structures that hinder effective social change. Next workshop is April 13-15. See full schedule and details [PinwSeattle.org](http://PinwSeattle.org).

***Connect with Congregational Council*** Members of the Plymouth community are invited to meet with Council members to ask questions, make suggestions, and express their hopes for Plymouth. Council members are available online via Zoom 7-8 pm the **second Wednesday of each month**. Email Diane Jacobsen, [DJacobsen@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](mailto:DJacobsen@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org), by 5 pm the day of the meeting for the Zoom link.

***Help Wanted*** If you can provide purchased, pre-packaged food and arrange it on a platter in the kitchen before worship for coffee hour following worship, please contact Toni Arthur: [TArthur@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](mailto:TArthur@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org). Your help with this ministry of hospitality is greatly appreciated!

***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. See this week's *Herald* or [PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](http://PlymouthChurchSeattle.org) for some opportunities.

***Did You Know...*** You can view past services on our website, [PlymouthChurchSeattle.org](http://PlymouthChurchSeattle.org). Under the “Worship” tab, click “Recent Services.” You can also view past services, musical performances and special events on our YouTube channel, Plymouth Church UCC.



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.