



Belonging.

REJOICING

10:30 AM SUNDAY, MAY 14, 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 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

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

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10:30 AM SUNDAY, MAY 14, 2023
SIXTH SUNDAY IN EASTER

*When you enter Plymouth Church UCC,
may you feel the peace, intimacy, belonging,
acceptance & 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

*Morning Prayer Op. 39, No. 1 Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Joe Williams, piano*

CALL TO WORSHIP Rev. Kevin Bechtold
by Nikita Gill

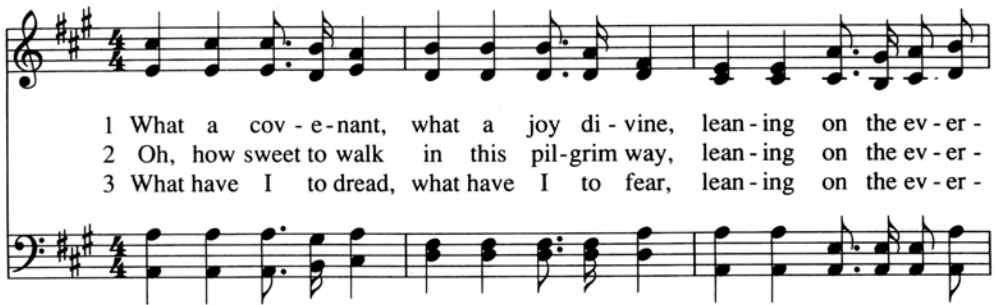
One: God sees us and finds us worthy!
You are not small.
You are not unworthy.
You are not insignificant.

**Many: The universe wove you from a constellation,
just so atom, every fiber in you comes from
a different star.**

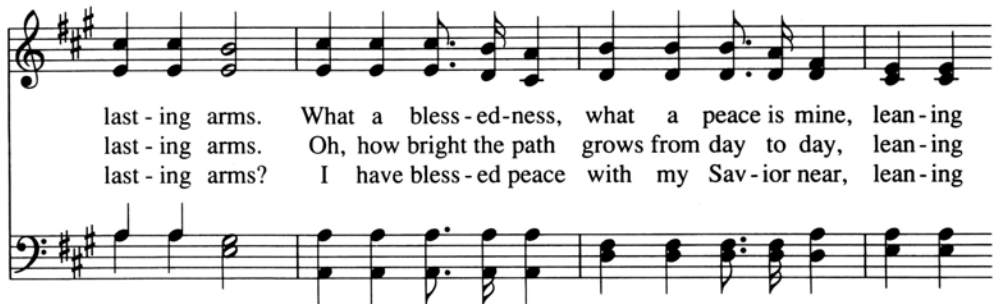
One: Together, you are bound by stardust , altogether
spectacularly created by the energy of the
universe itself.

**All: And that, my darling,
is the poetry of physics,
poetry of you.**

HYMN *What a Covenant.* LEANING

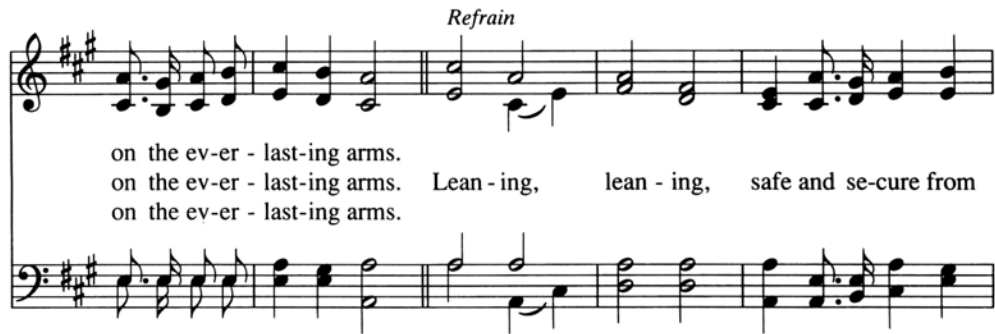


1 What a cov - e - nant, what a joy di - vine, lean - ing on the ev - er -
 2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pil - grim way, lean - ing on the ev - er -
 3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean - ing on the ev - er -



last - ing arms. What a bless - ed - ness, what a peace is mine, lean - ing
 last - ing arms. Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day, lean - ing
 last - ing arms? I have bless - ed peace with my Sav - ior near, lean - ing

Refrain



on the ev - er - last - ing arms.
 on the ev - er - last - ing arms. Lean - ing, lean - ing, safe and se - cure from
 on the ev - er - last - ing arms.



all a - larms; lean - ing, lean - ing, lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION Rev. Bechtold

by U.S. Senate Chaplin Barry Black

**Let us pray: Eternal God, we stand in awe of you.
Lord, when babies die at a church school, it is time
for us to move beyond thoughts and prayers. Remind
our lawmakers of the words of the British statesman
Edmund Burke: “All that is necessary for evil to
triumph is for good people to do nothing.” Lord,
deliver our senators from the paralysis of analysis
that waits for the miraculous. Use them to battle the
demonic forces that seek to engulf us, we pray, in
your powerful name. Amen**

ASSURANCE OF GRACE Rev. Bechtold

God sees. God hears. God knows. With every breath,
our opportunity renews to move with God, shifting the
world for the sake of us all. There can be safety. There can
be wholeness. We can resist the terror of tied hands and a
profound lack of creativity. Inhale this assurance, that God
is able. Exhale knowing we can hear the children's cry and
respond with right action!

WELCOME. Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown

Plymouth Church acknowledges the land that we occupy, which was stewarded by the Duwamish people, the first stewards of this land. We 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 others 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 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

Imagine the Body of God, by Rebecca Anderson

Imagine it with all the genders and races and physical descriptions of the world.

God is male and female and both and neither and all. God is black and red and olive and tan. God has hair in long braids, slanted eyes, flat nose, big lips, long beard, curvy body, long arms, short legs.

God wears flowing dresses, and blue jeans, and saris, and turbans, and tuxedos, and lots and lots of jewelry. God has tattoos of every animal of the world, and a single heart-shaped stud in their right ear.

And God has every ability, and every disability in the world. God walks, God limps, God rolls, God crawls. God gets where God needs to be, gets to us, however God can.

God's mind works with the speed—and sometimes the randomness—of ADHD. God feels pain with the depths of depression, and joy like an episode of mania. God hears the voices of all people and all living things. God has no one way of solving problems. Sometimes God moves from step to step with the most analytic of minds. Sometimes God makes great intuitive leaps that cannot be explained. Sometimes God gets stuck in a loop because the present, whether good or bad, is the time where God lives.

God paints with their feet and reads with their hands. God can dance by swaying and shuffling, and sing by making noises that are not words, but express emotions that words cannot.

God is too busy reaching out to us to be concerned that they cannot see. God is too busy feeling the rhythms of music in their bones to worry about what it sounds like. God is loving, loving with all God's arrhythmic heart to be anything but grateful for the body they have.

Is it any wonder that we have trouble grasping God, when God's body does not move the way we expect a body to move? Is it any wonder we have trouble understanding God when God speaks with the slurred words? Is it any wonder that we cannot comprehend God, who bares the chronic pain of the suffering of the world?

How can we come closer to this being beyond our comprehension, this bodymind that meets none of our expectations?

By freeing ourselves of expectations.

By searching for God in the unique bodyminds of our fellow human beings.

By seeking to understand that which challenges us, and confuses us, and frightens us.

By accepting ourselves, and the bodyminds that make us who we are.

When we pray that all of this may be so; when we pray to love all bodies and minds; when we pray to be both broken and whole at once: we are praying to be more like God.

Mark & JT Edwards, Afghan Family (Supported by Plymouth), Susan Carter (Mother of Heather Banks & Kathleen Bernard), Sue Ellen Daniel (Friend of Barb Laski), John Daniels, Susan Emerson (Mother of Kate Forrester), JoAnn English (Relative of Lucian Guthrie), Shirley K. Shelley (Aunt of Ricky Powell), Anna Florey, Marni Good (Friend of Ricky Powell), Floyd Gossett, Michelle J. Bennett (Friend of Dawn Bennett), Allie James (Friend of Dawn Bennett), Irma Johnson (Friend of Toni Arthur), Concetta Lewis (Sister of Jo-Ann Guthrie), Barbara Miller (Friend of Barb Laski), Montecino Family, Paula Orrego, Jim Oswald (Friend of Bing Tso), Anna Partch (Friend of Sari Breznau), Jerome Robinson, Jose Robles and Family, Doug Ryan (Brother of Mary Ryan), Jaime Rubio Sulficio, Beta Utu Malae (Sister of Robert Malae), (Sister of Michael Gordon)

We grieve with the family and friends of those lost in the Allen, Texas mass shooting:

Sofia Mendoza (8), Daniela Mendoza (11), Christian LaCour (20), Aishwarya Thatikonda (26), Elio Cumana-Rivas (32), James Cho (3), Cindy Cho (35), Kyu Song Cho (37).

Sofia and Daniela's mother, Ilda Mendoza, is in critical condition. William Cho (6), who was also injured is the only survivor of his family.



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.**

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 Rev. Bechtold

Jesus felt tender compassion for the suffering people he met.
He realized that many workers would be needed for a great
harvest of mercy and love. This day you and I are called to
this faithful work together — not only lead and give, but to
participate in every facet of this ministry. This very day, you
and I are called to a sweet labor of generosity, healing, and
peace. With compassion, let us bring our gifts, then, so that
the ministry of this church will be a growing, vibrant witness
to God's love.

*To set up a one time or recurring donation to Plymouth Church
click on the “Give” link on PlymouthChurchSeattle.org or
CashApp your donation to \$PlymouthUCCSeattle.
We give thanks for your generosity.*

OFFERING MUSIC *I Am Ready For Change* Carrie Newcomer
Plymouth Singers

I am willing to change
I am willing to see
I am ready to trust in you, in me
I am ready for change
There's a voice and it is mine
There's a vision and it is time
There is courage, the choice is here
to live in love and not in fear
I am willing to change
I am willing to see
I am ready to trust in you, in me
I am ready for change
There'll be pushback and some will say
keep on doing things the same old way
but together, with hope and heart
We'll keep on changing, each doing our part.
I am willing to change
I am willing to see
I am ready to trust in you, in me
I am ready for change

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

**Holy One, the Great Provider,
the Giver of all gifts;
love is the greatest currency.
Thank you for putting money into our hands, that we
can hold with love and freely offer it back to you, for the
benefit of many. Amen.**

god is a mother
and with that
sentence
the world stops
the world always stops
when woman and
divine
commingle
as if the
feminine
dilutes the
miraculous
when in reality
it embodies it
when jesus turns water
to wine
they clap
but when women turn breasts
to milk
they cringe
a broken man's body
is celebrated each sunday
while a broken woman's body
is just hidden away
and it's no wonder
that mother is a word
used by men
to demonize those
who don't claim the name
and weaponized to shame
those who step out of line
because
their ideal
woman
plays the role of nurturer
and silencer
in pews
built and led by them

but
when god
becomes mother
she is neither quiet
or compliant
she leads confidently
she questions authority
she commands respect
which might be the problem
for mother god
did not gather us up
carelessly
but took her time with it
she fed us milk
birthed our souls
and broke her body
and the permanence
can be uncomfortable
and to disentangle god
from motherhood
is impossible
but
to disentangle god
from womanhood
is sinful
because seeing god as mother
is one step closer
to seeing god in me
and it's in that
i am truly
born again



Kaitlin Shetler is an advocate for women and justice, a poet, and an occasional preacher in Churches of Christ circles.

READING FROM HEBREW SCRIPTURE Genesis 16:1-10, 13
(The Voice Translation) read by Dr. Brown

Despite God's promise, years went by. Still Abram's wife Sarai remained childless. But she did have an Egyptian servant girl whose name was Hagar. Sarai had an idea so she approached her husband.

Sarai (to Abram): You can see that the Eternal One has still not allowed me to have any children. Why don't you sleep with my servant girl? Maybe I could *use her as a surrogate* and have a child through her!

Abram listened to Sarai and *agreed to follow her plan*. After they had lived 10 years in Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took her [enslaved] girl Hagar, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. So Abram slept with Hagar. *It was not long before* she conceived. But as soon as she knew she was pregnant *with Abram's child*, *Hagar's attitude changed* and she became haughty toward Sarai. *Sarai would not tolerate her servant looking down on her, so she approached Abram again.*

Sarai (to Abram): This is all your fault. I allowed my servant girl to be intimate with you, and as soon as she saw she was pregnant with your child, she started behaving arrogantly and disrespectfully toward me! I have done nothing to deserve this. Let the Eternal One judge who is in the wrong here—you or me!

Abram (to Sarai): *Sarai—look, she's still your servant girl.* Do whatever you want with her. She's under your control.

So Sarai clamped down on Hagar severely, and Hagar ran away. The Special Messenger of the Eternal One found Hagar *alone* by a spring of water out in the desert. It was the spring of *water* along the road that went to Shur.

Special Messenger: Hagar, Sarai's [enslaved] girl? Where have you come from, and where are you planning to go?

Hagar: I am running away from my [enslaver], Sarai!

Special Messenger: Hagar, go back to your mistress, and change your attitude. Be respectful, and listen to her instructions. *You're pregnant, and you need to go home.* Trust me: I am going to give you *many children and many descendants*, so many you won't be able to count them!

As a result of *this encounter*, Hagar decided to give the Eternal One who had spoken to her a special name because *God had seen her in her misery.*

ANTHEM. *Worthy.* India Arie
Deacon Indigo Brown, voice
Joe Williams, piano

MESSAGE *Worthy* Dr. Brown

HYMN *If We Just Talk of Thoughts and Prayers* O WALY WALY

If we just talk of thoughts and prayers
If we just dream of what could be
If we just sing of do - ing good
God, may our prayers and dreams and songs

4
— And don't live out a faith that dares,
— And do not build com - mun - i - ty,
— And don't walk through our neigh - bor - hood
— Lead to a faith that takes on wrongs -

8
— And giv - ing in to con - stant death,
— And do not seek to change our ways,
— To learn its hope, to ease its pain,
- That works for peace and just - ice, too,

12
— Our thoughts and prayers are fleet - ing breath.
— Our dreams of change are false dis - plays.
— Our talk of good is simp - ly vain.
— Then will our prayers bring joy to you.

Text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (with verse one amended) All rights reserved. Church use granted.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION Dr. Brown

POSTLUDE. *Mother's Sacrifice* L. Viola Kinney
Joe Williams, piano

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sound Medicine Meditation Join Tory Trujillo for the first of a new monthly offering for transformative healing and meditation 11:45 am-1 pm in Hildebrand Hall next Sunday, May 21. Be prepared to receive a profound experience. Read more in the news article at PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

Thirty Years as an Open and Affirming Church On Sunday, May 21, Plymouth celebrates our 30th Anniversary of being an Open and Affirming Church. Be sure to join in person or online for a time of reflection and celebration.

Free Workshop on Nonviolence 4 pm (PT) May 17, hosted by the Justice Leadership Project and the Southern New England Conference of the UCC and focused on the work of Rev. James Lawson who was instrumental in the civil rights movement. Register at JusticeLeadership.org.

Pentecost Special Offering Sunday, May 28 and throughout the month of June, gifts earmarked Pentecost Special Offering will be divided evenly between UCC Strengthen the Church and Scholarships for Plymouth members to take the Undoing Institutional Racism training.

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 **June 14-16**. See full schedule and details PinwSeattle.org.

Connect with Congregational Council Members of the Plymouth community are invited to meet with Council members online via Zoom 7-8 pm the second Wednesday of each month. Next opportunity is June 14. Email Diane Jacobsen, (DJacobsen@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org), by 5 pm the day of the meeting for the Zoom link.

Pop Some Tops! Come enjoy Plymouth Housing's Annual fundraiser to help end homelessness. Join us on Friday, June 9 from 7 pm until midnight for a night of dancing, drinks, and fun. Get your tickets now at PlymouthHousing.org.

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). Your help with 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. Contact Toni Arthur: TArthur@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

Did You Know... You can view past services on our website, PlymouthChurchSeattle.org. Under the “Worship” tab, click “Recent Services.” You can also view past services, musical performances and special events on our Vimeo 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.