



10:30 AM SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

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.

The church building is closed for all activities until further notice.

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

DBlair@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

JCastle@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

JHayakawaFung@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

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

WBlight@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

DJacobsen@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

RTurner@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

TArthur@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org

10:30 AM SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2021

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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.

You can contribute to the mission and ministries of Plymouth UCC anytime, anywhere! Go to PlymouthChurchSeattle.org and click on the “Give” box, *or* text to give: Simply text the amount you’d like to give (i.e. 10.00) to Plymouth UCC’s mobile giving number (206.208.1442), hit send. Questions? Contact Diane, DJacobsen@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.

PRELUDE *Carol Medley* Mark Hayes
Dr. Wanda Griffiths, Piano

WELCOME. Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown

CALL TO WORSHIP Dr. Brown

Blessed be the ones
who dance
in the corridors of death,
who sing
in the hallways of terror,
who laugh
in the prisons of fear,
who shout
across the silencing walls,
who love
beyond the borders of hatred,
who live
to welcome home freedom,
who die
never turning their heads,
who return
as the rising of hope.



*Jan Richardson is an
artist, writer,
and ordained minister
in the United
Methodist Church.*

—*Jan Richardson*

HYMN Hark! The Herald Angels Sing MENDELSSOHN

Hark the herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring;"
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled
Joyful, all you saints arise, join the triumph of the skies
With the angel host proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!"

Christ by highest heav'n adored, Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time the Savior comes, offspring of the Virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate Deity
Pleased on earth with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!"

Hail the bearer of God's peace! Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life our Savior brings, ris'n with radiant, healing wings.
Mildly laying glory by, born that we no more may die
Born to raise us all from earth, born to give us second birth.
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the Christ-child bring!"

LIGHTING ADVENT CANDLES Bernard Family and Singers

This is our beginning, a beginning born in the dark. In the
womb of time, our vision is dim, but it is the chance for
us to learn again how to feel our way to God. The night is
long and feels unbearable, making us sure we are alone. The
darkness grows, and grows on us, teaching us that within it is
God who abides here. In the dark, hope is born.

(Lighting of the Hope candle)

Also, in the dark, peace is available. In the midst of much
turmoil and violence, there can be peace. The kind of peace
that surprises us as it washes over our worst fears. While we
wait, God is with us as the One of Peace comes near.

(Lighting of the Peace candle)

With hope and peace abiding, the dark welcomes joy. Joy
doesn't force its way in to our experience, but seeps in
through the cracks of our lives, like new-found well water

seeking to quench our thirst. Joy waits with us, and promises that wherever we find ourselves, we are with God.

(Lighting of the Joy candle)

After many days of wondering, we find ourselves on the way of love. We falter, and love strengthens. We often want more, and love reminds of our blessings. Love looks forward while honoring how what we've endured made us who we are. The dark disorients us just enough to allow love to do its work so that we might become the ready midwives for the blessing, Immanuel, that is to come.

(Lighting of the Love candle)

People: We dare to walk in the light of love!

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Arr. by Pentatonix
Jennylynn Vidas, Sari Breznau, Tim Keller, Michael Delos



O come, O come Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
Until the son of God appears
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.
O come, O come, Thou Lord of Might!
Who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height
In ancient times once give the law
In majesty on cloud and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee O Israel

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Rev. Donene Blair

Douglas Berry (Cousin of Michael Gordon), Ken Collins (Friend of Gordon and Stanhope families), Carmen Ramsey Ellington (Friend of Karen Clark), Mary and Jon Eytinge and Family, Floyd Gossett, Jim Halfaker, John Holford (Father of Michelle Sarju), Michael Kaid, Darryl Marshall (Stepfather of Jennifer Castle), Jo Mitchell, Montecino Family, Stan Orr, Tommy Rivers Puzey (Friend of Karen Clark), Jose Robles and Family, Thomas Smith (Brother of Twanda Hill), Jaime Rubio Sulficio, Patricia Valentine, Bill Zimmerman (Cousin of Doug James)
Our hearts are with Kelle and Indigo Brown on the one year anniversary of the passing of Kelle's mom, Sandra Price.

Oh Holy One, you come to us
in our need, in our mess.
To this low, rough manger, you come.
In the cesspool of pandemic and political distress,
and racism and climate crisis, you come.
To people who are weary, lonely and depressed you come.
To those who are broken, to those who have lost
to storms and to bullets, you come.
To people who are tired of fighting, weary of insisting,
exhausted from trying, you come.
To those who don't have the strength
to lift up their heads for the dawn,
but gaze at the floor to gather the strength
to survive these times—you come.
We are amazed and grateful.
For this gift—not that the vision is fulfilled,
but that you come—we give thanks.
That you come to share this struggle,
our sorrow and even sometimes our despair,
to hurt and to hope with us—we rejoice.
Come, Beloved, come! Amen

—*An Advent Prayer, by Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes*

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

LORD'S PRAYER

**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 kin-dom 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.**

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CALL TO OFFERING Rev. Blair

God of all good things: This morning, as we draw closer to the blessed birth, we remember Mary and how your blessings come to the world in the most unexpected ways and often through the most unprepared people. Give us eyes this day to see the wealth of ways you have blessed us and the opportunities you have placed before us to be an unexpected blessing to others. Use the gifts we bring to you this morning to bless those who need the good news the most.

OFFERING MUSIC

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly Arr. by Mark Hayes
Dr. Wanda Griffiths, Piano

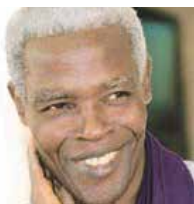
DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION Rev. Blair

God of the Universe, thank you that your promises are sure, for you are faithful. Help us to follow your leading and give freely, sacrificially and cheerfully towards the work of your kindom. May you cause the seeds that we sow to grow into well-watered, fruitful trees of life. Amen.

CONTEMPORARY VOICE read by David Guthrie



If I am not spiritually blind, I see your spirit. I speak to it if I want to invite you to do something with me. If your spirit agrees it moves your body and your body acts. That’s Inspiration...The healer is a lifelong enemy of all manipulation. The healer’s method is inspiration.

— *Ayi Kwei Armah, The Healers*

Ayi Kwei Armah is a Ghanaian writer



bell hooks, was an American author, professor, feminist, and social activist.

“Visionary feminism is a wise and loving politics. It is rooted in the love of male and female being, refusing to privilege one over the other. The soul of feminist politics is the commitment to ending patriarchal domination of women and men, girls and boys. Love cannot exist in any relationship that is based on domination and coercion. Males cannot love themselves in patriarchal culture if their very self-definition relies on submission to patriarchal rules. When men embrace feminist thinking and practice, which emphasizes the value of mutual growth and self-actualization in all relationships, their emotional well-being will be enhanced. A genuine feminist politics always brings us from bondage to freedom, from lovelessness to loving.” —*bell hooks*

READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW Matthew 1:18-25
 (Dr. Wilda Gafney translation) read by Rev. Jennifer Castle

Now this is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah happened; When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to have a child in her womb from the Holy Spirit. Joseph her husband was a just man and unwilling to shame her, he wanted to divorce her secretly. But when he deliberated this, suddenly an angel of the Most High God appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for in her is conceived a child from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this happened to fulfill what had been spoken by the Most High God through the prophet: “Look now! The virgin shall conceive a child in her womb and give birth to a son and they shall call him Emmanuel,”

which translated means, “God is with us.” When Joseph got up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Most High God commanded him. He took her as his wife, yet did not know her sexually until her birthing of a son named Jesus.

CAROL O Little Town of Bethlehem, vs 1,3,4 . . . Phillips Brooks
 Bethanie Russell, Singer; Sari Breznau, Guitar

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

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

O holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray
Cast out our sin and enter in
Be born in us today
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell
O come to us, abide with us
Our Lord Emmanuel!

MESSAGE *The Joseph Complex* Dr. Brown

HYMN OF COMMITMENT

Rise Up, Shepherd, and Follow, Trad. Spiritual, modeled after Twin Bandit's recording
Plymouth Singers, Directed by Sari Breznau
Edited by Doug Arney

There's a star in the east on Christmas morn
Rise up Shepherd and follow
It will lead to the place where the savior's born
Rise up shepherd and follow
Follow, follow, rise up shepherd and follow
Follow the star of Bethlehem
Rise up shepherd and follow
Leave your sheep and leave your lambs
Rise up shepherd and follow
Leave your ewes and leave your rams
Rise up shepherd and follow
Follow, follow, rise up shepherd and follow
Follow the star of Bethlehem
Rise up shepherd and follow

If you take good heed to the angels words
Rise up shepherd and follow
You'll forget your flocks and herds
Rise up shepherd and follow
Follow, follow, rise up shepherd and follow
Follow the star of Bethlehem
Rise up shepherd and follow
Follow, follow, rise up shepherd and follow
Follow the star of Bethlehem
Rise up shepherd and follow

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION Dr. Brown

POSTLUDE

Go Tell It on the Mountain . . African-American Spiritual, Arr. by Mark Hayes
Dr. Wanda Griffiths, Piano



WORSHIP ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Friday, December 24, at 3 pm. In-person seating is now at capacity. If you have not submitted an RSVP, please worship online with us in our Online Worship Center. The service will be both livestreamed and recorded to be viewed later on Christmas Eve at 6 and 9 pm.

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING

All gifts received Sunday, December 19 and Christmas Eve, December 24. will be divided evenly between **The Christmas Emergency Fund** and **Plymouth UCC Scholarship Fund**.

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Over the past 18 months, the emergency financial needs of many who serve the church increased dramatically. Many of our clergy continue to bear the consequences of lost or decreased income. These difficult times make the need for the Christmas Fund more urgent than ever.

Plymouth UCC Scholarship Fund supports members and friends in financial hardship take part in future opportunities offered by and through Plymouth UCC.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship with Plymouth on Christmas Eve Friday, December 24, at 3 pm. In-person seating is now at capacity. If you have not submitted an RSVP, please worship online with us in our Online Worship Center. The service will be both livestreamed and recorded to be viewed later on Christmas Eve at 6 and 9 pm.

Please Note: December 26 and January 2 services will be prerecorded and online only. December 26 will be a service of Lessons and Carols. Rev. Jennifer Castle will preach January 2. While we transition to live and hybrid worship, we will not have Coffee Hour on those Sundays, and encourage you to reach out and connect to others during this time. There will be no paper/pdf edition of the Herald the week of December 27. Check the website and your inbox for the latest church news.

Share the Spirit Plymouth has a long tradition of delivering poinsettias to folks who are isolated or have suffered a loss. We need your help! If you can safely deliver a poinsettia by dropping it off at a safe distance and wearing a mask, please email June Hayakawa-Fung (JHayakawafung@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org).

Help with Christmas Food Boxes Volunteers needed to pack boxes at Plymouth, 10 am-noon Monday, December 20, and to help deliver boxes later that day. Please contact Indigo Brown (Indigo.Brown@outlook.com) if you can help.

Longest Night On Tuesday, December 21, 2021 at 7 pm, Plymouth Church will observe the Longest Night/ Winter Solstice with a virtual celebration in song (view in our Online Worship Center). This year will feature the incomparable Josephine Howell and her phenom band. As we acknowledge the loss, grief and heartache of this time, may you find joy as we meet together in music's embrace.

Let Your Light Shine We invite you to make videos of you holding lit white candles. to be part of Christmas Eve worship. Make a recording of about 30-60 seconds duration. Send your videos to Rev. Kevin Bechtold (KBechtold@PlymouthChurchSeattle.org) by Monday, December 20, at 12 noon. Contact Rev. Bechtold if you have questions about technical issues.

Plan to attend Plymouth's 152nd Annual Meeting Sunday, January 30, 2022. The Annual Report will be reviewed, and your vote is needed to install new lay leadership for our church family. Celebrate 2021 and look ahead to 2022. The agenda will include consideration of a proposed amendment to the Church By-laws, reducing the size of the Congregational Council (currently, 12) to 10 or eight. Wording of the change will be supplied at least one week before the meeting. This meeting will take the place of coffee hour that Sunday, using the usual link and password at PlymouthChurchSeattle.org.



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.