



The Bell

PLYMOUTH CHURCH
FORT WAYNE + UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PLYMOUTHFW.ORG

From the Senior Pastor New Plymouth Logo Revealed



To honor the celebration of our sesquicentennial year, the Evangelism and Marketing Board determined that now is the perfect opportunity to update Plymouth's logo as we seek to "live faithfully into the future." They've worked on this over the past year, engaged with a consultant, reviewed dozens of options, and compared and tweaked them. The result of their work is the above image. It's my pleasure to walk through and describe some of the symbolism found therein, at least as I interpret it.

Let's start with the basics. There's a tree. This highlights our environmental concerns around being an earthwise congregation that seeks to care for creation. But trees are also rooted in a place, and we have a commitment to this place. As was said in the previous capital campaign, we are "Here, for good." Like a tree, we ain't going anywhere. The leaves show new growth, thriving, and vitality. Biblically, the tree also reminds me of Revelation 21-22, which describes the coming kingdom of God, where God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. That passage describes the tree of life alongside a river of waters flowing next to it. I see in this logo a tree next to moving waters, which reminds us of our ultimate hope in that coming realm/reign/divine commonwealth, and relatedly, Micah 4 says: everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree and none will make them afraid.

The image also depicts two people. They are in positions of celebration. They are not isolated individuals, but they are interconnected to one another as persons-in-community. They both emerge from the half-moon below them, which we could read as the earth, reemphasizing our ecological commitments. Or, we can see them emerging from the Divine "Ground of Being," a theological concept that says that God is the source of all creation, life, and creativity. They come from that common ground, but are also different. From that angle, what previously looked like the leaves of a tree become the people sending out good energy, good news, and positive actions. What looked quite stable and sturdy as a tree is also filled with movement, excitement, and direction.

As I understand from the Board, they were most pleased with this logo on account of the sense of life, movement, and growth in the image, as well as the sense of different individuals having common grounding and growing in new life/community together while maintaining their differences.

I very much like the movement implied in the image; it doesn't feel static, whether it's the Spirit moving us or a tree in the wind, it feels active. We seek to be a people on the move, who are also grounded in the Spirit of Life, which then provides us the strength to share the good news between and beyond ourselves.

Additionally, I found a resource on color symbolism in Christianity, which was helpful when thinking about some of the logo's colors. I will not try and be exhaustive on what each color has meant at different times and to different communities, but will point to some of their respective symbolism that reflects Plymouth values. The blue, besides being the waters of life, often signifies hope.

We seek to sustain hope in our work and life together. Green symbolizes the breaking of shackles and freedom from bondage. It reminds me of our call to end oppression wherever we may find it. The red signifies action, fire, charity, and spiritual awakening. It speaks of a passion to share the gospel and be filled with the Spirit.

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Orange is symbolic of endurance and strength, something we need when we live in a world that does not always reflect the values we believe are most important. Likewise, it represents the red of passion tempered by the yellow of wisdom. Finally, yellow denotes hospitality, love and benevolence, all values that we seek to express and promote in our ministries and congregational living.

I prefer images that are multivalent, meaning they have more than one meaning or valid interpretation. Perhaps you see something in the image that others haven't seen? That's a good thing! Again, I want to thank the Evangelism and Marketing Board for their hard work, creativity, and persistence in helping us visually reflect some of the things we value here at Plymouth Church!

Peace,
Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy
Senior Pastor and Teacher



During the Month of March we are invited to pray for the Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) in Lebanon, a global mission partner through the Middle East Council of Churches. We also pray for One Great Hour of Sharing, supported in part by Plymouth Benevolence.

Plymouth People In Our Prayers

Patricia Adsit, Archer Family, Elizabeth Bayle, Janis Bohnstedt, Trevor Burns, Casey Cade, Carleen Carteaux, Natsha Chemey, Kris Conner, David Cornwell, Brad Crowder, Quinn Hacker, Joan Hartwig, Susan Jarvis, Bob Jensen, Nancy Jordan, Ginny Laudadio, Brian Laurenz, Joan Lipscomb, Sheldon Lockwood, Bonnie Pennock, Mike Popp, Noel Resor, Donna Riethmiller, Anne Rowland, Jacqueline Sanders, John Shannon, James Sidell, Charmaine Siekmann, Johanna Smith, Terri Stumpf, Caspian James Throop-Voors, Kirby Volz, Camille Wallace, Gordon Walter, Amanda Wray

New Life is welcomed in the birth of Caspian James Throop-Voors, March 8, to proud parents Jessie and Ryan Throop-Voors. Delighted grandparents are Mary Voors and Laura Coon, Kenton Neuhouser, Jeffrey Markley.

Sympathy is extended to Ann Corral and family on the unexpected death of her mother, Wilfreda Potts, February 24, Shrewsbury, MA.

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Jeanette Lohse, 101, who died January 28.

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Dolores (Dee) Harding who died August 26, 2019, Oceanside, CA.

Sympathy is extended to Jeanie Rhoades and family on the death of her sister-in-law, Kathy Simpson, February 8.

Sympathy is extended to Tina Puitz and family on the death of her mother, Evelyn Strasburger, February 11, Lafayette, IN.

Sympathy is extended to Daniel and Anne Boyko and family on the sudden, unexpected death of his grandfather, Daniel Boyko, February 4.

Sympathy is extended to Bill Balasia and family on the death of his sister, Margaret Crane, February 15.

Sympathy is extended to Robert Nance and family on the death of his mother, Virginia "Ginny" Nance, March 8. Memorial Service will be held at Plymouth on May 2, 11 a.m. to celebrate the lives of both Virginia and her son, Allen Nance, who died in December, 2018.

Plymouth Donations

If you feel the call to donate to Plymouth during this time of uncertainty, please consider using our online method by using your smart phone's barcode scanner. This QR Code/Scanner tag will take you to the Plymouth page at eservicepayments.com.

To scan this QR code, open the camera on your device and hover over the QR code. Once your camera focuses on the code, an option to follow the link will appear. You can also download a QR scanner app! Use this secure and confidential link to support Plymouth Church's ministry and mission! Your gift helps advance the local and global outreach of Plymouth benevolence.



Major Plymouth Cancellations Re: COVID-19

After conferring with pastoral staff and the moderators, and hearing updates from other congregations in Fort Wayne and the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the UCC, it has been decided that **in-person worship shall be postponed for the foreseeable future**. Likewise, **all in-person programming has been cancelled for the foreseeable future**. This means Wednesday Night Live, Board meetings, Youth Group, and any other gatherings of Plymouth people that occur in person.

This decision was not taken lightly but out of an abundance of precaution. Anything we can do to delay the spread of COVID-19 and ease the coming burden on our health care infrastructure and hospitals is worth doing. It is better to get in front of this pandemic as best we can, and if we have to sacrifice in-person worship and programming, that's what we will do. For information regarding COVID-19, visit sites like cdc.gov, who.int, and local health and human service organizations.

During this in-person absence, we invite you to visit Plymouth's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/plymouthfw, and Plymouth's website, plymouthfw.org, where worship content will be uploaded on Sundays, which will include prayer and a brief homily.

Pastoral staff will not be making in-person visits at this time, but we are available for email or phone conversations. While the church building will be closed to the public, church staff will be on site and we will be responding to phone calls or emails. The church phone number is 260-423-9424 and the office email is office@plymouthfw.org.

For those groups that cannot postpone meetings, the UCC Conference office has a Zoom video conference call line available for digital meetings. If you send us a request with date and time, we will check with the Conference to confirm its availability. If you already know how to meet for video conference call via Zoom or another program, that will be left to your discretion. Board and committee chairs are responsible for communicating with their respective groups on when and if video or phone meetings will occur.

Lastly, while we do not recommend that Plymouth members physically interact in groups at this time, we do ask that you keep each other in prayer, and be in communication with one another. Give someone a call. Send someone an email. Text them. Let them know you are thinking about them and remember them. With each other's affirmation and the greater affirmation we experience through God, we will have each other's backs, now and in the days to come.

Peace,
Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy

Fact Check

Information spreads fast and far on the internet - but are you seeing information from reputable sources? For details regarding COVID-19, try checking websites like cdc.gov, who.int, and your local health and human service organization websites!

Basic preventative measures include washing your hands frequently and thoroughly, avoiding touching your face, mouth and eyes, maintain social distancing, and covering your mouth and nose whenever coughing or sneezing.

Digital Worship

The first of the digital devotional services for Sundays was uploaded to Plymouth's Facebook page at [facebook.com/plymouthfw](https://www.facebook.com/plymouthfw). To watch the video, scroll down to the image that says "Digital Worship 3-15-2020," and click it.

Videos will be posted on the Plymouth Facebook page on Sunday mornings while we practice social distancing; be sure to visit the page for such content. These services can also be found on the church website at plymouthfw.org/sermon-archive.

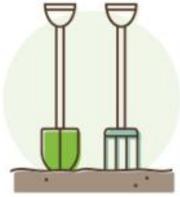
Pastoral Care Hotline

Rev. Murphy and Rev. Phillips continue to be available by phone to talk if needed. Please call the office at 260-423-9424. Our office hours are Tuesday-Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, but the main church line will be open from 10:00 to 11:00 am on Sunday mornings as well. If you have something you'd like to pray for (essentially a phone version of coming forward during our Healing Sunday services), give the church a call on **Sunday, March 22 between 10:00 and 11:00 am** and we will pray with you.

Good Friday Prayer Vigil Signup

Sign up to participate in this year's Good Friday Prayer Vigil on April 10 by emailing the front office at office@plymouthfw.org. Please volunteer for a 15-minute prayer time in this 7:00 am to 7:00 pm prayer vigil connection. Each individual needs a phone in order to receive and make a phone call at your prayer time. Complete instructions with prayer guide will be emailed or mailed to each volunteer.





Final 2019 Growing Hope Globally Report



Pleasant Chapel	\$7376.01	Corn Crop After Expenses
Peace UCC	\$2814.44	Communal Giving
Plymouth Congregational	\$10291.27	Communal Giving
Total Gift	\$20,481.71	

These funds were designated to be equally divided between two recipients: Burkina Faso Gnagha and Honduras Macuelizo.

The Growing Hope Committee would like to thank all who have contributed in ANY way to this project. A special thanks to the Troyer family for their most generous gift of a portion of this year’s crop. This is indeed special and at the heart of the GHG program. The Committee will be meeting soon to put in place the Growing Project for 2020. Together we can help fulfill Jesus charge to “Care for the least of these”.

Thanks and Peace,

The Growing Hope Globally Committee of Pleasant Chapel, Peace UCC, and Plymouth Church

One Great Hour of Sharing

Plymouth Church will be receiving offerings designated for the UCC One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) on March 22. Through the OGHS offering, we are planting seeds of new life.

Because Plymouth activities have been canceled, please consider mailing in your donations with “One Great Hour of Sharing” or “OGHS” in the memo line. Donations can also be made online using the QR code on page 2 of this issue of *The Bell*. Please use the line specifically for OGHS when donating online.



Together, we are investing in communities worldwide: providing education to girls and boys, empowering communities through vocational training, supporting microcredit lending and seeing people through to self-sufficiency, empowering families with skills to support themselves and their neighbors, and participating in sustainable solutions that offer dignity to all. These are just a few ways the OGHS offering touches God’s children, in addition to disaster relief and refugee initiatives.

Through your generosity, the world is a better place. You have an opportunity to plant seeds into the lives of others. Be a co-worker with God. Building, planting, watering...and trusting that God gives growth to all good gifts shared in faith. Thank you for your partnership!

Poor People’s Campaign

Fifty years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and many other leaders launched a Poor People’s Campaign to tackle the pervasive problems of systemic racism, poverty, and militarism. By many measures, these interrelated problems are worse today than they were back in 1968. If you add in climate change and ecological devastation, the urgency is even greater. Their agenda includes demands on the federal and state governments to:

- Ensure the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share of urgent social needs, including decent and affordable housing, quality education and health care, safe and affordable water, and job creation.
- Protect voting rights and prohibit racist gerrymandering, hiring, policing and sentencing policies that exacerbate inequalities for black and brown people.
- End military aggression, ban the proliferation of guns, and demilitarize our communities on the border and the interior.
- Ensure the right to clean water, air, and a healthy environment and increased public investment in jobs programs to transition to a green economy.

If you have questions about the Poor People’s Campaign, contact Jan Evrard at jevrard52@gmail.com or 260-602-1268.

White Privilege and Racial Justice

A couple of years ago, I led a Chapel Class on White Privilege using curriculum from the UCC website. It took several weeks to complete and helped us to recognize how whiteness is ingrained in all aspects of life. However, covering the material was only the beginning. Reverend Traci Blackmon presented a few questions in this material that I feel is important to review.

- If you grew up with an expectation that images on TV, in books, and in movies would share your racial identity, you have white privilege.
- If you have never felt the burden of “representing your race” you have white privilege
- If you have never been presumed as intellectually inferior or incapable solely because of the color of your skin
- If you can presume that history courses offered in your school will provide a narrative about people who look like you
- If this country has never debated the monetary value of all the people who look like you
- If there have never been laws passed to prevent your full participation in democracy
- If you have never been categorized based solely on the color of your skin

The curriculum is still available on the UCC website and I would highly recommend studying it. Most recently, Jane Mildred, also of the Peace & Justice Committee, came upon this interesting article from 2017, “64 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice,” written by Corinne Shutack. The author mentions books to read, movies to watch, companies to work with or avoid, donations you can make, what to write to your legislators etc. You can access the full list at medium.com/@cshutack/what-white-people-can-do-for-racial-justice-f2d18b0e0234.

I hope that through this learning, we might have open and honest conversations that will bring us closer to understanding and caring about each other.

Jan Evrard
Chair of Peace & Justice Committee

Plymouth Women: From Present to Presence

Sesquicentennial Moment on Sunday, March 8, 2020

On September 20, 1870, twenty-six souls made up the first membership of Plymouth Congregational Church. Sixteen women were present, and so our journey began.

During the debate on the Nineteenth Amendment which established women’s suffrage, Plymouth pastor, Rev. Arthur Folsom, took a stand and was one of the featured speakers in an event sponsored by the WCTU to promote the amendment and to advocate for women’s rights. That was 1913.

But, prior to this endorsement—in 1901, in fact—Plymouth’s Bylaws were amended to provide “three or more Deaconesses.” The women of Plymouth were making their presence felt, and it took until 1981 to include men in this group!

Guild and the Circles were important parts of the church development. The first Circle—Plymouth Circle—was organized in 1906 by Mary Sell whose husband was pastor at that time. Thus began the dynamic cycle, with Rev. Charles Houser responsible for setting up the original Guild that included 13 Circles—later increasing to 16—with over 400-500 participants.

After Plymouth Circle, there were Beecher, Friendship, Mary Lyon, Plymouth Pilgrims, Consero, Harmony, Priscilla’s, Mary Martha, Bicknell, Bradford, Standish (still existing and well-known for the sweet pepper jelly, Christmas wreaths, and garlands) and then Group I, Group II, Group III, and the name puzzler: Congo! My mother was a member of this Circle so it was a constant part of my growing up.

I belonged to Mary Martha, an evening Circle of mostly working ladies or young mothers. I was both, and I so looked forward to the second Tuesday of the month. After a morning with four boys ages 1-5 and an afternoon of teaching a class of 35 kindergarteners, an evening with adult conversation was a godsend plus a little delight that Doug was left with all the bath and bedtime duties!



The Guild was made up of all the Circles, had its own officers and program goals, and met on the first Friday of each month throughout the church program year. Two Circles were responsible for the luncheon, usually serving over 100. One Circle would do the food while the other would be responsible for serving and table decorations. I'm sure those luncheons offered every variation of chicken you can imagine.

One of my mother's friends kept a calendar of what she wore to Guild each month so as not to repeat the same outfit two months in a row! That first Friday was always special!

The Guild had one important event planned each year—the church Bazaar, later to become the International Fair. Each Circle had a booth with our wares for sale: everything from homemade goods to Vanilla extract. Congo sold pre-ordered and available large Georgia pecans for \$2.50 per pound. I know because the large cartons would arrive at our home!

The Bazaar/then Fair started with a ticketed dinner Thursday evening and continued through Friday. The luncheon on Friday became so popular that we had two seatings. Downtown businesses and offices called the church office weeks in advance to check for the date and to get their luncheon tickets. The profits had a predetermined destination: a chosen foreign mission. You see, even in the 1950s, the women of Plymouth were Intentionally Global.

In May of 1970—as part of the Centennial Celebration—the Guild presented “The Weddings of a Hundred Years” and included wedding gowns from 1876-1970. Some too fragile to be worn were displayed, others were modeled by the bride, a daughter, or a friend (who could fit into them). My dress was among them and still hangs in the closet having been rejected by two granddaughters. I think the three crinolines and the hoop were the deal breakers!

As women of Plymouth, we continued to make our presence more visible.

In December of 1975, The first women ushers were appointed.

In 1976, Rev. Stephanie Weiner was called as Plymouth's first woman pastor. She was followed by Rev. Clare Walter, Rev. Dale Susan Edmonds, Rev. Carole Green, Rev. Jeane Spoor, and Rev. Ruth Phillips.

I would be amiss if I did not include two important ladies from the '40s and '50s who played a significant part in our youth activities and Sunday School: Helen Boyd, Director of Religious Education, always with a beautiful smile; and soft-spoken Marion Wylie, Sunday School Superintendent, who led the chapel service before the children ventured into their Sunday School classes.

Making our presence even more prominent, in 1984, Carole Green became Plymouth's first woman Moderator, a position that began alternating between women and men in 1982. Carole's successors include Ann Silletto, Barbara Rathbun, Laura Rudolph (twice), Linda Balthaser, Barbara Bugg, and Beth Walker.

March is designated as National Women's History Month. Plymouth's women were present in 1870, but our 150-year journey was never limited to just a month. Our ongoing presence has inspired, enriched, and grown; and I can only imagine the opportunities the next 150 will bring.

Gale Cunningham



Long Distance Sunday School



The past few days have us all scrambling to figure out how to do our learning, working and living in a new setting. During this time, my goal is to support families and to keep our kids socially connected. We might learn a little about worship along the way, too.

During our time apart, our Sunday school kids can keep learning about the parts of worship through at-home activities. Our current unit was on the Lord's Prayer — and luckily focused on coloring a series of giant posters. Smaller versions of those posters will be in the mail to families, soon! We are also trying to find spaces for our kids to have social time online. As we figure out ways to keep our kids connected, I am

communicating with families through e-mails — if you or a family you know would like to be included in these updates, please let me know.

By the end of the week, I hope to have our first set of Sunday-School-By-Mail boxes sent off. This first box will include coloring posters, simple discussion starters, a few art supplies to help with the coloring, and more goodies. I know my boys love getting mail, and I hope these boxes will give families some fun, off-line activities to pass the time. Over the next few weeks I am planning more boxes that will help families celebrate Holy Week and Easter, and finish off the school year learning about Baptism.

I'll also be sharing online resources on the Plymouth Generations page on Facebook. If you're not there yet, come and join us! There are already suggestions of e-books to read, coloring pages to download, and pictures of our Plymouth friends who we already miss so much!

It will likely take a bit of experimentation to figure out how to best support our families during this time. Please, check in on one another, help your kids connect with their friends, and keep in touch.

Katie Watson
kjwatson4@gmail.com



April Birthdays



2	Joyce Black	15	Sharon Christian	21	Gina Arata
3	Sam Lipscomb	16	Jane Meredith	21	Allie Brown
3	Jessamyn Schmidt	16	Monty Millage	22	Mary Ann Sidell
4	Jacqueline Brabbs	16	Eric Gilliom	22	Rhys Rudolph
6	Sally Gerard	16	Beth Price	23	Randal Lawrence
6	John Gardner	16	Collin Ramsey	24	Sandy Moliere
7	Jeffrey Kolkman	17	Steve Ross	24	Robin Ames
7	Heather Brackeen	17	Chris Randolph	24	Michael Walter
8	Jeff Markley	18	John Donley	25	Diane Lasley
11	Deb Miller	18	Debby Compagnone	25	Claire Roney
11	Courtney Dienelt	18	Audrey Velagapudi	26	John Hoffman
12	Linda South	19	Lenora Lewark	27	Chris Lasley
13	Thomas Baker	20	Joni Sutton	29	Bill Vlabel
15	Scott Rigdon	21	George Irmscher		

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Whoever You Are, Wherever You Are on Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here!