



2860 Coventry Road, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120
216.921.3510 • www.plymouthchurchucc.org

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister

Pastor Dillon Shipman
Designated Associate Minister

Leslie Szalay
Director of Christian Education

"My house is a house of prayer for all people." (Isaiah 56:7) • An Open and Affirming Congregation

July 17, 2023

Dear members and friends of Plymouth Church,

No one will ever replace Jim Riggs. Someone, though, must succeed him.

Finding that person is now the objective of a new committee at Plymouth Church.

On Sunday, July 9, a group of five musically-minded Plymouth Church members met and prayed with Senior Minister Matt Wooster to begin the process of finding a new Minister of Music and the Arts.

Its first task is to define the position Jim held with distinction for 25 years. Jim left big shoes to fill. In addition to playing organ, Jim also directed Plymouth's chancel, handbell, and community choirs, maintained a music library, oversaw ArtsPlymouth, and served as a liaison to the larger cultural community in Northeast Ohio.

Once it has defined the position, the committee will then post the job, review and meet with applicants, and eventually name a successor. Along the way, it is likely a few finalists will "audition" as guest organists and music directors.

It is everyone's hope to have a successor in place this fall. However, this is not a process to be rushed. Music and the arts are vital in the life and ministry of Plymouth Church. It is therefore critical that this committee take the time to find the right person, just as our predecessors were patient in their search for Jim.

Here now is a list of those serving on the search committee, along with a summary of their musical backgrounds and history at Plymouth Church.

SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Christine Bretz, co-chair: Christine has been a member at Plymouth Church almost 20 years. She serves as vice chair of the Worship Department and on the Chancel Committee. She greatly appreciates the value of music as an expression of faith and the power of music in the worship experience.



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Ella Davis, co-chair: Ella has been a member at Plymouth Church since May 2022. She holds two degrees in vocal performance and enjoyed a long and fruitful career in music as an educator, administrator, choral conductor, and church music ministry educator.

Karen Kolendo, secretary: Karen has been a member of Plymouth Church and a member of the Chancel and Handbell Choirs 16 years. She also has served many years on the ArtsPlymouth and Personnel Committees. She now seeks a new music minister who will work for peace, justice, mercy, and love for all God's children.

Zachary Lewis, communications director: Zachary has been a member of Plymouth Church since 2020. He was for many years the classical music critic of The Plain Dealer and now serves as Communications Manager at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Kathy Stiles, communications: Kathy has been a member of Plymouth Church since fall 2022, when she moved to Cleveland from Texas. She has spent two years in handbell choir but has been singing in church, school, college, and community choirs all her life. Last January, she sang with the Cleveland Orchestra in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Chorus.

With trust and hope,

Christine Bretz

Ella Davis

Matt Wooster

Search committee co-chair

Search Committee co-chair

Senior Minister