

The Perspective

Volume 47

Number 6

June 2024

June 2

Sacrament of Communion

A Sabbath Informed Life | Rev. Dr. Matt Wooster preaching
Deuteronomy 5:12-15 and Mark 2:23-28

June 9

Pursuing God's Will | Rev. Brian Shields preaching
Mark 3:20-35

June 16

Father's Day

Seedy People | Pastor Dillon Shipman preaching
Mark 4:26-34

June 23

Say So | Rev. Dr. Matt Wooster preaching
Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32

June 30

Worship on the Lawn

Out of the Depths | Rev. Dr. Matt Wooster preaching
Psalm 130

Worship is at 10:00 am in the Sanctuary & online at plymouthchurchucc.org



***An Open & Affirming and Just Peace Congregation
of the United Church of Christ***

Our Mission is to be a Christ-centered community led by the Holy Spirit that supports the spiritual journey of all who strive to boldly live out their faith in the world. We are committed to diversity, spiritual growth, and putting our faith into action locally and throughout the world.

Plymouth Church Leadership 2024

Council President	David Turner
Council Vice-President	Russell Lamb
Secretary	Andrew Cleminshaw
Treasurer	Jennifer Gerard
Assistant Treasurer	Linda Sempliner
Adult Faith & Life - Co-Chairs	Ken Rogers Brenda Grauer
Building & Grounds (B&G) - Chair	Steve Kaufman
Caring - Chair	Yaa Ansah
Children & Youth (C&Y) - Chair	Carolyn Jillson
Evangelism & Growth (E&G) - Chair	Jonathan Kraft Carrie Wise
Giving - Chair	Mendle Adams
Partnership & Service (P&S) - Chair	J. Horner
Worship - Chair	Kendalle Cobb
Personnel Chair	John Markt
Foundation Chair	Mitch Sanborn
Council Youth Member @Large	Catherine Cleminshaw
Council Member @Large	Mary Smith
Council Member @Large	Lucas Hershberger
Council Member @ Large	Sara Martin
Council Member @ Large	Robert Woolfrey

Plymouth Staff

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster
Senior Minister

mwooster@plymouthchurchucc.org

Pastor Dillon Shipman

Designated Associate Minister

dshipman@plymouthchurchucc.org

Leslie Szalay

Director of Christian Education

lszalay@plymouthchurchucc.org

Paul Holter

Facility Manager

pholter@plymouthchurchucc.org

Kathryn Kundrat

Finance Administrator

kkundrat@plymouthchurchucc.org

Brenna Threatt

Office & Communications Administrator

office@plymouthchurchucc.org

Church Office

216-921-3510

Pastor's Corner

Dear Plymouth Church,

At the end of May, I proposed to Church Council a process to create a developmental plan for the next chapter of ministry at Plymouth Church, and I hope that the entire church community will be engaged in a process of discernment and hope.

Developmental planning, also known as long-range planning, seeks to build on the church's shared sense of identity and purpose to envision what we feel called to do next. Starting with the mission of the congregation, printed below, this process will gather information about where we are now, and the opportunities for what we feel called to be. With a vision in mind, we will identify options for what we need to learn or do in order get there.

Our Mission

Plymouth Church is a Christ-centered community led by the Holy Spirit that supports the spiritual journey of all who strive to boldly live out their faith in the world in service to God.

The whole congregation will be invited to participate by giving input and sharing ideas. A planning committee of four to six church members will be appointed by Council to shepherd the process and to create planning recommendations. I expect that opportunities for congregational input to be planned for the fall of this year.

In the meantime, the planning committee needs to be formed in order to guide this intentional process. If you are interested in serving on this important committee, or have a recommendation, please contact me or the President of Council, David Turner. The qualities of planning committee members include an openness to what God calls the congregation to be in the future; willingness to learn new things and think new thoughts; comfort with discussing ideas without rushing to conclusions; willingness to put time, energy, and prayer into this effort.

The process and theological grounding for this planning are well described in the book *Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann of the Alban Institute. This book has been a trusted guide for me over the years, and much of what I've shared in this letter is based on their insights.

Plymouth Church has a tradition of meaningful worship and ministry, and I am excited to discover together what our future will hold.

Peace,



Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster, Senior Minister



From Dillon's Desk

Dear friends,

For the past few years, I've had several people come up to me, from the many number of communities I am or have been part of, and ask why we need to make such a big deal about Pride. "We've come such a long way... I just don't know that we need to hear about justice and equality for LGBTQ+ people all the time." The truth is, in many of the communities and bubbles we find ourselves in, that may be true. It seems as if we've made incredible progress and perhaps we should focus more of our attention elsewhere.

Unfortunately, while we have come a long way, we still have very far to go on the journey. In the past five years, LGBTQ+ persons have been facing heightened violence and harm; teens coming out are still being kicked out of their homes and families for trying to be their authentic selves; legislation being proposed against LGBTQ+ persons is at an all-time high this year; the suicide attempt rate among LGBTQ+ youth is nearly four times the rate of straight, cisgender youth.

It's not easy being part of the LGBTQ+ community. As much as we shine our lights, there are many people in our world who want to silence us and make us invisible. That's why Pride is so important, because we have to stand up and stand out for each other. The power of community is profoundly important, and that's why we focus so much on LGBTQ+ inclusion here at Plymouth. We are striving to do our part to change the world for someone who may feel like their life is not worth living because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

So, whether you identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, or are an ally, June is a month set aside to celebrate the uniqueness that is you. There is no one way to exist as a person in this world, even as a queer person, and I hope that you take a moment and recognize what is so special and unique about yourself. Know that you are perfect as you are, exactly as you were created to be by God.

I'll leave you with one of my favorite poems that I'll be meditating daily on this month.

Amen. Happy Pride, Plymouth. Let's celebrate together this month!

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Dillon Shipman

From Dillon's Desk, cont.

Jesus at the Gay Bar

by Jay Holme

He's here in the midst of it -
right here at the center of the dance floor,
robes hitched up to His knees
to make it easy to spin.

At some point in the evening
a boy will touch the hem of His robe
and beg to be healed, beg to be
anything other than this;

and He will reach His arms out,
sweat-damp, and weary from dance.
He'll cup this boy's face in His hand
and say,

"My beautiful child,
there is nothing in this heart of yours
that ever needs to be healed."



Pride Parade

Plymouth Church will once again join the Cleveland Pride March on Saturday, June 1st. The parade staging will begin at 10 AM with the march starting at 11 AM from Memorial Plaza (Mall A) Rockwell Ave. Plymouth Church and Pilgrim Church UCC will also have a booth at the Pride festival throughout the afternoon. We invite all to join us at the parade and festival.

**Come and support the LGBTQ
community!**

Introduction of New Director of Music & the Arts

After months of prayerfully reviewing, interviewing, and meeting with candidates from all over the country, the search committee recommended, and George A. Sargeant accepted, the position of Director of Music & the Arts, to begin on August 1, 2024.

George is a native of Erin, New York, a small hamlet in the Elmira-Corning region. He grew up in the Lutheran Church (ELCA) and remembers being fascinated with the organ by the age of three. He began showing musical aptitude when he was five, but family circumstances made formal musical instruction difficult if not impossible before high school.

Shortly after his confirmation, George and his family attended a joint Lutheran/Roman Catholic service at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York to mark the 450th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, the principal Lutheran statement of faith. Here, he heard a real pipe organ played well for the first time and the experience confirmed what he had long sensed to be his calling in life. At the beginning of his junior year his home church, Our Saviour's Lutheran in Horseheads, hired as its music director Charles Hickman, who had been the Associate Dean of the School of Sacred Music at Union Theological Seminary in New York and who had retired to the Elmira area. Charlie quickly noticed George's talent and offered to teach him for free.

George is no stranger to Ohio, having pursued undergraduate studies at Ashland College before it became a university. While there, he studied organ with John Gilbert and piano with Elizabeth Pastor. He was an active participant in the music program at Trinity Lutheran Church in Ashland, where music director Ron Marenchin became a mentor in church music.

Following completion of his studies in Ashland in 1987, George relocated to the Boston area, where he has lived ever since. He received a Master of Sacred Music degree from Boston University School of Theology, where he studied organ with John Ferris and choral conducting with Gerald Weale. He interned as Organist at Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church in Natick, which ended up becoming his first settled position.

Towards the end of his time at Fisk, George enrolled at Longy School of Music in Cambridge, studying organ with Peter Sykes and earning an Artist Diploma in Organ Performance. Shortly thereafter he found his way to the United Church of Christ when he was appointed Director of Music at Memorial Congregational Church in Sudbury. While there he undertook some private choral conducting coaching with Roger Mansen. After his departure from MCC he served as Interim Director of Music at Church of the Covenant in downtown Boston.

For the past nineteen years George has been Associate Organist and Choirmaster at Boston's historic Old South Church in Copley Square, where he shared responsibility for leading the semi-professional choir. As part of a large music staff he helped establish two new weekly services featuring non-traditional styles of music. He was also heavily involved in the ongoing restoration of the church's 1921 Ernest M. Skinner organ.

Introduction of New Director of Music & the Arts

George is a diehard ecumenic. In addition to his Sunday morning work, he regularly plays Saturday and Sunday afternoon Masses at Roman Catholic churches and has held positions at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Sudbury and St. Joseph's Church in Boston.

Outside of the church George engages in several other musical endeavors. From 1999 to 2006 and again from 2012 to 2014 he was the accompanist for The A Cappella Singers, a women's community chorus that draws its membership from several of Boston's western suburbs. Following the retirement of the choir's then-director, George was asked to step into the director's role and remained in that position until 2023. He also plays recitals occasionally, mostly in Boston venues such as Trinity Church, Copley Square, St. Paul's Cathedral, and Methuen Memorial Music Hall. He has also performed at Washington National Cathedral, St. Thomas Church in New York City, and First-Plymouth Congregational Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Those who have worked with George describe him as a “brilliant organist and experienced choir director. He has good rapport with both volunteer and paid musicians, and uses a consistent and studied approach to conducting rehearsals. I recommend him with my whole heart” (choir member).

“George is a talented musician, organist, and conductor of singers. He has a broad exposure to choral, organ playing and instrumental ensembles. George has been successful in working with choirs and is efficient in his rehearsal preparation.

George is courteous, professional and never blistering or demeaning in his approach” (colleague in music ministry).

In his spare time, George enjoys two hobbies, neither of which has anything to do with the other or with sacred music. He has been an avid comic book collector since he was eleven years old and has amassed a collection numbering well over ten thousand. More recently, he turned a childhood fascination into a middle age pursuit and became an amateur storm chaser. George also loves cats, though he does not have any at the moment.

George is looking forward to becoming part of the staff at Plymouth Church and joining with them, the choir, and the congregation in the worship of God, the building up of the beloved community, and leading the music program to new heights of excellence.

The search committee included co-chairs Ella Davis and Christine Bretz, Karen Kolendo, Zach Lewis, Kathy Stiles, and Rev. Matt Wooster.



Children & Youth

CHILDREN & YOUTH Parent Meeting & Picnic

C & Y families are invited to come give feedback and share ideas about the faith formation programs & events for families and children at Plymouth Church.

LET'S TALK ABOUT...

- Sunday school
- Children's church
- Worship Space
- Youth Group
- Service Trip
- Spooktacular
- Sugar Plum
- Christmas Pageant
- OWL

POSSIBLE FUTURE PROGRAMS INCLUDING...

- First Sundays
- Parent study groups
- Faith at home
- Volunteering/giving
- Babysitting club

Bring the kids & let them play while we meet! The agenda will be the same for both meetings.

Sign Up in the Welcome Center or contact Leslie or Dillon

June 18

6:30 PM

or

July 14

11:30 AM



Plymouth Kids Calendar

June—July

June 2

Communion | No Sunday School

June 16

Children's Church begins

June 18

Parent Meeting

June 23

Children's Church

June 30

Worship on the lawn | Children's Church

July 7

Communion | No Sunday School

July 14

Children's Church
Parent Meeting

July 21

Children's Church

July 28

Worship on the lawn | Children's Church



Summer Children's Church

Children in preschool through middle school are welcomed to join us in the garden Sunday mornings beginning June 16th.

In our *Caring for Creation* summer program, we connect the Bible lesson to the garden through stories, games, & crafts.

Volunteer at the Cleveland Food Bank

Plymouth volunteers for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank meet on the 2nd Tuesday and the 3rd Wednesday of every month, from 6:00-8:00 pm. Volunteers are invited to join us this month on **Tuesday, June 11 and Wednesday, June 19** at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, at 13815 Coit Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44110. We will gather afterwards for a bite to eat and a cup of cheer.

Contact Paul Qua pqua@classicautocampus.com

Or 216-544-7501



**Greater Cleveland
Food Bank**

Coffee Hour



**Volunteer Sign Up
in the
Welcome Center**

**Shaker Heights
Hunger Center
Volunteering**

June 17, 19, 24, & 26
Shaker Heights
Community Church

charlene_nevans@hotmail.com

Plymouth Church

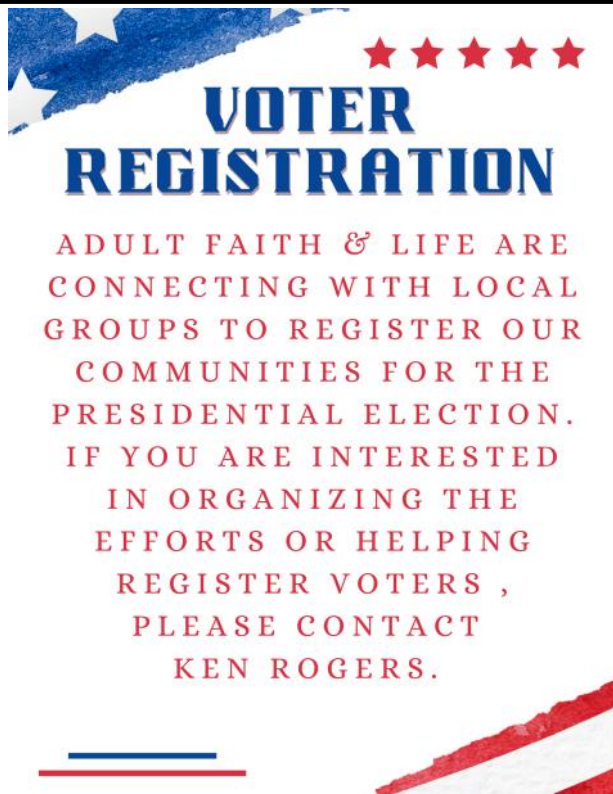
**FOSSIL
FUEL**

June 12th
8:30 am in the Candy
Circle Conference Room



Plymouth Choirs Celebrate 2023-2024 Season

The Plymouth Choir and Plymouth Ringers concluded the annual season of worship leadership in May. On Sunday, May 12, the congregation recognized the interim choral co-directors, Lia Bendix and John Mills, and interim bell choir director, David Turner, with thanksgiving and a gift for their excellent leadership. Thanks to all of the choir members for the gifts of music, time, and dedication! These choirs of Plymouth Church are truly communities of ministry.



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VOTER REGISTRATION

ADULT FAITH & LIFE ARE CONNECTING WITH LOCAL GROUPS TO REGISTER OUR COMMUNITIES FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ORGANIZING THE EFFORTS OR HELPING REGISTER VOTERS , PLEASE CONTACT KEN ROGERS.



BE CURIOUS
SURVIVING AND THRIVING
IN AN ANGRY WORLD

July & August Sermon Series

In this series, we will explore, experiment, and challenge ourselves to be curious, celebrating the practices that help us to open in curiosity. Following the example of Jesus, we will explore curiosity in worship and ask plenty of questions. This divided world needs more curious questions. Let's explore together!

New Sign!

A new church sign will be installed May 30 (weather permitting) with landscaping & lighting completed June 3-4

Parking Lot Project

The church parking lot will be repaired this summer, beginning the week of July 15. It will be completed in three phases: 1. Southeast half of the lot, 2. Northwest half of the lot, 3. Asphalt layer over whole lot.

This plan ensures half of the parking lot will be available at all times, allowing congregants with disabilities to easily access the church. Street parking is available and encouraged throughout the project.

The project requires four weeks to complete, concluding by August 16.

Please contact Paul Holter with any questions or comments

(pholter@plymouthchurchucc.org, 216-751-0584)



Second Annual Pilgrimage to the Southern Border

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
JANUARY 13-20, 2025
MORE INFORMATION
COMING NEXT MONTH

Adult Faith and Life Department

Announcing the 2024 Summer Book Study on Immigration

In 2023, seventeen people at Plymouth participated in the first book study on immigration and found the book *Hard Edges: Serving the Front Lines at the Border* a helpful book in beginning to envision the realities of US southern border immigration. This study launched Plymouth's interest in knowing more about immigration in our country and enrolling our congregation into national UCC efforts in "Becoming an Immigrant-Welcoming Congregation".

This year, we are pleased to introduce a new 2024 publication as our book for Plymouth's summer immigration book study: *A Map of Future Ruins: Borders and Belonging*, by Lauren Markham. This book has already received positive acclaim for its relevance to understanding global migration.

"This stunning meditation on nostalgia, heritage, and compassion asks us to dismantle the stories we've been told—and told ourselves—in order to naturalize the forms of injustice we've come to understand as order."—Leslie Jamison, author of *The Empathy Exams*

Book Description: "When and how did migration become a crime? Why does ancient Greece remain so important to the West's idea of itself? How does nostalgia fuel the exclusion and demonization of migrants today?"

In 2021, Lauren Markham, the author of the book went to Greece, in search of her own Greek heritage and to cover the aftermath of a fire that burned down the largest refugee camp in Europe. Almost no one had wanted the camp—not activists, not the country's growing neo-fascist movement, not even the government. But almost immediately, on scant evidence, six young Afghan refugees were arrested for the crime.

Markham soon saw that she was tracing a broader narrative, rooted not only in centuries of global history but also in myth. A mesmerizing, trailblazing synthesis of reporting, history, memoir, and essay, *A Map of Future Ruins* helps us see that the stories we tell about migration don't just explain what happened. They are oracles: they predict the future."

You may order a discounted copy of the book by signing up at the Welcome Center at church or by calling the church office. The cost of the book is \$24, but church members will be reimbursed \$14 as part of the Adult Faith and Life Department budget. A study guide will be provided to participants before the first session.

Our study group will meet for four discussion sessions throughout the summer, beginning Wednesday, June 19th, and three other Wednesday evenings throughout July and August on dates the study group will determine at the first session. We will begin with a potluck dinner on the 19th at 5:30pm and discuss the introductory first three chapters of the book (ending with pg. 39). Discussion leaders for the summer will be Dr Faye Gary and Rev. Brenda Grauer. We are also currently in conversation with the book's author about being present with us at one of our sessions or at another time during the summer.

We hope you will consider joining friends and neighbors of Plymouth for this important discussion, relevant to our time now, but increasingly describing a much larger, future, global mass of humanity seeking refuge for one reason or another, as they are forced from their homelands!



Summer Worship

10 AM (until Sep 1)

Locations

June: Sanctuary

July-Labor Day: Chapel

Worship on the Lawn

June 30, July 28, August 25



Submission Deadline

Monday, June 17

Pastoral Relations Committee

Do you have questions, comments, or concerns you'd like to share with the Minister? The members of the Pastoral Relations Committee can help Church members connect with our pastoral staff. Both Reverend Matt and Pastor Dillon have a group of members who provide advice and counsel. We also offer guidance and support to our Ministers

Committee for Rev. Matt

Chris Karr

Cindy Chapman

Beth Sanborn

Wayne Hall

Paul Qua

Committee for Pastor Dillon

Rick Johnson

Will Sanborn

Norma Storer

Betsy Stueber

Kendalle Cobb

Happy Birthday!

To our Four Score Plus

Milton Davis

Rich Gray

Garcia Green

Jean Harper

Donald Mann

Tim Mendelsohn

Terry Shockey

