Rain, sleet, and the rare snow flake may have descended on central Iowa the last weekend of April, but the cold weather was no match for the spirit of Plymouth’s 2019 Confirmation Class. From April 26-28, twenty-three eighth graders and their guides put a capstone on this confirmation journey with a weekend retreat to the Y Camp in Boone. After two years of weekly meetings to engage in acts of service, build community through fellowship, and learn about our sacred story through theme nights, Plymouth’s confirmants were well equipped to make decisions about the next step in their faith journey.

Guided by eight faithful adult guides—some parents, some not—and taught by Plymouth ministers Lindsey Braun and Laura Robinson, on retreat our youth earnestly shared things that represent them to help create our sacred space. They built an altar of pocket watches and beloved stuffed animals, basket balls and family photos, bracelets from grandma and rocks from special places, games and lanterns and so much more. And together, they explored what it means to affirm the faith. A huge part of affirming faith is claiming a community that will support, challenge, and encourage us on our journey. We talked about how our Plymouth community depends on us showing up in all our unique and differing ways with and for each other. Our youth spent time answering the questions: Where have I been? What do I believe? (continued on page 3)
Christ is risen! Now what?

We have arrived in the “Now What?” season. You probably know it by its more common name: Easter! In church, “Easter” designates, not one day, but fifty—from Easter Sunday (April 21) all the way on to Pentecost (June 9 this year). The fifty days of the Easter season are thought to correspond to the period of time during which the Risen Christ appeared to the first disciples as they waited for the Holy Spirit to birth the church.

As I think about Easter this year (the season, not the day), I find that I am drawn to a question I learned from my predecessor and mentor David Ruhe. The question is one in a series of three, David’s rubric for interpreting and preaching from a biblical text. Any sermon, he says, in wrestling with scripture should deal with the questions of:

- What? (What did the original author intend to convey to the original audience?),
- So What? (What might this mean for us today?)
- Now What? (What are we going to do about it?).

It occurs to me that this rubric can also make some sense of where we have been in the last couple months and where I hope we will go from here. All through Lent, and right up through Easter Sunday, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ have served as our “what.” We have listened closely to the teachings of Jesus about God’s rule and what God wants from our lives. We have witnessed his abandonment, his suffering and the ultimate triumph of Easter.

Jesus is our “what.” And, at least in the sermons I have preached, our motto has supplied our “so what.” We agree to differ. We resolve to love. We unite to serve. This is our response to what we have seen of God in Jesus. This is the way we try to live together in the light of Christ’s resurrection. The motto shows us how we belong to one another because we belong to God.

We have got the what. And we’ve got the so what. So…now what?

I think that is what the Easter season is all about.

As people who belong to the Risen Christ, we have got some work to do. Over the coming weeks, our Narrative Lectionary readings will lead us through the Acts of the Apostles and Paul’s Letter to the Romans. And when we attend to these texts we will discover a remarkable thing: for the first generation of Christians, nothing mattered more than the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile. What had been two separate religious and racial groups—deeply divided and hostile to one another—are brought together as one body in the church.

Christ is risen! Now what? Hostility is overcome. Dividing walls topple and fall. Enemies become friends. Christ is risen! And now is the time to work with the God who wants to mend our relationships.

Easter is always a busy season in the life of Plymouth. We will celebrate the confirmation of our 8th grade students and baccalaureate for graduating seniors. We will send the Matins Choir out on tour and make plans for Vacation Bible School. Church boards will wrap up the program year with potlucks. Church staff will receive their annual performance reviews. Church leaders will wrestle with the question of how best to align our staff for the next season in the life of the church.

This could be a bunch of busywork…or it could be deeply meaningful. Much will depend on the way we approach it.

Easter is risen! Now what? Now we have a church. Now we get to work. Now we watch in amazement as God moves among us and makes us new.

Welcome to the Easter season here at Plymouth Church!
What’s the next step in my journey? With whom will I travel? And they spent time in worship.

Our youth also got to be kids. Though a lot of our playtime was “indoor recess,” our kids played ping pong and foosball, bouldered and built remote control cars, watched movies and created skits, and even got outside to hike and cheer each other on while climbing the rock wall and play gaga ball and roast marshmallows and and and… we slept well on Saturday night!

By Sunday morning, when it was time to write their decision statements (I have decided to be confirmed because… or I have decided not to be confirmed because…) most had achieved clarity.

Their answers were diverse, but each statement had integrity. And whether the answer was yes, no, or not yet a common refrain was the value of the Plymouth community to their lives. Whether or not they know quite what to make of this God thing, our young people know that Plymouth is a place they can keep asking questions, keep growing in a supportive community, keep calling their home. I think that's something to celebrate.

On May 4, we will confirm twenty-one new members into the life of faith and full membership here at Plymouth. And their classmates who choose not to be confirmed at this time will be right there in the front row, cheering them on. I hope you'll join us in the celebration!
Matins Home Concert

Sunday, June 2, 2019
7pm, Sanctuary
Reception following in Waveland Hall
under the direction of Susan Waller
accompanist, Carl Gravander
PLYMOUTH WOMEN SPECIAL EVENT

The Plymouth Women are sponsoring a fun springtime event! All are invited to join us for a private tour of Dogpatch Urban Gardens on Tuesday, May 14 from 1-3 p.m. The farm has been in operation for three seasons, and specializes in growing annual vegetable crops using organic methods. Dogpatch strives to cultivate community through nutrition, family values, and environmental conversation. We will meet at the farm at 5085 Meredith Drive. Use the parking lot across the street on 51st Street (handicap parking available at the farm). Our tour will end with a visit to the farm’s gift shop, where unique merchandise may be purchased. You can visit dogpatchurbangardens.com for more information. There is no cost for this event. In case of rain, we will tour on Wednesday, May 15. Please sign up for the tour at plymouthchurch.com/resources/register-events. Questions? Contact Sunny Cook at 515.422.7282.

CURRENT HAPPENINGS

VBS IS COMING!

Join us this summer as we voyage to Mars and Beyond! We will explore the wonders of the universe and God’s power at work within us. Opportunities are available for everyone to take part in this exciting journey. Childcare will be provided for those under 3, while ages 3- middle school will engage in worship, storytelling, science, art, music, active games, and mission activities tailored to their age group! High schoolers and adults are encouraged to join in by volunteering. There really will be something for everyone! You can volunteer to help with music, skits, dinner, set up, tear down, decorating, lead a small group or activity station, and more. Mark your calendars to blast off June 23-27 and join us as we Go Beyond—with Faith, Boldness, Kindness, Thankfulness, and Hope!

CELL PHONES FOR CUBA

The Cuba Partnership Team at Plymouth Church continues to collect used cell phones, which will be given next fall to people at Ebenezer Baptist Church, our “sister church” in Havana, Cuba. All cell phones that operate on “SIM” cards will be acceptable. Phones can be left at the Plymouth office during regular hours. You can contact the Cuba Partnership Team’s co-chairs Esther Burgett at esburgett@aol.com or Jan Campbell at jancampbell@me.com.

FARM STAND UPDATE

Please welcome back Marie Kashindi to her fourth year selling produce at Plymouth’s farm stand, and please welcome Beulline Bucumi. The Plymouth farm stand is in its eighth year, and is a partnership between Plymouth and Lutheran Service of Iowa’s Global Greens program. Global Greens is an extensive network of gardens, a market and education for refugee farmers in Des Moines. The market at Plymouth plays a key role in helping them reach their future goals because we provide a safe space where they can work on fundamentals, such as record keeping, practicing English and learning what vegetables are best for the American market. The market will run Saturday nights and Sunday mornings May through October.

WELCOMING MIGRANTS COMMITTEE

The Welcoming Migrants Committee has two upcoming opportunities for Plymouth members:

On Saturday, May 4 from 9-11:30 a.m. in Waveland Hall, Erica Johnson from American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) will give a presentation on how to welcome migrants in our community.

On Sunday, June 2 at 12:15 p.m. in the Greenwood Room, Mary Ellen Barber, Clinic Coordinator from Des Moines Justice for Our Neighbor (JFOJ) will speak about their work with migrants, asylees and refugees, and volunteer opportunities.

MAY LUNCH & LEARN

You won’t want to miss the next Lunch & Learn on May 16. Lunch: Gather at 12:15 p.m. in Waveland Hall for a yummy meal catered by Becky Smith. Learn: The team from Plymouth’s Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) will present a multi-faceted program that promises to be both thoughtful and educational. The presentation will focus on incorporating anti-racism into spiritual practice. We will watch a video, hear about ARC’s progress and future plans, participate in discussion, and have an opportunity to ask questions. Hand-outs will be provided for further reflection. Cost for the meal is $10 and reservations are due by noon on May 14. Register by calling the church office (515.255.3149), in person Sunday, May 12 in Waveland Hall, or online at plymouthchurch.com/resources under Register for Events. If you forget to make a reservation, you are invited to bring your own lunch and enjoy our program. As always, men are welcome. Join us!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>AMENS, 6:45 a.m.</td>
<td>AMENS, 6:45 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Singers Warm Up, 8 a.m.</td>
<td>Tai Chi, 7 a.m.</td>
<td>AMENS, 6:45 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Graders Meet to Join, 8:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Quilting, 10 a.m.</td>
<td>Career Closet Meeting, 5 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matins Warm Up, 8:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Yoga, 5:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Board of Christian Education, 5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare, 8:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Board of Benevolences, 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Board of Christian Stewardship, 5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worship/Confirmation (9), 9 &amp; 11 a.m.:</strong></td>
<td>Board of Music &amp; Fine Arts, 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Quilting, 5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikira Hernandez-Evans (11)</td>
<td>Anti-Racism Committee, 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Line Dancing, 6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church School, 9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>COCI Centering Prayer, 5:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Stephen Ministers Meeting, 6:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancel Choir Warm Up, 9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>RENEW Leadership Team, 6:15 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After Worship Fellowship, 10 a.m. &amp; Noon</td>
<td>Troop 50 Scout Meeting, 7 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>W</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship Forum, 10:10 a.m.</td>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower Delivery Team, Noon</td>
<td><strong>U</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancel Choir Council, 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>S</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Promise Training, 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>O</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis LGBTQ Committee, 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post H.S. OWL, 2 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **12** | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. |
| Matins, 8:15 a.m. | Tai Chi, 7 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Childcare, 8:45 a.m. | Quilting, 10 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Worship/Teacher Appreciation, 9 & 11 a.m.: | Family Promise, 4 p.m. | **W** |
| Valerie Miller-Coleman | Plymouth Women Board Meeting, 4 p.m. | **C** |
| Church School, 9:15 a.m. | Yoga, 5:15 p.m. | **O** |
| Chancel Choir Warm Up, 9:45 a.m. | COCI Centering Prayer, 5:45 p.m. | **M** |
| After Worship Fellowship, 10 a.m. & Noon | Board of Christian Social Action, 6 p.m. | **N** |
| Fellowship Forum, 10:10 a.m. | Troop 50 Scout Meeting, 7 p.m. | **O** |
| Flower Delivery Team, Noon | Transition from Prison Meeting, 7 p.m. | **M** |
| Anti-Racism Education Subcommittee, 12:30 p.m. | **N** |
| Family Promise, 4 p.m. | **O** |

| **13** | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. |
| Matins, 8:15 a.m. | Tai Chi, 7 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Childcare, 8:45 a.m. | Quilting, 10 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Worship/Senior Recognition, 9 & 11 a.m.: | Family Promise, 4 p.m. | **W** |
| Matt Mardis-LeCroy | Plymouth Women Board Meeting, 4 p.m. | **C** |
| Chancel Choir Warm Up, 9:45 a.m. | Yoga, 5:15 p.m. | **O** |
| After Worship Fellowship, 10 a.m. & Noon | COCI Centering Prayer, 5:45 p.m. | **M** |
| Fellowship Forum, 10:10 a.m. | Board of Christian Social Action, 6 p.m. | **N** |
| Parent Youth Tour Meeting, 10:15 a.m. | Troop 50 Scout Meeting, 7 p.m. | **O** |
| Flower Delivery Team, Noon | Transition from Prison Meeting, 7 p.m. | **M** |

| **19** | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. |
| Matins Warm Up, 8:15 a.m. | Tai Chi, 7 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Green Team Plant Sale, 8:30 a.m. | Quilting, 10 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Senior Check In, 8:30 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. | **W** |
| Childcare, 8:45 a.m. | Plymouth Women Board Meeting, 4 p.m. | **C** |
| **Worship/Senior Recognition, 9 & 11 a.m.:** | Yoga, 5:15 p.m. | **O** |
| Matt Mardis-LeCroy | COCI Centering Prayer, 5:45 p.m. | **M** |
| Chancel Choir Warm Up, 9:45 a.m. | Board of Christian Social Action, 6 p.m. | **N** |
| After Worship Fellowship, 10 a.m. & Noon | Troop 50 Scout Meeting, 7 p.m. | **O** |
| Fellowship Forum, 10:10 a.m. | Transition from Prison Meeting, 7 p.m. | **M** |
| Parent Youth Tour Meeting, 10:15 a.m. | Flower Delivery Team, Noon | **M** |
| Flower Delivery Team, Noon | **N** |

| **26** | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. |
| Matins Warm Up, 8:15 a.m. | Tai Chi, 7 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Childcare, 8:45 a.m. | Quilting, 10 a.m. | Family Promise, 4 p.m. |
| Worship, 9 & 11 a.m.: | Family Promise, 4 p.m. | **W** |
| Nikira Hernandez-Evans (11) | Plymouth Women Board Meeting, 4 p.m. | **C** |
| Chancel Choir Warm Up, 9:45 a.m. | Yoga, 5:15 p.m. | **O** |
| After Worship Fellowship, 10 a.m. & Noon | COCI Centering Prayer, 5:45 p.m. | **M** |
| **W** |
| **O** |
| **M** |

| **27** | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. | AMENS, 6:45 a.m. |
| Matins Warm Up, 8:15 a.m. | Memorial Day, Church Closed | Memorial Day, Church Closed |
| Childcare, 8:45 a.m. | | Memorial Day, Church Closed |
| **W** |
| **O** |
| **M** |

Office Summer Hours Begin
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>WISE Meeting, 7 a.m.</td>
<td>Memory Cafe, 10 a.m.</td>
<td>Gallery Installation &amp; Meeting, 9 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENEW, 10 a.m.</td>
<td>Men’s Lunch Group, 11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>RENEW, 3 p.m.</td>
<td>RENEW, 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai Chi, Noon</td>
<td>Pack 50 Cub Scouts, 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Food Buddies, 4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Food Buddies, 4:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees Finance Meeting, 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Chancel Chorale, 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Worship: 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Worship: 5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge, 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Green Team Meeting, 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Valerie Miller-Coleman</td>
<td>Valerie Miller-Coleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Closet Sorting, 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Human Trafficking Task Force, 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Childcare, 5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Childcare, 5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Minister Leadership Team, 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Plymouth 20/30, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote Run Farm Pick Up, 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Conversations, 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Youth Dinner, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers Drowning Book Class, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth Bells, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matins Rehearsal, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>WISE Meeting, 7 a.m.</td>
<td>Family Promise, 4 p.m.</td>
<td>RENEW, 3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENEW, 10 a.m.</td>
<td>Plymouth Lunch &amp; Learn, 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Family Promise, 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Family Promise, 4 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai Chi, Noon</td>
<td>Family Promise, 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Personnel Committee, 5 p.m.</td>
<td>Worship: 5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge, 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Plymouth 20/30, 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Plymouth 20/30, 6 p.m.</td>
<td>Matt Mardis-LeCroy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Promise, 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.</td>
<td>Childcare, 5:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Conversations, 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Youth Dinner, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers Drowning Book Class, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matins Rehearsal, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>WISE Meeting, 7:15 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENEW, 10 a.m.</td>
<td>Plymouth 20/30, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai Chi, Noon</td>
<td>Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge, 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Closet Sorting, 4 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coyote Run Farm Pick Up, 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Conversations, 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.S. Youth Dinner, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers Drowning Book Class, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matins Rehearsal, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>WISE Meeting, 7 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tai Chi, Noon</td>
<td>Plymouth 20/30, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge, 12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Human Trafficking Task Force, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Closet Sorting, 4 p.m.</td>
<td>Chancel Choir, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Conversations, 4:45 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Youth Dinner, 6 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matins Rehearsal, 7 p.m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Family Promise Week**

**GREEN TEAM GREAT ANNUAL PLANT SHARING AND SALE**

**SUNDAY, MAY 19**
Sacred Work: Saying Goodbye

Saying goodbye is sacred work. And we are about to have a lot of opportunities to practice.

As a Transition into Ministry Associate Minister, Laura Robinson has been a great gift to this congregation: preaching so artfully, teaching in our confirmation program, providing exceptional pastoral care and covering a lot of critical responsibilities during LeAnn’s 2018 sabbatical. I have always felt that Laura brings a depth of wisdom well beyond her experience. She will be missed!

But our loss is another church’s gain—in this case Bethel United Church of Christ in White Salmon, Washington. Returning to her roots in the Pacific Northwest—and living a lot closer to her family—Laura will serve as their solo pastor amidst the stunning natural beauty of the Columbia River Gorge. Her last weekend in worship will be June 1 and 2.

The weekend before that on May 25 and 26 we will say goodbye to Valerie Miller-Coleman in worship. And you are all invited to join us for a potluck/farewell for the Miller-Coleman family at Greenwood Park’s Jay Spence Shelter on Wednesday, May 29, from 5-7 p.m. (I will be cooking the hot dogs but you should come anyway). Bring table service and a dish to share.

Since September 2011, Valerie has served as Plymouth’s Minister of Community Engagement. And just look at the impact she has had! Valerie brings an entrepreneurial imagination and apparently boundless energy to her work in the church. She envisions the things that are not and then invites the rest of us to wonder: “Why not?”

She has equipped and challenged us to live out our faith in more ways than I can mention. She has served as a creative catalyst for new worship opportunities (including Vespers and Community Table) and helped to grow Plymouth’s ministries to young adults. She has preached, taught and organized with tremendous skill. And her deep compassion has made the difference for many of us passing through the highs and lows of life.

We are a better church, a more faithful church, because of her ministry among us. Now she starts a new chapter as the next Senior Minister of Plymouth Church in Lawrence Kansas.

This is a big deal! Plymouth in Lawrence is among the largest and most-admired congregations in the United Church of Christ. Like us, they embrace progressive theology, welcome of all and community engagement. It is a church poised to do great things, and Valerie is just the leader they need. I look forward to watching their shared ministry unfold.
And the weekend before that, on Sunday, May 19, we will say goodbye to Jennifer Hines. In April of 2007, Jennifer started her work as Plymouth's Director of Operations and Finance. It is an enormous job: overseeing Plymouth's budget, managing our facility and serving as our HR person.

By any measure, Jennifer has been tremendously effective. Just consider the state of our campus. During her tenure, she has moved us from a posture of reactive maintenance to proactive maintenance. She played a key role in renovating the sanctuary, finally found a good solution to the vexing problem of the properties just east of the church, and is even now overseeing badly needed repairs on the historic Rollins tower.

Or look at all she has accomplished in terms of HR. This can be a tangled and confusing aspect of our church, but Jennifer has worked hard to bring clarity and consistency to our policies. Several years ago, she took a sabbatical to write our current employee handbook. And when we worked with Susan Beaumont some years back, Jennifer was critical to realigning the staff team, developing new job descriptions and instituting new practices for supervision. She has managed to marry strong advocacy for our staff with careful stewardship of our personnel dollars.

It was during Jennifer's tenure that we put a professional face on our communications efforts. With her guidance, our communications team has found all kinds of creative and effective ways to keep our members informed and get Plymouth's message out into the community.

Financially, Plymouth has never been stronger. As a fundraiser, she played a key role in annual stewardship efforts, campaigns to retire debt, renovate the sanctuary, sustain our Transition into Ministry program and repair the tower. Now we do not have a mortgage and the Transition into Ministry program's future is secure. The Plymouth Church Foundation has not only grown its assets; it has revised its grant policies in a way that recommits it to serving this congregation.

And none of this would have happened without Jennifer.

But do you know the part I find most impressive? Jennifer has not only done this work extremely well; she has always approached it as ministry. She consistently invites the people who work with her to keep the central thing central: to focus on growing in love of God and neighbor.

Now Jennifer begins a new chapter in her life, as Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Cancer Connection. They do incredibly meaningful work, providing education, recreation and support to families experiencing childhood cancer. With Jennifer's combination of deep compassion and savvy organizational leadership, I am confident that they will do astonishing things together.

So: Jennifer, Valerie, Laura. It really is not easy—all of this forgiving and thanking and leave taking. But God is in it.

In the weeks ahead, I hope you will join us for the sacred work of saying goodbye.

See you in church!
Apply now to join a Plymouth delegation traveling to Cuba this fall

The Cuba Partnership Team at Plymouth is organizing a delegation of about 12 people, led by one of the Plymouth ministers, to travel to Cuba this fall. The purpose is to continue building people-to-people relationships between Plymouth and its sister church Ebenezer Baptist in Havana, as well as experiencing the history, culture and beauty of the island nation.

The trip, scheduled Nov. 5-13, will be the fourth delegation of Plymouth members to Cuba in the last six years, the most recent being in spring 2017.

The estimated cost of the upcoming trip is $2,300 to $3,000 per person, with everything but out-of-pocket expenditures covered.

Applications are due May 20, with a $115 visa fee included then, and you must have a valid passport by July 1.

You can learn more at the next meeting of the Cuba Partnership Team on Thursday, May 2, at 5:30 p.m. in the Peace Conference Room at Plymouth.

To ask questions now, and to apply for the trip, contact Esther Burgett, Cuba Partnership Team co-chair, at EsBurgett@aol.com or 515.321.3860.

Bible in 90 Days Recap

Fizzy grape juice glasses raised, *Pomp and Circumstance* playing over the Greenwood Room speakers, names called and certificates of achievement handed out with hugs and handshakes to the “graduates” of Plymouth’s 2019 class that read the Bible in 90 days: this was the scene of celebration on a recent Thursday evening. More than 50 Plymouth members and friends participated in this epic journey through the Bible. Over the course of 13 Thursdays, through rain, sleet, snow, and finally Spring, this lively group learned and discussed topics together. Conversation ranged from the existence of multiple creation stories to the evolution of worship; grappling with questions of violence and evil to singing the psalms and even creating some of our own (our favorite lament was raised against the snow: Oh, Lord, make it stop!).

Our work together culminated with an examination of the gospels, the early church, and the vision of worship presented in Revelation. Good questions, small group discussions, and encouragement of one another made the work more fun all along the way. Special thanks to Beth Stelle Jones, Stephen Scott, and Laura Robinson for their leadership and help along the way, and to all who accompanied us on this journey. If you participated in the journey but missed the last session, please see Lindsey for your certificate of achievement. If you missed out and are wondering when and how you can participate, the Board of Spiritual Growth plans to offer this course again in the winter of 2023 as part of our rotation of core curriculum; keep your eyes peeled for more information about these and other offerings this fall.
Notice of Plymouth’s Annual Meeting
Tuesday, May 14, 2019
7 p.m., Waveland Hall

MODERATOR
Sally Pederson, 1995

MODERATOR ELECT
David Johnson
Senior VP, Corporate Development, Meredith Corporation
Deacons, Spiritual Growth, Christian Social Action

CHURCH CLERK
Betty Fosburgh, 1990
Homemaker/Volunteer
Board of Deacons, Visual Arts Committee, Hospitality Committee, Plymouth Women, Choir Guild, Office Volunteer, Board of Music & Fine Arts

AT-LARGE MEMBER

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Pam Kenyon
At Large

Cheryl Morton
Trustee Chair

Mark Rosenbury
Moderator

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION
Janet Rosenbury, 2007
Judy Downes, 2019
Executive Director, Polk Co. Democratic Party

Stephanie Pickens, 2010
Attorney & Stay at Home Mom
Choir Guild, Family Life Committee, Tm Fundraising Committee

Lynn Hicks, 2004
Confirmation Guide

Jonathan Preisser, 2017
Mathematician

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP
Mike Baldwin, 2017
Retired, Dept. of Human Services

Barbara Madden-Bittle, 1982
Registered Nurse
Moderator, Long Range Planning Task Force, Deacon Chair, Trustees, Building Committee, Spiritual Growth, Family Promise

Jeff Marks, 2001
Educator, DPS
Deacon

Linda Wilker, 1996
Technical Relationship Manager, Wells Fargo
Christian Education, Family Life Committee, Choir Guild, Confirmation Guide

BOARD OF DEACONS
Julie Carroll, 2005
English Teachers, VHS
Christian Social Action, Church School Teacher, Confirmation Guide

Leigh Ebbsmeyer, 2007
Nurse Care Manager, Project of Primary Health Care
Deacon, Spiritual Growth, Willits LGBTQ Committee

Bryan Fiala, 2016
Certified Financial Planner

Bill Kusy, 1986
Apartment Owner/Manager
Deacon, Trustee, Council Member At Large, Various Committees

Steve Malone, 2017
Marketing professional

Linda Railisback, 2003
Retired Physician
Deacon, Trustee, RENEW, Quilting

Chad Waller, 2013
Life Marketing Representative, EMC
Confirmation Guide, Church School Teacher, OWL Facilitator

Nancy Williamson, 2016
Human Services
Stephen Ministry, Family Promise

BOARD OF MUSIC AND FINE ARTS
Lori Fenton, 2017
Accountant
Chancel Choir, Bell Choir

Laura Morrison, 1992
Chancel Choir, Choir Council

Ann Ungs, 1995
Physical Therapist
Moms & Moppets, Mom’s Monday Evening Book Club, Christian Education, Church School Teacher

BOARD OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH
Amy Myers, 2014
Program Coordinator, Des Moines Public Schools
Benevolences, Connections Committee, Anti-Racism Committee

Kay Riley, 2000
Semi-Retired Spiritual Director
Interim Spiritual Growth Director, Sacred Conversations Facilitator, Stephen Ministry, Co-chair Anti-Racism Committee

Anne Stelle, 2018
Retired Hospital Chaplain

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Deb Ledesma, 1993
Wells Fargo
Christian Education, Youth Executive Committee, Church School

Erin Netteland-Sandvig, 1990
Family Medicine Physician, MercyOne PWAG, Church School Teacher, Family Life Committee, Matsins Choir

Peter Paschler, 1981
Retired
Matsins Committees, Music Director Search Committee

PLYMOUTH CHURCH FOUNDATION
Libby Jacobs, 1983

MODERATOR
Sally Pederson, 1995

MODERATOR ELECT
David Johnson
Senior VP, Corporate Development, Meredith Corporation
Deacons, Spiritual Growth, Christian Social Action

CHURCH CLERK
Betty Fosburgh, 1990
Homemaker/Volunteer
Board of Deacons, Visual Arts Committee, Hospitality Committee, Plymouth Women, Choir Guild, Office Volunteer, Board of Music & Fine Arts

AT-LARGE MEMBER

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Pam Kenyon
At Large

Cheryl Morton
Trustee Chair

Mark Rosenbury
Moderator

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION
Janet Rosenbury, 2007
Judy Downes, 2019
Executive Director, Polk Co. Democratic Party

Stephanie Pickens, 2010
Attorney & Stay at Home Mom
Choir Guild, Family Life Committee, Tm Fundraising Committee

Lynn Hicks, 2004
Confirmation Guide

Jonathan Preisser, 2017
Mathematician

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP
Mike Baldwin, 2017
Retired, Dept. of Human Services

Barbara Madden-Bittle, 1982
Registered Nurse
Moderator, Long Range Planning Task Force, Deacon Chair, Trustees, Building Committee, Spiritual Growth, Family Promise

Jeff Marks, 2001
Educator, DPS
Deacon

Linda Wilker, 1996
Technical Relationship Manager, Wells Fargo
Christian Education, Family Life Committee, Choir Guild, Confirmation Guide

BOARD OF DEACONS
Julie Carroll, 2005
English Teachers, VHS
Christian Social Action, Church School Teacher, Confirmation Guide

Leigh Ebbsmeyer, 2007
Nurse Care Manager, Project of Primary Health Care
Deacon, Spiritual Growth, Willits LGBTQ Committee

Bryan Fiala, 2016
Certified Financial Planner

Bill Kusy, 1986
Apartment Owner/Manager
Deacon, Trustee, Council Member At Large, Various Committees

Steve Malone, 2017
Marketing professional

Linda Railisback, 2003
Retired Physician
Deacon, Trustee, RENEW, Quilting

Chad Waller, 2013
Life Marketing Representative, EMC
Confirmation Guide, Church School Teacher, OWL Facilitator

Nancy Williamson, 2016
Human Services
Stephen Ministry, Family Promise

BOARD OF MUSIC AND FINE ARTS
Lori Fenton, 2017
Accountant
Chancel Choir, Bell Choir

Laura Morrison, 1992
Chancel Choir, Choir Council

Ann Ungs, 1995
Physical Therapist
Moms & Moppets, Mom’s Monday Evening Book Club, Christian Education, Church School Teacher

BOARD OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH
Amy Myers, 2014
Program Coordinator, Des Moines Public Schools
Benevolences, Connections Committee, Anti-Racism Committee

Kay Riley, 2000
Semi-Retired Spiritual Director
Interim Spiritual Growth Director, Sacred Conversations Facilitator, Stephen Ministry, Co-chair Anti-Racism Committee

Anne Stelle, 2018
Retired Hospital Chaplain

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Deb Ledesma, 1993
Wells Fargo
Christian Education, Youth Executive Committee, Church School

Erin Netteland-Sandvig, 1990
Family Medicine Physician, MercyOne PWAG, Church School Teacher, Family Life Committee, Matsins Choir

Peter Paschler, 1981
Retired
Matsins Committees, Music Director Search Committee

PLYMOUTH CHURCH FOUNDATION
Libby Jacobs, 1983
For more information about Plymouth Church, please scan this code to visit our website at www.plymouthchurch.com, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/plymouthchurch and Instagram at PlymouthUCC. If you are not able to visit on Sunday, a podcast of a portion of the previous week’s service featuring the sermon is available on iTunes, or on the Plymouth website under Resources/Sermon Podcasts. Print copies of most sermons may be downloaded from the website at Resources/Sermon Library.

To submit information for the Contact, email Cindy Eaton-Eklund, ceaton@plymouthchurch.com

Matt Mardis-LeCroy ....................................................Senior Minister
Lindsey Braun ....................................................Minister of Discipleship
Cindy Eaton-Eklund ........................................Director of Communications
Christopher Goodson.................................Director of Music and Fine Arts
Carl Gravander ................................................Organist
Nikira Hernandez-Evans.............................Associate Minister
Jennifer Hines ............................Director of Operations and Finance
Karen Jeske ....................................................Transition into Ministry Coordinator
Valerie Miller-Coleman ......Minister of Community Engagement
LeAnn Stubbs ...............................Minister of Care and Welcome
Laura Robinson ...........................................Associate Minister
Jan Van Wyk ..................Director of Plymouth Nursery School
Susan Waller ............................Director of Youth Ministry

MAY 2019   VOLUME 30 ISSUE 5 (USPS 007018)
The CONTACT is published monthly by Plymouth Congregational Church United Church of Christ, 4126 Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312-2792. Phone: 515.255.3149  Fax: 515.255.8667
Periodicals Postage Paid at Des Moines, Iowa. Subscription rate: $1 per year. Cindy Eaton-Eklund, Editor.
Postmaster, send address changes to: 4126 Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312-2792