After preaching the Sunday sermon on April 19, I had a number of e-mails from beloved Plymouth members commenting on the pastors rising to the challenge of preaching to an empty sanctuary. I was touched by the care and thoughtfulness that was being expressed. And then I got to thinking, that for me, and I am sure for my colleagues as well, the sanctuary isn't exactly empty. And this is what I mean by that statement:

As I am preaching in a vacant sanctuary, in my mind’s eye, the pews are filled with YOU. Thanks to the natural human proclivity to sit in the same place over and over, I know where you sit. I know where you sit, Doug and Wendy and Carol and Augie and Kathleen. I know where you sit, Frank and Sheena and Martha and Mark and Janet and Neil. I know where you sit, Tracy and Libby and Janet and Brian and Dave and Dick. I know where you sit, Kelly and Ellen and Emily and Ryan and Dan and Maya and Charlie. I know where YOU sit.

And I can’t express how I am looking forward to that day when we can gather again for worship in person, and see one another, face to face. And I do so hope that you will put your face in “your” pew when you come back!

It gives me great comfort and joy to see you in my mind’s eye. And I am filled with consternation that I can’t see you in person! If you have a minute, send your pastors a snap shot of where you are spending time during this Covid-Season…you will make our day!

Staying in touch with each other is always important. It is especially important right now to stay in touch. I want to publically thank all of the people who have stepped up to be Plymouth Care Callers, and our Stephen Ministers, who are making weekly phone calls to our members.

If you are not currently receiving a weekly call, and would like to, PLEASE send me an email or call the church office.

Our Plymouth Quilters are busy sewing face masks. If you would like a face mask, PLEASE send me an email or call the church office.

Staying connected is all of our responsibility. Staying connected is a comfort and a joy. Your church and your Pastors are still, and always will be, HERE FOR YOU. Don’t hesitate to reach out.

God Bless and Keep You,
Pastor LeAnn Stubbs

LEANN STUBBS
Minister of Care & Welcome
I thought it would be over by now.
It sounds so naïve to say it now, but I thought this whole COVID-19 situation would mean a brief and momentary disruption. By now, I thought, we would be returning to normal.
I don’t think that anymore.
Instead, I have been thinking about Winston Churchill and Susan Beaumont. In a blog post reflecting on church leadership in the midst of a global pandemic, our friend Susan Beaumont distinguishes between the first and second season of the crisis. The first season (she says) was marked by striving. In the face of a threat we swung into action—suspending in-person worship, moving much of our life on-line, learning how to reach out and care for one another under the conditions of social distancing. We figured out how to do worship on Facebook, organ recitals on YouTube, confirmation and Church Council meetings on Zoom. It was, to be honest, kind of exciting. Plymouth changed—enormously, and very quickly.
But now it seems that first season has come to an end. The adrenaline has faded. The fatigue is setting in. And it reminds me of Churchill’s famous quote: not the end, not even the beginning of the end but it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning. Call it Phase 2.
Phase 2 will be much longer. The sprint gives way to the marathon. But having accomplished the initial adaptive work, we have come (says Susan Beaumont) to the end of our own ingenuity. And what looms before us now is a kind of in-between time. The way we used to do church belongs to the past. And what will be is yet to be revealed. We wait and we watch but we do not know. We do not even know when we will know.
Normal? Not now. Maybe not for a long time.
But this new season has a lot of potential for Plymouth Church. It’s like we say of a child in our baptism liturgy: ever new possibilities lie open before us. We have freedom: freedom to experiment, freedom to explore, freedom to create new ways of connecting and carrying out our common work. The Spirit of God beckons us to new adventures.
So here is the plan: we will continue to refine and improve new ways of doing church for a new season. We will continue to get better at worshipping online, meeting remotely, caring for each other and learning to love our neighbor. But we will also seize this moment to do some dreaming. Later this month, you will be invited to share the things you have noticed—the visions you have seen—about the possibilities for Plymouth’s future. Our Strategic Planning Steering Committee will be reaching out to the entire church because we want to see what you see; we want to hear what you hear. We want to begin the good work of finding our way into the future.
It isn’t over yet. And a loving God invites us to use this season: to reflect, to adapt, to grow. Thank God we get to do it together.

Grace and Peace,

MATT MARDIS-LECROY
Senior Minister
Notice of Plymouth’s Annual Meeting
Tuesday, May 12, 2020
at 7 p.m. on Zoom

MODERATOR
David Johnson

MODERATOR ELECT
Jodi Gruening, 1981

CHURCH TREASURER
Dick Jones

CHURCH CLERK
Betty Fosburgh, 1990
Homemaker/Volunteer
Board of Deacons, Visual Arts

NOMINATING & ELECTION COMMITTEE
Pam Duffy, 2010
Jon Merkle, 2010
Artis Reis, 1983

BOARD OF BENEVOLENCES
Irene Hardisty, 1997
Retired
Board of benevolences, Peace Committee, Steering Committee for RightPeace, Youth Board Committee, Confirmation, Church School

Terrence Stamp, 2020
Delivery Driver
Discover Plymouth

Elaine Van Dyck, 2018
Retired
Deacon, Plymouth Women’s Scholarship Committee

Annette Weeber, 1987
Retired
Chancel Choir, Grounds Committee, Plymouth Women, Deacon

Caroline Bettis, 2016
Attorney
Career Closet, Strategic Planning Committee, TiM Committee, Board of Membership

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Megan Franklin, 2014
Athletic Administrator
Co-leader Vacation Bible School

Kelley Howell, 2019
Registered Nurse, Stay-at-Home Mom
Parent Volunteer/Helper in Sunday School, Choir, Preschool

Jennifer Irsfeld James, 2006
Historic Preservation Consultant
Plymouth Board of Membership, Plymouth Double House, Preservation Committee, Sunday School Teacher, Plymouth Nursery School, Stepping Stones, Moms & Moppets, Confirmation Guide, Parent Volunteer with Sunday School and Youth Choirs/ Matins, PWAG, Nine to Dine

Alissa McKinney, 2004
Senior Director of Development, Blank Children’s Hospital
Board of Benevolences Chair, Plymouth Foundation Board Secretary, Senior Minister Search Committee, Leaf Rake: Food Committee

David Mitchell, 1985
Occupation Administrator, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, State of Iowa
Board of Social Action Chair, Board of Benevolences Chair, Board of Christian Education, Sunday School Teacher

Randi Seiberling, 1990
Retired
Deacon, Board of Music and Fine Arts, Chancel Choir, Chancel Choir Council

Judy Stark, 1999
Volunteer with SHIP, Iowa Lutheran Hospital, Free Clinics of Iowa and HOA, Former Health Care Executive with Iowa Health System, Wellmark BCBS and CoOpportunity Health
Regular Attendee at Worship and Sunday Forum, Irregular Attendee at Wednesday Bible Study

BOARD OF CHURCH CLERK
Emily Maharry

BOARD OF CHURCH TREASURER
Jodi Gruening, 1981

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION
Alyssa Clabaugh, 2006
Marketing at Wells Fargo
Volunteering in Sunday School Classrooms and Children’s Choirs

Amy Howells, 2013
Attorney
Sunday School Teacher, Matins Parent

Jane Ryan, 1987
Retired Professional Writer
Homelessness Assistance Team, Chancel Choir

BOARD OF CHRISTIAN STewardship
Mary Ann Beard, 2004

Katelyn Karzten, 2013
Administrative Assistant
Lead Sunday School Teacher

Lorraine May, 1988
Lawyer
Sunday School Teacher

Sally Pederson, 1995
Retired
Church Moderator, Plymouth Foundation Board, Willets Committee

BOARD OF DEACONS
Craig Bittick, 2015
High School English Teacher and Teacher Librarian (retiring May 2020)
Gallery Committee, attend Bible study, attends various evening classes

Luke Bowers, 2019
2019 Mark C. Ackelson Fellow with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

Ann (Cubbage) Hoepnner, 2020
Alumni Relations at Mercy College of Health Sciences
Member of Plymouth as a child

Reese Strickland, 1992
Director of Photography
3-time Matins Tour Chaperone, Board of Christian Education

BOARD OF MUSIC & FINE ARTS
Chloe Bodenhamer, 2002
Stay-at-Home Mom
Member of Plymouth as a child, Confirmation, PWAG Co-Coordinator, Mom’s Monday Book Club

Mickey Carlson, 2010
Retired
Board of Membership, Family Promise, Faithful Readers, Coffee Shop Volunteer, Anti-Racism Committee, Plymouth Foundation, Plymouth Place Board

Emily Chafa, 2002
Retired Administrative Law Judge
Fine Arts Committee, Cuba Partnership Team, Career Closet, Chancel Choir, Plymouth Justice Action Network

Steph Graham, 2019
Music Teacher

Lorenzo Sandoval, 2000
English & Theater Instructor at DMACC, Artistic Director of the Iowa Shakespeare Experience

Marti West, 2020
Business Systems Consultant at Wells Fargo
Co-chair for Bell Choir

BOARD OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH
Shari Simmons, 2013
Technical Writer, Data Analytics, UnityPoint Health
Board of Deacons, Faith Builders, Confirmation Mentor, PWAG, Faith to Faith Small Group Facilitator, Sacred Conversations Facilitator

EMily Maharry

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Darrel Mullens, 1996
Attorney
Board of Trustees, Benevolences, Christian Social Action, Family Promise

Kathy Murphy, 2019
Retired

Tony Stoik, 2019
Retired Minister
Adult Bible Study
CURRENT HAPPENINGS

GET CONNECTED!

Use the links below to check out our website, Facebook page, Instagram, and YouTube Channel, so that you get get connected with us online! Plymouth will be closed through May 10. We want to continue to stay connected and minister to everyone that we can, so keep in touch!

- www.plymouthchurch.com
- www.facebook.com/PlymouthChurch
- www.instagram.com/PlymouthChurch
- YouTube Channel: PlymouthChurch DSM

EVENING PRAYER

During this unknown and anxious time for our community, we are practicing the discipline of praying together at certain hours of the day. Tune into our Facebook page every weekday at 5:30 p.m. for Evening Prayer with our ministers.

Beginning in May, we will present Friday Music with Seth Hedquist, a service of prayer through musical meditations, as you transition into the weekend.

If you miss the message live, don’t worry! You can still find the message under Videos on our Facebook Page. Leave your prayers in the comments of those videos for us to read and pray over later!

PLYMOUTH CAREER CLOSET CLOSED

Due to health concerns presented by COVID-19, the Plymouth Career Closet shop will remain closed and support operations suspended until further notice. Until it is safe to reopen, we will not be accepting donations, sorting clothes at the church, or operating the shop at the downtown YMCA. We look forward to the time we can again serve women in need. In the meantime, we ask our volunteers to stay home and stay safe!

DAILY 11 A.M. SERVICES

Each weekday, tune in to our Facebook page at 11 a.m. to join our ministers for special short services! Schedule as follows:

- **Monday:** Join Matt Mardis-LeCroy for Monday Morning Check-In! We will be touching base, share the latest news about Plymouth Church and take some time to pray together.
- **Tuesday:** Join Karen Jeske for Center & Connect Plymouth people for 10-15 minutes to center, process feelings, and connect with other Plymouth members about what we are all experiencing related to social distancing.
- **Wednesday:** Join Matt Mardis-LeCroy for Bible Study, where he will be exploring the text that will inform our weekend worship at Plymouth.
- **Thursday:** Join Mary Kate Buchanan for From the Kitchen. She will be discussing the various ways that we can connect to God and one another during our extra time in our homes!
- **Friday:** Join Lindsey Braun with your families for Family Connection. She will be providing messaging, connection, and resources for families with children.

If you miss the message live, don’t worry! You can always watch them later under Videos on our Facebook page!

**(Calling All: Parents & Caregivers!**

If your family has participated in ministries like Church School, Classes for Families, or Vacation Bible School, we’d love to hear from you! Let us know how we are serving your family, and in what areas we could do better. We’ll use your feedback to improve our programming.

https://tinyurl.com/rb8mqb5
DMARC Continues to Need Your Help!

BY: ANNABELLE MARSH | Food Pantry Committee

As many of you may know, DMARC has worked to meet the basic human needs of our community for over six decades. Today, its Food Pantry Network of 14 partner pantries and over 20 different mobile food pantry sites, assists nearly 56,000 unique individuals annually. Many of those assisted are hardworking Iowans working one, maybe two jobs and still not getting by. With the COVID-19 outbreak, DMARC has been working even harder to meet the needs of our community.

But the pandemic has brought its own challenges:

• **Increased cost of basic items.** Rice in the past 30 days has increased in cost 36%!

• Due to safety concerns, and adherence to directives from the CDC and public health officials, DMARC cannot bring groups together to do a “traditional” food drives (physically); nor would they be able to have volunteers sort those items donated.

• **Challenges to access some staple food items.** DMARC always strives to have a 4-6 week supply of food items. However, some of these staple food items are becoming difficult to procure. DMARC currently has one week supply of canned vegetables on hand.

Stats from DMARC’s work to meet those challenges in March:

• The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 18,729 individuals (7,826 households), an increase of 12% compared to March 2019.

• In the last two weeks of March (March 16-31), DMARC saw over 1,200 first-time pantry users, which is four times higher than the number of new pantry users seen in the first half of the month (340 from March 1-15).

• **More than half (54%) of new food pantry users are unemployed.** The DMARC network as a whole is seeing a much higher number of people reporting they are unemployed.

It is important to know or remember that DMARC never turns anyone away. And is committed to having food available whenever it is needed.

Which is why we continue to need your help! Whatever your gift, your cash donation will leverage DMARC’s buying power up to SIX TIMES and help DMARC purchase the things that are most needed.

Make your contribution via the Plymouth Church VIRTUAL DRIVE today: www.dmarcunited.org/donate/virtual-drive/plymouth/ or donate at www.plymouthchurch.com/donations/make-a-donation/ (mention: DMARC in the Notes field).

Thank you for all you do to combat food insecurity in our community!
Filling a Need, Remotely

BY: DARREL MULLINS | Board of Benevolences

Plymouth’s Family Promise is still supporting homeless families during the COVID-19 Crisis, of social distancing guidance; however, the families stay only at Westminster Presbyterian Church. When Plymouth Church “hosts”, Plymouth volunteers drop-off the evening meals; and, one Plymouth volunteer stays overnight at Westminster in an isolated room, just in case of an emergency, from 7:30 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Normally our Church building helps us feed our community of faith as we come together. When we cannot meet in person, uniting to serve helps hold us together. Delivering a meal to a family experiencing homeless or staying overnight can give us a way to feel together. It’s a way to help others when it can feel very much like we’re alone and helpless.

Our next “host” week is May 31 to June 6. We don’t yet know if we’ll host at Plymouth or via Westminster. If we host at Plymouth, there will be additional volunteer opportunities to do on your own, with your family, or with a group of friends. As always, if you want to support the program, but your circumstances don’t allow in-person participation, a donation to the program is appreciated and helpful.

Over 160 Plymouth members have participated in this program. Most will agree it can be a deeply rewarding experience; one you can tailor to your level of interest and schedule. Please consider volunteering.

If interested, please email the interim program coordinator, Darrel Mullins at darrelmullins@me.com. Family Promise volunteers are signed up for various volunteer opportunities or donating funds using Sign Up Genius using www.SignUpGenius.com (search by “plymouthchurch@plymouthchurch.com”).

Peace Committee Children’s Book Cart

BY: NANCY ANDERSEN | Peace Committee

With Earth Day having come and gone, as the world deals with the COVID-19 Pandemic, we hope you had some time while Staying at Home to reflect on the environment and nature and the role the human race plays in protecting it. When the church reopens, we will have two new books in the Children’s Book Cart in Waveland Hall about Greta Thunberg.

The first book ‘Greta and the Giants’ is a fictional story inspired by Greta Thunberg’s stand to save the world, written by Zoe Tucker and Zoe Persico. In it, a young girl tries to save a forest from destruction. This story has a happy ending. It is a glimpse of what could happen when people realize the importance of God’s creation and are willing to make changes to protect it. The book has large colorful illustrations and is geared toward younger children.

The second book ‘No One is Too Small to Make a Difference’ is a book written by Greta Thunberg, the young climate activist who has become the voice of a generation. In her own words she talks about her beliefs, how they came about, and her decision to try to make a change. A collection of her speeches at the UN, the World Economic Forum, the European Parliament, the U.S. Congress and others are included. The book is a rallying cry for why we must fight to protect the planet, no matter how powerless we feel. This book is geared toward older children and teenagers.
Even though the coffee shop is closed at this time—we felt as though it was important to recognize the baristas on duty prior to the closing of the shop. We hope that the coffee shop will reopen this summer, but realize that this might not be possible. We thank our loyal customers, and hope to see you, back in the coffee shop, soon.

Ron Moo
Ron is a graduate of North High School and currently attends the STEP program at Central Campus. Ron was born in Thailand and likes to learn new languages. Ron enjoys listening to music, do outside activities, and write during his free time. Ron likes to clean and learn to do new skills in the coffee shop. He takes pride in doing a good job. His future goal is to get a job and receive a paycheck. Ron will be the student manager of Plymouth Grounds this summer.

Seraphina Shelton
Seraphina graduated from Lincoln High School and currently attends the STEP program at Central Campus. In the coffee shop, Seraphina is known as the “queen of foam” and likes to make fancy drinks. She is extremely organized and is proud of her attention to detail. Seraphina is an artistic and creative young lady. She loves to “turn nothing into something.” During her spare time, Seraphina enjoys drawing, crocheting, making dolls clothes, and creating crafts. Some of Seraphina’s original doll clothes can be seen displayed at Plymouth Grounds.

Daniel Custis
Daniel is a senior at Roosevelt High School. He is also a student in the Central Campus culinary program. Daniel works part time at the Latin King Restaurant. His extracurricular activities include; Varsity Boys Basketball Manager, Special Olympics Unified Sports teams, and Best Buddies. During his free time, Daniel likes to attend Coffee and Conversation socials at Plymouth, use his phone, watch Netflix, and chill. Daniel hopes to attend Central Campus in the fall.

Our Faith, Our Vote, Our Voice

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Plymouth Justice and Peace Action Network (P-JPAN) encourages all Plymouth members to vote by mail in the June 2 Primary Election. Recently, the Iowa Secretary of State’s (SOS) office announced that it will send a request for absentee ballot form to all registered voters and it extended the mail-in voting period to 40 days in order to keep Iowans safe and help flatten the COVID-19 curve. By the time you read this, you should have received your absentee ballot request form, which includes postage paid for returning the request to your County Auditor. If you haven’t received your absentee ballot request form, click here for a copy of the form: www.polkcountyiowa.gov/media/330976/absenteeballotapp_campaign.pdf

Just print & complete the form, & mail it to Polk County Election Office, 120 2nd Ave., Suite A, Des Moines, IA 50309.

☐ Are you registered to vote?

☐ If you’ve moved, have you updated your voting address?

To register to vote or to update your information: mymvd.iowadot.gov/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2fVoterRegistration

If other questions, call the Polk County Auditor’s Office: 515-286-3247.

Take advantage of this opportunity to vote conveniently and privately in your home. Participate in democracy while keeping yourself and others safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.