Voting Members Present: Franklin Codel, Judy Diedrichs, Pam Duffy, Jodi Gruening, Irene Hardisty, Linda Knodle, Jon Merkle, Alex Moon, Eliza Ovrom, Sid Ramsey, Jon Reinders, Terri Sterk, Bonnie Sunderlund, Linda Wilker

Voting Members Absent: Wendy Bellus, Jason Dreckman, David Johnson, Rocky Morton, Elizabeth Talbert, Lorna Truck

Others Present: Mary Ann Beard, Reverend Lindsey Braun, Reverend Mary Kate Buchanan, Kathy Dewald, Christopher Goodson, Karen Jeske, Reverend Doctor Matthew Mardis-LeCroy, Reverend Nikira Hernandez-Evans, Sally Pederson, Noelle Trevillyan, Susan Waller

Introductions & Welcome: Sally Pederson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Devotions: Sally Pederson—Reflected on the recent deaths of several Plymouth Church members, and particularly that of Family Promise leader Mike Adams. She also read Mary Oliver’s poem, A Summer Day.

Minutes: August 27, 2019—Motion to approve, Sid Ramsey; second, Pam Duffy. Minutes approved as submitted.

SPECIAL REPORTS AND OLD BUSINESS
Subject: Plymouth Church Foundation Presentation, Mary Ann Beard  
• Distributed and reviewed a report on the operations of the Plymouth Foundation.
Subject: Board of Trustees Grant Application for Rollins Tower Work, Franklin Codel  
• Moved the acceptance of a grant application to the Plymouth Foundation requesting funds to complete the restoration of the Rollins Tower. These are considered “gap” funds to be paid back over time.
• Additionally, the Trustees are waiting for approximately $250,000 in pledges to the $400,000 Tower funding campaign.
• Motion approved.
Subject: FOCUS Survey, Karen Jeske  
• Provided copies of the survey results
• Discussed in depth the survey results.
Subject: Director of Operations and Finance Search Committee Update, Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy  
• Committee met this week and refreshed the candidate pool.
Subject: Director of Child and Family Ministries Search Committee Update, Rev. Mardis-LeCroy  
• Committee met this week and refreshed the candidate pool.
Subject: Strategic Plan 2020: A Shared Vision for Our Future, Sally Pederson  
• Thanked the board chairs and vice chairs for providing a pool of names for the committee. The following are serving on the committee—
  o Amy Anderson  
  o Aaron Baker  
  o Caroline Bettis  
  o Nathan Blake  
  o Pam Kenyon  
  o Sid Ramsey  
  o Barbie Sullivan  
• Committee to meet with Reverend Sarai Rice for the first time Sunday, September 29.

BOARD REPORTS
Benevolences: Report submitted by Irene Hardisty is attached.
• Promoted open Homeless Shelter meal dates.

**Christian Education:** Report submitted by Jon Merkle is attached.

**Christian Social Action:** Report submitted by Jon Reinders is attached.

**Christian Stewardship:** Report submitted by Pam Duffy is attached.
- Moved approval of Steve Sypal to the board. Motion approved.
- Discussed the pledge-to-pledge October campaign.

**Deacons:** Report submitted by Jodi Gruening is attached.

**Membership:** Report submitted by Terri Sterk is attached.

**Music and Fine Arts:** No report.

**Spiritual Growth:** Report submitted by Linda Knodle is attached.

**Trustees:** Report submitted by Franklin Codel is attached.
- Briefly discussed financial results and indicated that expenses are currently lower than budgeted, in part because of open staff positions.
- Pledging is close to budget.
- Budgeting for the next year is coming up.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Arts, Memorials & Architectural Changes:** No report.

**Personnel:** No report.

**Plymouth Foundation:** See report in **Special Reports** above by Mary Ann Beard.

**Plymouth Women:** Bonnie Sunderlund
- Next Lunch & Learn is October 17, Waveland Hall, 12:15 p.m., and the presenter is Jackie Norris, CEO of Goodwill of Central Iowa.

**Stephen Ministry:** Kathy Dewald
- Recruiting now for a new class this fall.

**Transition into Ministry (TiM):** No report.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None.

**Member at Large:** Rocky Morton. No report.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Rev. Lindsey Braun**
- Fall Sunday School kick off is a happening. Are training 11 teachers with 177 children signed up for S.S. to date.
- Trained 19 confirmation guides for 50 confirmands.
- Have realized how many details are essential in organizing and running the children’s programs.

**Rev. Mary Kate Buchanan**
- Providing adult Bible study Wednesday evenings, 7:00 p.m.
• Along with Rev. LeAnn Stubbs have kicked off the older adults program.
• Visiting different boards.
• Saturday, October 12, will provide the Blessing of the Animals with Rev. Nikira Hernandez-Evans.

Christopher Goodson
• Program year events have started.
• Choirs are rehearsing and performing with new schedules for rehearsals.
• “Jazz in the Fight for Civil Rights” with Dr. Damani Phillips scheduled for Friday, October 18.

Rev. Nikira Hernandez-Evans
• Enjoying several social witness events, including International Peace Day service.
• Headed to Cuba with a Plymouth Church group.
• Providing OWL program coordination.
• Ministerial profile work is beginning.

Karen Jeske
• Working on Connections program guide.
• Wednesday night dinners up and running.
• TiM activities start ramping up in October.

Susan Waller
• Kicked off the program year.
• Created different emphases for grade 9-12 youth on Sundays.

Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
• Thanked Sally Pederson and David Johnson for their work in launching of the Steering Committee for the Strategic Plan 2020: A Shared Vision for our Church committee members.
• Thanked the Personnel Committee and Board of Trustees for their work with our staff.
• FOCUS report seems to identify a longing for greater connection.
• Dr. Allen Hilton returning for a seminar and preaching the weekend of October 12/13.

CLOSING PRAYER: Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy
NEXT MEETING: October 22, 2019, 7:00 p.m., Greenwood Room

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Knodle, Secretary
September Plymouth Church Council Boards Reports

Board of Benevolences, Irene Hardisty
- Vice-chair position has been accepted by Alex Moon.
- Plymouth Church’s Family Promise Committee team leader, Mike Adams, passed away. His celebration of life was August 14. Please contact Rev. Matt Mardis-LeCroy or Irene Hardisty if a need arises concerning hosting of families. A Family Promise Committee will be convened in the near future to discuss committee leadership. Next scheduled Plymouth Church hosting is January 20-26.
- Shelter Meals: These six meal dates remain open, Nov. 26 or 27, Dec. 26 or 27, May 26 and July 27. Please share these service opportunities with people who may have an interest in preparing the meal or donating food for a meal. Also, not all Church Council boards and committees have signed up for shelter meals. If uncertain whether your group has, or to sign up, please contact susanapohl@gmail.com or ihardisty@yahoo.com. Until further notice, when providing meals please take disposable cups. We have learned the shelter has a shortage of drinking cups.
- Food Insecurity: Diane Sickles is leading a letter-writing campaign to elected Federal representatives encouraging support of “Bread for the World,” which conducts research and policy advocacy on food and aid and promotes other anti-hunger programs. In 2009, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution on the Global Food Crisis calling on the church “to advocate for strengthening sustainable agricultural and fishing practices.” In 2011, the General Synod passed a Resolution for Mindful and Faithful Eating, challenging our members and congregations to explore and discuss how food choices can be in accord with Christian values and beliefs. The letter/post card writing is supported by the Peace, Food Buddies and Food Pantry committees.

Board of Christian Education, Jon Merkle
- Church School started on Sunday, September 8. Thank you for the huge effort by Rev. Lindsey Braun and other staff members, board members and our volunteers who helped make the first day a big success.
- Three babies were baptized on September 8.
- We are identifying resources for Our Whole Lives (OWL) training and identifying who can help fill those gaps in resources.
- The entering kindergarten classes were held on September 8 and 15. The blessing took place in during worship service on September 22.
- Jerrid Kruse, Elizabeth Baker and Erin Davison-Rippey are taking the lead on designing a survey to assess how parents of infants through grade 6 view programs offered to them by Plymouth Church.

Board of Christian Social Action, Jon Reinders
- Reviewed the Board of Christian Social Action committees' MAPs, with a focus on continued improvement in building relationships, increased communication and defining deliverables.
- The Anti-Racism Committee is hosting Dr. Damani Phillips in October. The board voted to support this initiative with advertising.

Board of Christian Stewardship, Pam Duffy
- Board Vacancy: Barb Madden-Bittle resigned. Steve Sypal is being nominated to fill the vacancy.
- 2020 Stewardship Campaign update:
  - Goals
    - **Financial goal of $1.957M**, which matches the Board of Trustees 2019 projected budget was not achieved in pledges and required reserve funds.
    - **Total household participation rate** (total=1,465): Increase number of households pledging from 41% (608 households) to 45% (659).
    - **New Member/Household Pledge Participation**: 25-50 percent of new households
    - **Pledged amount**: Increase 2019 pledges for participating households by 5 percent.
  - Advanced Strategies
    - Phone call (technology) to all households to invite to PIE Weekend.
    - Stewardship Campaign runs from November 16-17—December 14-15, 2019.
    - Sermons and testimonials planned during campaign month.
    - BoCFS visits all boards to get "pledge-to-pledge" cards and for pledge on PIE Weekend. Direct mail of postcard versus bulk mail to ensure delivery.
    - Packets distributed PIE weekend.
    - Campaign "thermometer"/indicator of campaign progress in church.
    - Other: Method for EFT pledgers/others to give in weekly offering.
  - Board Visits—Will occur during October by board members.
Board of Deacons, Jodi Gruening
- Five Minutes with Matt: Excitement about the start of the “new season” September 8, and reinforcing excellence in worship.
- Testing an approach to track worship attendance.
- Changing the order of baptism so Christian Education and Deacons “close out” the ceremony.
- Three funerals since September’s meeting. Grateful for the quick responses to serve.
- Thanksgiving reminder of schedule and decoration needs.
- Shelter meal was a success!
- Vespers will be Advent only.
- Potluck before our next meeting on Tuesday, October 8.

Board of Membership, Terri Sterk
- Membership roll update: Approximately 230 inactive members are being considered for deletion from membership rolls. Next step is a letter to be mailed offering reinstatement or official deactivation.
- A new member class will be held Sunday, September 29, 2019, 1-4 p.m., Greenwood/Burling Rooms, with new members joining Saturday and Sunday October 12/13.
- Mental Health Disability Task Force has a changed mission to reallocate NAMI Walk to NAMI Golf.
- The Willits LGBT committee is taking time to determine their direction and mission going forward. For the 2019-2020 program year, the Board of Membership will budget the fees for a Plymouth Booth at the Pride festivities.

Board of Spiritual Growth, Linda Knodle
- Thanksgiving Eve Service of Gratitude is being planned. The Reverend Doctor Matthew Mardis-LeCroy and Saturday Night Band Director, the Reverend Mary Beth Mardis-LeCroy are preparing the liturgy and music.
- Homeless Shelter dinner is Friday, September 27.
- Inspiration Lounge Library is close to being ready. Volunteers are still “pocketing” books in preparation for checking them out. An open house is planned for a weekend in November.

Board of Trustees, Franklin Codel
- August monthly results: Pledge income was up markedly in August and ended up $15,000 more than budget. Non-pledge income was slightly, $2,000, lower than budget, a trend we have observed all year. Personnel expenses were almost $30,000 better than budget as we are carrying two open positions and one position that will not be filled. The positive trends will continue in September on personnel expenses. Building expenses were $11,000 better than budget. Overall, the month delivered a $12,900 surplus and was over $61,000 better than budget.
- Year-to-date results: For August YTD, pledge income is $40,000 better than budget. However, non-pledge income, $54,000, is behind budget. Personnel expenses are $104,000 better than budget, and expenses overall are $146,000 better than budget. At this point, the projected usage of operating reserves sits at $26,000 vs. $86,000 in budget, but that is projected to swing to a surplus in the next month or two and remain there for the full year due to the delay in filling open positions.