Congratulations to the Plymouth Church Confirmation Class of 2020! Like many things this year, confirmation had to pivot quickly back in March. And this class weathered those changes with resilience. Theme nights went online. Small groups learned how to play games together at a distance on their devices. Confirmation statements were submitted via email and baptisms happened by aspersion (flinging water from a distance). We set a date to confirm the now 9th grade class in September. Surely we would all be back to “normal” by then.

We all know now that that is not the case. However, we were able to share in an extraordinarily special and meaningful confirmation service, both online and in person on Sunday, Sept. 20. I hope we never have to do it this way again. But, it is good to know that when we use our creativity and imagination, the Holy Spirit shows up.

We celebrate the entire 27 member class, both those who chose to be confirmed and those who said “no” or “not yet.” We honor their commitment to two years of learning, community building, and service as together we grew in love of God and neighbor. Please join me in welcoming Plymouth’s newest members, covenanting with us to walk in love and be a fruitful body of Christians!

Thank you to the volunteers who made it possible!

BY: LINDSEY BRAUN

Confirmation Class of 2020!
We are very pleased to announce that we have called our new Interim Senior Minister—Rev. Sarai Rice. On Tuesday, September 22, Church Council approved this action. Sarai will begin her work with us on Monday, October 5. Sarai’s name will be familiar to many; she recently provided her consulting expertise to our strategic planning group as they crafted our Practicing Radical Love plan.

Here’s a recap of the process that led us to this moment. The August 24th Moderator Minute provided insight about why calling an Interim Senior Minister is important and outlined the selection process. A collaborative effort resulted in a robust job description that grounded our search. Former moderators comprised the initial search team: Dave Everett, Steve Jacobs, and Beth Stelle Jones. They sent their top three of five candidates on to the interview team that was approved at the August 25th Church Council meeting: Dave Everett, Anita Fleming-Rife, Jim Green, Jodi Gruening, David Johnson, Linda Sullivan, and LeAnn Stubbs. And then the entire Plymouth staff conducted group interviews with all three candidates. After this thorough vetting process, our top candidate emerged. On Tuesday, September 22nd the Church Council voted to accept the Interim Senior Minister candidate, who was recommended unanimously by the interview teams and the church staff.

Some may ask, “Is Sarai too close to Plymouth Church, does she know us too well?” In fact, we considered this question, also discussed it with Sarai, and we determined quite the opposite: her considerable consulting and organizational expertise, combined with her understanding of our operations and our values means she will “hit the ground running.” There is much work ahead! Considering revisions to our bylaws, laying the groundwork for a new senior minister search, acting on our new strategic plan, continuing our virtual and then in-person worship—all these initiatives and more. We are very enthused Sarai will be part of our journey over the coming months, helping us grow in love of God and neighbor.

Comments from some staff and others involved in the interview process include: “Sarai is exactly who we need right now…” and “She demonstrated great pastoral care during the interview by the questions she asked us.” When we asked Sarai about her favorite Bible story, she referenced an Old Testament story of Jacob and God’s advice to him. One of her takeaways from the story is to “listen to everyone”.

In sum, we believe Sarai’s experience, wisdom, compassion and enthusiasm are exactly what Plymouth needs at this moment in time. As our congregation gains clarity about who we are, and what we need from lay and staff leadership, particularly our next called and settled Sr. Minister, Sarai’s gifts will serve us well. And it sure doesn’t hurt that she is super smart and has a great sense of humor!
Dear beloved Plymouth,

Practicing Radical Love Everywhere and Always is our new theme around Plymouth, which came from our new strategic plan approved at the August Church Council meeting. After months of meetings, interviews and discernment, the Strategic Planning Committee is now handing the plan over to the Member Communications Task Force and Plymouth’s Communications Department (Keith Uhl, Christine Woods, Barbie Sullivan, Pam Kenyon, David Johnson, Jodi Gruening, Karen Jeske; and Emily Tripp, Cindy Eaton-Eklund, and Elsie Brault) to help determine how members can best become familiar with the plan and bring it to life in our families, our work and our community.

Practicing Radical Love is both individual and together. In many ways it represents the essence of what Plymouth members shared with the strategic planning committee through the Congregational Triad Conversations. In those eight sessions and surveys, more than 350 members provided their deepest thoughts on what the future should hold for Plymouth Church. Borne from those sessions are the four practice areas that will guide our ministries over the next three to five years:

- Practicing Meaning & Purpose
- Practicing Hospitality & Belonging
- Practicing Justice & Kindness
- Practicing Operational Excellence

It’s an exciting time for Plymouth! Watch for continued updates in the Monday Moderator Minute and Plymouth Weekly emails!

If you haven’t already, we ask everyone all to read and become familiar with the strategic plan! Use this link to access the plan: plymouthchurch.com/strategic-plan.

If you have ideas on how Plymouth members can engage more deeply with Practicing Radical Love, please send an email to Karen Jeske, kJeske@plymouthchurch.com.
ONLINE WEEKLY OFFERINGS

STAY CONNECTED!
We want to stay connected! Use the links below to check out our website, Facebook page, Instagram, and YouTube Channel!

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

MONDAYS
Weekly Kick-Off
At noon on Facebook Live, a member of the staff will introduce the scripture for the week as well as important events, a discussion question or short reflection.

Evening Prayer
At 5:30 p.m., join our ministers on Facebook Live for a service of prayer.

TUESDAYS
Evening Prayer
At 5:30 p.m., join our ministers on Facebook Live for a service of prayer.

WEDNESDAYS
Evening Prayer
At 5:30 p.m., join our ministers on Facebook Live for a service of prayer.

Wednesday Bible Study
At 7 p.m., join bible study on Zoom to discuss the upcoming scripture and theme for the weekend. Visit the Plymouth website, click Events, and select Wednesday Night Bible Study for the link to join.

THURSDAYS
Evening Prayer
At 5:30 p.m., join our ministers on Facebook Live for a service of prayer.

SATURDAYS
Saturday Worship Service
On Saturday, join us on Facebook Live at 5:30 p.m. to watch the Saturday Worship Service.

SUNDAYS
Sunday Worship Service
Each Sunday, tune in to our YouTube channel at 9 a.m. to watch the Sunday Worship Service.

Fellowship Forum
Sunday morning at 10 a.m. join us for our weekly conversation about God, life and whatever happens to come up. To join the conversation, visit the Plymouth website, scroll down to “Join Us for Online Worship”, and click “Fellowship Forum.” All are welcome to participate.

CURRENT HAPPENINGS

THURSDAY HYMN-SINGS
Each Thursday from 6-7 p.m., weather permitting, you are invited to an in-person, outdoor, physically distanced and masked, music event at Plymouth. We will gather to sing our favorite hymns, fellowship safely, and release our artistic spirits from their COVID cages.

To help with contact tracing, all must be registered in order to attend. Use the links below to register:

October 8: tiny.cc/HymnSing10-8
October 15: tiny.cc/HymnSing10-15
October 22: tiny.cc/HymnSing10-22
October 29: tiny.cc/HymnSing10-29

FRIDAY LAWN CONCERTS
This fall Plymouth Church will be featuring a variety of community musicians in our Lawn Concert Series. Concerts will be held every Friday at 6-7 p.m., weather permitting. No registration necessary! Please arrive a few minutes early. Outdoors, physically distanced, and masked, on the Ingersoll Lawn.

Bring a chair and unwind from the week with a variety of musical talents! Here are the upcoming acts:

October 9: Celtic Duo
October 16: Valley H.S. Jazz (tentative)
October 23: Micah Wright, clarinet (tentative)

SING-ALONG FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Every third Sunday this fall from 10-10:30 a.m. the Children’s Music Staff will offer a unique in-person, outdoor, physically distanced, masked, worship and music event for our youngest members. To help with contact tracing, families will need to register for each separate event. Use the links below to register:

October 4: tiny.cc/Sing-Along10-4
October 25: tiny.cc/Sing-Along10-25
November 15: tiny.cc/Sing-Along11-15
Thanksgiving Theme
December 13: tiny.cc/Sing-Along12-13
Christmas Carols
CURRENT HAPPENINGS

WEBSITE RESOURCES
When you visit our website (plymouthchurch.com) we have tabs across the top for easy access to information about our Senior Minister Transition, COVID-19, Strategic Plan, and now, we have a tab for Communications archives! Under Communications, you will find links to our Contact, Monday Moderator Minute emails, and Plymouth Weekly emails. You can find even more resources and information on our website under Life at Plymouth in the top right corner.

FALL WORSHIP SERIES
Welcome to God’s Farmer’s Market! Grab your Plymouth tote bag and your list and get prepared to explore all the Fruits of the Spirit! Head on over to the Plymouth website each Monday to find ample ways to engage with each week’s fruit. Discussion questions for the dinner table, books for the whole family to read, a movie to watch, and a short video to spark some thought.

STEPHEN MINISTRY
Stephen Ministers are trained members of Plymouth Church, who are available to help bring a spiritual presence in your life through caring, listening, and prayer. Contact LeAnn Stubbs at 515.255.3149 to discuss having a Stephen Minister assigned to walk with you.

BREAD WEEK!
On October 4, we are celebrating World Communion Sunday! From September 28 to October 2, Pastor Mary Kate lead us in baking some of her favorite bread recipes in preparation for the big day. Be sure to share photos of your creations with us by tagging @plymouthchurch on Facebook or Instagram or using #PlymouthBreadWeek! Use the links below to watch her baking videos from the passed week:
tiny.cc/BreadWeekDay1
tiny.cc/BreadWeekDay2
tiny.cc/BreadWeekDay3
tiny.cc/BreadWeekDay4
tiny.cc/BreadWeekDay5

CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS WANTED
Interested in Facilitating Family Church School Zoom small groups on Wednesday evenings from 6-6:40 p.m.? Contact Georgia Sheriff gsheriff@plymouthchurch.com.

PLYMOUTH SWAG
Take a bit of Plymouth with you wherever you go! The Board of Membership is excited to offer Plymouth swag for purchase.

We have 5 options available!
Short Sleeve T-shirt: $10
Long Sleeve T-shirt: $15
Quarter-Zip Sweater: $35
Reusable Bag: $10
Travel Mug: $30
If you’d like to place an order, fill out and submit here: tiny.cc/PlymouthSwagOrder
Questions? Feel free to email Jen Jensen at: jen.jensen1010@gmail.com

CURRENT HAPPENINGS

FELLOWSHIP FORUM
After Sunday worship, why not join us for the Fellowship Forum on Zoom? Sunday morning at 10 a.m., guest speakers will be facilitating our weekly conversation about God, life and whatever happens to come up. Just follow the link below to join the call! To join us, visit plymouthchurch.com scroll down to Join Us for Worship, and click the Fellowship Forum button!
Justice Rallies

BY: RUSHING KIMBALL | ASSOCIATE MINISTER

On Sunday, September 20 scores of Plymouth people came out to protest on the Ingersoll lawn in support of Black Lives Matter and then just two days later they rallied together to show support for voting on National Voter Registration Day! People were lining the street with homemade signs saying "Black Lives Matter" and "Black Voters Matter". At the intersection of Ingersoll and 42nd, the honking of car horns to voice their support was filling the air. It is because of the grassroots activism that is rooted at Plymouth Church that these events took place. At the begging of September during Sunday Forum, an idea came to fruition for Plymouth Church to show its support for Black lives and for the importance of voting in the upcoming election at such a critical moment. The people came out to stand on the Ingersoll lawn to remind passersby that God is love, that their voice and their life matters, and the Plymouth Church stands with the marginalized as we all work to dismantle systemic racism in our society and government.
Cancer Support Group
Sponsored by Plymouth Church Stephen Ministry

BY: DEB BROOKHART & FRANK THOMAS

Have you just received a cancer diagnosis? Are you currently going through treatment? Dealing with life during and after the cancer diagnosis? And a million other questions, emotions, difficulties during this time in your life.

Medically: How do we ask the right questions, find reliable information, how do we keep track of all the information that we are being given, how can we be an active participant in our care.

Emotional: Finding ways to express difficult feelings, not being defined by the cancer and how to care for ourselves.

Relational: How to get the support we need, keeping others updated about our journey, creating a safe space within your family.

Spiritual: Being totally honest with God, asking the hard questions without feeling guilty, weathering the spiritual storms, and finding spiritual support.

We can help each other – we are forming a group now that will meet initially through Zoom and help you to find a safe place to discuss all the issues that surround you during this time. Issues that are not mentioned here.

Does this sound like something you need, something you have been praying for? We want to be there for each other during this difficult time in life, only made harder by the isolation of the pandemic. We would like your help in forming this group – what do you need, what do you want to talk about, how can we help each other, or do you just need to be in a space where others understand where you are?

We are looking at a late afternoon meeting time, specific days and times to be determined (your input would be valuable). Our first Zoom meeting will be on October 22, at 5:30 p.m. Let’s figure this out together, please email Frank Thomas (fast219@gmail.com) or Pastor Mary Kate Buchanan (mbuchanan@plymouthchurch.com) to indicate your interest in this group.

Three Years a Just Peace Church

In October 2017, Plymouth declared itself a Just Peace Church. For the past three years Plymouth Boards, Committees and individuals have been intentional in working together to identify and alleviate injustices in the community and world as we strive to fulfill the Just Peace Covenant:

At Plymouth Church we resolve to grow in love of God and neighbor as a Just Peace Congregation, affirm our intention to seek justice and peace in every sphere of life, and recognize there can be true peace without justice for all. The scriptures speak plainly of God’s call for justice. We believe by the grace of God and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, peace sustained by justice is possible.

We seek Just Peace:

- In the community: so that all may live free from fear.
- With the earth: so that all life is sustained.
- In the marketplace: so that all may live with dignity.
- Among the nations: so that all lives are protected.

We affirm that living as a Just Peace Church is a continually evolving and intentional process, rather than the assumption of a permanent status.

In October 2020, Plymouth declared itself a Just Peace Church. For the past three years Plymouth Boards, Committees and individuals have been intentional in working together to identify and alleviate injustices in the community and world as we strive to fulfill the Just Peace Covenant:
Everyone has a story. My firm belief in this statement led me to organize an outdoor art event at Evelyn K. Davis Park with a group of young refugee students this July. Two amazing things happened as a result of this event. The first was My Art, My Story, an online gallery of the art the students created, combined with short, charming interviews with each of them.

I then went on to create and publish a book of the artwork titled My Art, My Story: Refugee Art From the Heartland, which has sold nearly 50 copies (and counting!). All funds raised through these sales are being donated back to Des Moines Refugee Support, the organization helping all of the young artists at the event this summer.

I’m currently in the process of setting up a nonprofit, the Central Iowa Refugee Arts Initiative, ensuring that similar art events can carry on well into the future. I also hope to continue the original purpose of this project: to support the refugees in our greater community and share the rich stories they have to tell.

To learn more about My Art, My Story or to check out the gallery and the book, I highly encourage visiting the website at www.myartmystory.org.
Fall Programming
Registration is Still Open!

Plymouth has now resumed programming for children and youth! Due to COVID-19, programming for our children and youth will be different this year from past years. If you have not registered for programming yet, please do so as soon as possible! Use the link below to register for Church School, Confirmation, or HS Youth. Please remember to register each child individually!

plymouthchurch.com/news/fall-2020-programming

OCTOBER 7
HS Small Groups
Theme: Peace & Bread

OCTOBER 14
Care Package Assembly

OCTOBER 21
HS Small Groups
Theme: Kindness ROCKS

OCTOBER 28
Fall Fellowship

All activities are from 6 – 7 p.m.
Upper level parking garage
Mask & RSVP required
Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the P-JPAN continues to urge Plymouth members to vote absentee.

By now, most people have received multiple forms to request an absentee ballot. However, if you have not, you can use the online version available at the Iowa Secretary of State’s website at sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/absenteeballotapp.pdf. Note that you must fill out a blank Absentee Ballot Request Form, not a form that had your personal information already pre-filled out. Your request for an absentee ballot must be received by the county auditor no later than 5 p.m. on October 24. Following are two links for more information about absentee voting:

- Check out youtu.be/e5P1V2faJ4o for a two-minute video on absentee voting.
- Use the link below to for FAQs about voter registration and absentee voting, based on information provided by the Polk County auditor in the August 23 Des Moines Register and the Iowa Secretary of State’s Office: plymouthchurch.com/plymouth-justice-and-peace-network-p-jpan/absentee-voting-in-2020/

If you submitted your Absentee Ballot Request Form in September, you should be receiving your absentee ballot in early October. And remember, as soon as you receive your absentee ballot, complete it right away and mail it or take it to your county auditor’s office. Do not delay! Make sure your vote is counted!

To track the status of your absentee ballot, you can check the Secretary of State’s tracker at sos.iowa.gov/elections/absenteeballotstatus/absentee/search.

**Precinct Election Officials**

In past years, seniors comprised most of the precinct election officials (paid $10 an hour), but due to COVID-19, county election offices are facing a critical shortage of these workers. If you are able, consider serving your community in this position. This is an excellent opportunity to play a key role in how citizens regard elections and in ensuring that anyone who is eligible and wants to vote is given the opportunity.

For more information, go to polkcountryiowa.gov/county-auditor/election/precinct-election-officials or pollworker.iowa.gov.
Our Faith, Our Vote 2020
NAACP Voter Registration Events

An average election in the United States has around 60% of the eligible voting population turning out at the polls. There are a variety of reasons why people don’t get out and vote: their job schedule does not allow it, they are away and didn’t apply for an absentee ballot, disillusionment with the political atmosphere, among others. With the rise in popularity of suppressive voting legislation, we may see an even lower turnout than normal in this election.

One thing we can do to help increase voter turnout is to help local community organizations, such as NAACP, in their GOTV efforts.

Below are 2 opportunities for Plymouth members to plug into upcoming NAACP voter registration events. Masks are required and hand sanitizer will be available.

- **October 3, 1- 4 p.m.:** Corinthian Baptist Church (814 School Street, Des Moines)
- **October 31, 1- 4 p.m., (tentative):** Stewart Square Park (1401 E Grand Ave, Des Moines - near Capitol Complex)

Note that NAACP hopes to schedule additional voter registration events. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Mary Nelson at maryandsteve@Q.com.


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AMOS Candidate Forum

On **Sunday, October 4, from 3-4:30 p.m.** AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) leaders from across central Iowa will be meeting with candidates for federal office via zoom. AMOS is a broad-based, local, nonpartisan organization of 39 dues-paying member congregations, neighborhood associations, and nonprofits, doing our part to make democracy work and create a community in which all can succeed. As a member institution of AMOS, Plymouth hopes to be well-represented at this forum.

The meeting will highlight stories from AMOS leaders and present an agenda of issues distilled from conversations with community members throughout the summer (from the importance of childcare to mental health to general economic stability). This is not a candidate debate, but rather a chance for all candidates to meet with hundreds of well-connected, active Iowans and respond to our agenda. AMOS is asking all candidates, if elected, to work with us around the issues that are important to us and to our families. As people of faith, this is an opportunity to live our values.

tiny.cc/AMOSOct2020Meeting

Please register and attend this candidate forum, even if you already decided who to vote for in each race. This is a chance to hear directly from the candidates on the issues you care about most. This is also a chance to show them that you support AMOS, and that every vote and every voter matters. And, you may learn or hear something new, including learning more about down-ballot candidates who aren’t as well known, helping you decide how to complete your ballot, front and back. Join us to support AMOS and Our Faith Our Vote.

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CONTACT  October 2020  11