This title includes some very big words and the first way we can engage with our new plan is to invite ourselves and our Plymouth friends to examine and reflect on these words together.

Practice. Radical Love.
Everywhere and Always.

Over the next few months we hope you will read the plan and find time to discuss these words. While you’re doing that, we will use some of the space in the Contact to do the same. This month we are looking at Radical Love.

Continued on page 6
Caring

CONDOLENCES
• to all those who have lost someone to COVID-19
• to Dan Mowry whose mother passed away
• to Deb Neilsen whose mother passed away
• to the family and friends of George Sullivan
• to the family and friends of Randy Miller
• to Dick Lozier whose brother passed away

Dear Plymouth Members,

As you prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving, please consider a Special Offering gift that supports our Just Peace covenant - working toward economic and social justice for our Des Moines Metro Area neighbors.

The projects selected for this year’s gifts are:

**Pastor’s Discretionary Fund**: 10% of the Special Offerings will be allocated to Plymouth Pastor’s Discretionary Fund. These funds are directed to urgent needs of community members, covering items such as rent assistance, utility cost, medicine, and bus/travel expense.

**Family Promise of Greater Des Moines**: 60% of the remaining collection will be given to support FPGDM, which provides support to families experiencing homelessness.

**Food Buddies**: 40% of the remaining collection will be given for this Plymouth’s initiative with Hubbell Elementary School that provides for weekend meals for students experiencing food insecurity.

To keep our Church Family safe and healthy, there will be no in person Thanksgiving services. Please make your gifts online at plymouthchurch.com/give or mail your check with memo line “Thanksgiving Gifts” to Plymouth Church Attn: Nancy Bassett, 4126 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312.

Thank you for your generosity,
Plymouth Board of Benevolences

Plymouth Church is humbled in gratitude for all that we have freely received from God. We continue to grow in generosity by giving away of our possessions that include food, clothing, furniture and money. We want this monetary abundance to flow out from Plymouth Church and into the hands of deserving organizations for people most in need and striving for social and/or economic justice.

It is in this spirit that the Plymouth Church Board of Benevolences is now accepting applications from Metro Des Moines area nonprofit agencies for its Christmas Special Offering gifts. These are modest gifts, where the amount gifted depends on the total Christmas collection and typically range from $3,000 to $5,000. These are a one-time occurrence and require a report back to Plymouth’s Board of Benevolences upon utilization of the funds, but no later than six months following receipt. This report should include the impact of the awarded gift and quantify persons served.

As a Just Peace Church, the Board of Benevolences seeks grant applications from non-profit organizations with projects that identify a need that will facilitate social justice for clients or an obstacle that restricts clients from obtaining economic stability. Applications for the 2020 Christmas Special Offering are due Nov. 20, 2020, and are available here: bit.ly/2HglW9Y.
A Greeting from Sarai Rice

BY: SARAI RICE

Dear Plymouth Church,

Some of you will have seen the introductory video that I did with David Johnson, but I wanted to say “hi” for myself as I begin work as your interim senior minister.

My name is Sarai, pronounced “Sara.” My parents chose the Hebrew spelling because my father was studying Hebrew when I was born!

For 12 years, I was the Executive Director of the Des Moines Area Religious Council, but before that I served as an Interim Presbytery Executive in both North Central Iowa and the Twin Cities, I was the director of Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa (Iowa’s state council of churches), I was a minister in Ames, and I taught at Memphis Theological Seminary. I’ve also spent the last 12 years working as a consultant with congregations around the country in the areas of strategic planning and staffing. I retired and lost my husband in July 2019, so this last year has been a time of adaptation and change for me.

I have two sons, one here in West Des Moines and one in Ottawa, Ontario. I also have two step-daughters with families in Johnston and Ames. And I have two cats who occasionally join Zoom meetings with me.

I’m very glad to be here at Plymouth. You have an amazing staff and leaders who continue to work hard to keep Plymouth humming in the midst of the pandemic. I know we will all be so happy when it’s over and everyone can see and hug each other once again.

In the meantime, I’d like to start to get to know you. If you’re interested in Zoom coffee, I’d love to meet you. Feel free to include spouses, kids, dogs, cats, and whoever else wants to show up! Just email me at srice@plymouthchurch.com and we’ll find a time. If you don’t do email, call the church office at 515.255.3149 and leave your name and number so that I can call you back.

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Plymouth Merchandise!

Take a bit of Plymouth with you wherever you go! The Board of Membership is excited to offer Plymouth swag for purchase. We have six options available!

- Bamboo Face Masks: $5
- Short Sleeve T-shirt: $10
- Long Sleeve T-shirt: $15
- Quarter-Zip Sweater: $35
- Reusable Bag: $10
- Travel Mug: $30

For more information, visit: plymouthchurch.com/ plymouth-merchandise-store
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. Visit the Plymouth website, click Events, and select Wed. 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 live on our YouTube channel 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!

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

ADVENT PREVIEW
This Advent we are truly home for the holiday season. Let’s make the most of it- together! Let Plymouth help you find meaningful ways to practice your faith at home with your church family this Advent. All season we will be cuddling up in our jammies, lighting our Advent wreaths, and exploring the themes of the season: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. To support your spiritual journey through the season, we will have several resources available to download from our website:

- A calendar of Plymouth Advent events!
- A devotional featuring the writings of Maya Angelou!
- A guide to making and lighting your own Advent wreath!
- A recipe to make Advent cookies!
- And MORE!

We also have prepared 270 Advent Bags with these materials plus a few other surprises to supplement your Advent season and Christmas worship.

These Advent bags will be available to be picked up on Saturday, November 21 from 10 a.m. to noon AND Sunday, November 22 from 1-3 p.m. Come pick up your bag, receive a blessing, and say hello to Plymouth staff.

*Bags will be available until we run out*

CHRISTMAS EVE PREVIEW
This Christmas Eve, Plymouth is offering THREE different opportunities for worship and fellowship!

5 & 6 p.m.: In-person, outdoor, 20 minutes. Sing a couple carols, hear the Christmas story, light a luminary. Registration is required: Register here for one of these services:
- 5 p.m.: tiny.cc/ChristmasEve20-5
- 6 p.m.: tiny.cc/ChristmasEve20-6

7 p.m.: Zoom worship & fellowship- hear the Christmas story, pray, and spend some face time with your fellow Plymouth members.

All day: Released on Christmas Eve morning, a recorded worship blending together music and hallmarks from all Plymouth’s Christmas Eve services. Sit down to worship when is best for you and your family.

More to come!
COMING TOGETHER: STEWARDSHIP 2021

Our theme for the 2021 Stewardship Campaign expresses what we all desperately want to do – come together once again in worship, in service, and in learning about the ways God is at work in our lives. The first week of November, you will: receive a letter from Interim Senior Minister, Sarai Rice, and a stewardship pledge card, learn more about our stewardship campaign on the Plymouth website, and begin to see a variety of videos on Plymouth’s Facebook page from church staff about a variety of topics related to stewardship.

As we turn to a new year, with a new budget and new challenges, we ask that you continue to invest in the people and the work of Plymouth Church, and turn in your pledge by November 22 to help church leaders build a more accurate budget.

For more information visit: plymouthchurch.com/stewardship2021

THANKSGIVING SERVICE OF GRATITUDE: A CALL FOR VIDEO SUBMISSIONS

Plymouth Church, what are you grateful for? 2020 has been a challenging year on many fronts. And yet! There are still things that make you smile, feel safe, evoke a happy dance, challenge you to grow, and let you know you belong and are loved. We want to hear about them! Before you share around your Thanksgiving table, share with us. Whether a three-minute testimony or a three-second gratitude blast of “I’m grateful for [fill in the blank]." You can submit your video offerings here: tiny.cc/gratitude-video.

All video submissions are due by Friday, November 13. Videos will be compiled into a Thanksgiving Service of Gratitude that will premiere Thanksgiving Eve. Let your voice and face and story be something another Plymouth friend gives thanks for!

Got questions or want some coaching on how to craft your story?
Contact Pastor Lindsey by email: lbraun@plymouthchurch.com.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

During this COVID time, our staff at Plymouth have created and modified a variety of different programs for our church community. Currently, our staff are working to prepare programming for 2021. They have created a survey of questions regarding the past eight months of virtual and hybrid programming, and they want to hear your thoughts! They encourage you to provide open and honest answers and feedback. One survey per household is sufficient. All responses are anonymous.

Please use the link below to fill out the survey. Submit your responses by Sunday, November 15. tiny.cc/ChurchSurvey2020

VOLUNTEER EMAIL LIST

Looking for something to do with all that PESKY extra time on your hands?! Look no further! We have the remedy! Join this volunteer email blast list! You’ll get an email inviting you to sign up to do some tedious. You’re not signing up for a 3-year term, but rather a one time opportunity to make a difference and get down and dirty as the hands and feet of Christ- the church!

To be added to this email blast list of volunteer opportunities: eepurl.com/heSU4b. You will receive an email from us each Friday, with volunteer opportunities.

CELEBRATING THANKSGIVING: FOOD INSECURITY

In November America gives thanks for gifts and grace we have received. While we celebrate, on Thanksgiving Day, the food bounty we have, Plymouth Church has a long history of recognizing many in our community experience food insecurity. Ways Plymouth Church has given to help alleviate food insecurity includes Food Buddies (supporting food insecure children at Hubbell Elementary School), Food Pantry (supporting DMARC Food Pantries), and Shelter Meals (supporting Central Iowa Shelter & Services).

The Board of Benevolences thanks and encourages Plymouth Church members for their support of initiatives that help to alleviate food insecurity. To continue supporting the Food Pantry, Shelter Meals and Food Buddies, cash donations may be made directly to Plymouth Church. Please indicate on the memo line to which initiative you’d like your funds to be contributed. THANK YOU Plymouth Church.

SING-ALONG FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The Children’s Music Staff will offer a unique in-person, outdoor, physically distanced, masked, worship and music event for our youngest members on the dates below from 10-10:30 a.m. To help with contact tracing, families will need to register for each separate event. Use the links below to register:

November 15: tiny.cc/Sing-Along11-15
Thanksgiving Theme

December 13: tiny.cc/Sing-Along12-13
Christmas Carols
A Conversation Starter

Our New Strategic Plan: Radical Love

Radical is a difficult word for some people. It’s provocative and attention-grabbing. And it has some specific connotations for some people that aren’t related to their faith. One thing that Jesus asks his followers, though, is to re-think or re-interpret our current understandings and knowings. So... maybe we are being invited to look at this word anew?

Radical can be used as both an adjective and a noun. (It’s worth a mention that some have used the noun version to label Jesus.) The strategic plan uses it as an adjective. And as you know, adjectives require a noun in order for them to mean something. This is important. In our strategic plan, we are not using Radical alone, we are using it to describe LOVE.

If we apply a dictionary definition to the word in this context, then to practice Radical Love is to love in ways that are more far-reaching and more thorough. In short, it is a challenge to us to stretch and do more to extend love.

Far more important than the dictionary, though, is how we see Radical Love. I asked two members of the Steering Committee and two members of the Implementation Committee and here are their reflections:

“Radical love is the fuel that makes us burn brighter and do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. It is selfless. It is ministering in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Pam Kenyon
(member of the Steering Committee)

“Practicing radical love means seeking to love ourselves and others the way God loves us. Love that is not based on merit or earned, but rather love that is limitless and cannot be fractured.”

Caroline Bettis Valentine
(member of the Steering Committee)

“Nonjudgmental acceptance of everyone!”

Keith Uhl
(member of the Implementation Team)

“Unselfish, caring, respectful love (with God’s help)”

Christine Woods
(member of the Implementation Team)

Plymouth Friends, it’s your turn. What does Radical Love mean to you? Feel free to share your thoughts with me at kjeske@plymouthchurch.com.
Thinking and talking are great ways to start, but maybe you can put our new Strategic Plan words into action and explore them further by participating in a seven-day challenge.

1. Complete any six of these items on any six days you choose during the month of November.

- After the election or anytime you feel frustrated or angry with someone, use this prayer:
  
  _______, I acknowledge that of God in you. I accept that God cares for you as God cares for me. I release you from my anxiety and concern, imperfectly…and with baby steps. I choose to see you as God sees you—a unique human being with qualities and abilities that bless the world. I thank God for you.

- When you are feeling anxious or insecure about yourself, use this prayer:
  
  I acknowledge that of God in me. I accept that God cares for me as God cares for everyone. I release my anxiety that I am less worthy than other people, letting go of that fear imperfectly…and with baby steps. I choose to see myself as God sees me—a unique human being with qualities and abilities that bless the world. I accept the challenge and the responsibility to become all of whom I am meant to be. I thank God that I am just the person I am.

- Send a note or email to someone you really appreciate, but might not know how appreciated they are.

- Bake something and share it with a neighbor.

- Order food from a locally-owned restaurant.

- Do an internet search for “Audrey Assad Your Peace Will Make Us One” and listen to this re-working of The Battle Hymn of the Republic.

- Attend the AMOS Delegate Assembly on November 8 to celebrate the work of 2020 and look ahead to 2021. To join this Zoom event, register here or contact amosiowa@gmail.com.

- Record a three second “I’m grateful for….?” video and share it with our staff by November 13, so we can include it in our Thanksgiving worship service this year.

- Consider an increase in your annual gift to the Thanksgiving offering.

- Watch our Special Thanksgiving worship service.

2. For the seventh day take a rest or sabbath.

Make space for an intentional break from your work, worries, stresses or whatever feels heavy in your life right now. Make the duration whatever length of time would feel like a true sabbath—five minutes, an hour, half a day or a whole day. We need to rest and recharge. We need sabbath in order to pursue Radical Love.
All Saints

Each year on November 1, we celebrate All Saints Day, also known as All Hallows’ Day. On this day, we honor our departed loved ones with our prayers. Will you please join us in praying for and remembering the members of our congregation who have passed this year.

Bob Griffith
Barbara Graham
Arlene Lorenger
True Sherman
Helen Watts
Mary Lou King
Shirley Stetson
Russ Parks
Jan Berg Kruse
Ned Rood
Betty Dunham
Don Marek
Marlon Laverman
Jim Krambeck
Harris Coggeshall
Tim Mlsna
Christopher Sheriff
Bernie Sayler
George Sullivan
Online Yoga Classes:  
with Mary McCarthy, E-RYT 500

Mary McCarthy has been teaching yoga at Plymouth on Monday evenings for over 20 years. Her business "Resilience & Grace" has moved online and she is helping people "feel good at any age" with her offerings. Mary's classes focus on physical health (strength, balance, and flexibility), mindfulness, and breath awareness (pranayama). She teaches a weekly mixed-level Hatha yoga class, gentle yoga classes, and a chair yoga class. In addition to her online classes, you can listen to a guided meditation on her "Resilience & Grace" podcast or try a class for free on her "Mary McCarthy Yoga" YouTube page. Each class is unique and individual modifications are provided.

You can connect with Mary and learn more about all of her offerings on her website: www.mary-mccarthy.com. Please email Mary at info@mary-mccarthy.com if you have any questions or want to register. All are welcome.

Effigy Mounds Presentation

Plymouth's Board of Spiritual Growth and Anti-Racism Committee are co-sponsoring a presentation on the Effigy Mounds National Monument on Zoom. Please note that the date has changed. Keep an eye on Plymouth Weekly next week for the correct date.

Effigy Mounds National Monument, located in the Upper Mississippi River Valley, preserves more than 200 mounds built by American Indian tribes. Numerous effigy mounds are shaped like animals, including bears and birds. The mounds are considered sacred by many Americans, especially the Effigy Mounds Monument's 20 culturally associated American Indian tribes.

The presentation will focus on the spiritual aspects of Effigy Mounds, as well as on systemic racism towards Indigenous Peoples, as reflected in how Tribal remains and cultural items buried in the mounds were treated.

Keep an eye on Plymouth Weekly email blasts for more information about the program, and a the Zoom link to attend the presentation.

Our Faith, Our Vote 2020

If you've already voted in the 2020 General Election, thank you for making your voice heard! If you've not yet voted, there is still time.

Voting Options:

- **November 2**: Absentee Ballot in-person deadline; postmark deadline for Absentee Ballots
- **November 3**: General Election Day; polls are open 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. Use the link below to find your local polling place: www.polkelectionia.gov

NAACP; participated in Plymouth's Get-Out-The-Vote rally; or participated in issue education sessions – your volunteer efforts made a difference! Together with other organizations, we registered over 75 new voters and provided voting information to 6500 households.
Plymouth Port Pillows Project

BY: GEORGIA SHERIFF

The Plymouth Port Pillow Project was in full swing in the late summer and early fall. Volunteers including: 13 families with 35 children and their parents and 17 volunteers from Plymouth Quilters and the Career Closet Committee made over 330 Port Pillows for patients of the Stoddard Cancer Center.

A grant from the Plymouth Foundation for velcro and stuffing combined with generous donations of fabric from Plymouth Quilters gave volunteers a fun way to connect with others and to provide a needed item for individuals served by the Stoddard Cancer Center.

The project involved completing a step in the port pillow process and then passing the in-progress work on to another volunteer. So, fabric was received by families who cut rectangles using a pattern. Some families cut velcro into three-inch strips. The family's work was then transported to volunteers who stitched the pillows on three sides and inserted the velcro. Pillows then traveled to families to be turned right-side-out and have stuffing inserted. The port pillows made one more trip to be stitched closed by volunteer sewers. The cards were then slipped under the velcro and the Port Pillows gathered into big baskets for delivery.

The response from children, families and volunteers was heartwarming. Parents told us they were thankful to have a project for their children that gave back to others. They felt a renewed connection to Plymouth and its members. Volunteers who were sewing were able to feel a connection to families as they stitched fabric and Velcro that had been cut by children and when they later stitched the pillow shut after children and parents had stuffed each one.

The original goal of 200 Port Pillows quickly became over 330 by the time the delivery to Stoddard was made! A big THANK YOU to the Foundation and everyone who participated!!

The port pillows were blessed and dedicated by Rev. Sarai Rice, Plymouth Interim Senior Minister. Children, families, and volunteers who participated in the project enjoyed the short Zoom service. Port pillows were then delivered to the Stoddard Cancer Center.

Port Pillows will be distributed by the Stoddard Cancer Center as needed to patients without charge. All involved in the Plymouth Port Pillow Project feel blessed to bring a touch of comfort to those who are experiencing chemotherapy and malignancy. In addition to the physical comfort of a port pillow between the shoulder harness and the port, we hope the accompanying cards let the recipients know that Plymouth’s children, families and volunteers care.
HS Youth Care Packages

BY: SUSAN WALLER

40 youth put together 20 care packages for our college and graduated young adults! Each of those peeps will receive a box early next week filled with candy, food, study items, face mask, Halloween trinkets, Kleenex, hand sanitizer, a hand written note from our current youth and if in Matins, the 2019-2020 Matins Memory Book which is a compilation of thoughts and wishes from last years’ Matins in lieu of final circle on Tour.

We also put together 10 care package sacks for some of our Plymouth residents at Scottish Rite. These past 7 months, our youth have been writing letters to older adults in our congregation. Many of these younger and older people have become pen pals. So this week, some of those pen pals will be receiving a “pick-me-up” fall package!

Connecting through letter writing has created many intergenerational relationships and broadened our understanding of the world we live in from different perspectives!

I received texts from our college/graduated young adults as they were checking their mailboxes and finding a care package from the HS Youth @ Plymouth. Although they know they will receive one because they have themselves put them together for their peers, it is so joyful to see how much these packages mean.

Here are some of the comments from our former HS Youth:

“Package received. Also, thank you as well. Say thanks to Ezra and Peter for the card.” – Sam G. (Iowa State)

“Just opened the package!! Thanks for all the wonderful gifts, and special thanks to Hunter and Nate for the card! Miss you guys.” – Carsen C. (George Washington University)

“It’s Christmas in October!” – Chloe E. (U of I)

“I just got my package! I’m so excited to open it!” – Evie S. (University of Tampa)

“Just got my package! Thanks so much for the treats and well wishes. I really appreciate it!” – Clara C. (Colorado State University)

“Thanks Sooz and the Matins for the care package! It was really fun getting to read everyone’s circle writings. I can’t wait to be back in church watching everyone sing someday! Once a Matin, always a Matin.” – Charlie P. (U of I)

Here are some thanks from our recipients of the senior adult care packages delivered to some of our members at Scottish Rite Park.

“When I opened your bag of goodies, it was just like Christmas! A bag of thoughtful treasures. I don’t know which was the best – candy or popcorn, or the bright pumpkin and tea candle to brighten my table. But, I guess what finally was best was the thoughtfulness of Plymouth kids.” – Wilma R.

“What a nice surprise to get a "goodie basket" yesterday from a member of Matins...we’re very grateful and wanted to let you know what a great bunch of young people you lead.” – Lloyd & Julie V.
Plymouth Church Program Staff

Sarai Rice .................................................. Interim Senior Minister
Lindsey Braun ..................................... Minister of Vitality and Outreach
Mary Kate Buchanan ........................... Associate Minister
Cindy Eaton-Eklund ............................ Director of Communications
Christopher Goodson .......................... Director of Music and Fine Arts
Carl Gravander ........................................ Organist
Karen Quance Jeske ......................... Director of TiM Programs
Rushing Kimball ................................. Associate Minister
LeAnn Stubbs ................................. Minister of Care and Welcome
Jan Van Wyk ................................. Director of Plymouth Nursery School
Emily Tripp ................................. Director of Operations and Finance
Susan Waller ................................. Director of Youth Ministry