Keep a lookout for a mailing this month! Inside you’ll find a guide to a special Lenten challenge: Practice Makes Plymouth!

Now that we have explored the Strategic Plan’s title, Practice Radical Love Everywhere and Always, this Lenten challenge is designed to help us all become familiar with the four PRACTICE pillars of the plan below.

With such a strong emphasis on Practices, the bottom line is that the more we all engage with these Practices, the more we will fulfill the aims of the plan.

Watch your mail and get ready to extend your 7-Day Practices into the whole Lenten season!
CONDOLENCES

• to all those who have lost someone to COVID-19.
• to the family and friends of Jim Schultz.
• to the family and friends of Louise Moon.

CONGRATULATIONS

• to Seth Hedquist & his wife on the birth of their son.

BY: AMY ELBERT

The Plymouth Career Closet for Women is closed due to the pandemic, but our steering committee is busy delivering clothes from the shop to women in need. We’ve filled shopping bags with coats, boots, shoes, sweaters, scarves, blouses, jeans and pants, and even a few purses and toiletries for a variety of service groups in the area.

Some of the organizations that have benefited from our Career Closet shop inventory are: Clive Community Services, Waukee-Dallas County Services, Dorothy’s House, Homes of Oakridge, Polk County Juvenile Drug Court Program, Des Moines Refugee Support, and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants.

The Career Closet for Women hopes to reopen some time in 2021, and we look forward to again welcoming customers to our shop at the Wellmark Y and accepting donations at Plymouth. We will spring into action once Plymouth Church and the Y deem it safe for our customers and volunteers. In the meantime, please donate your used clothing and accessories to the service groups listed above and to Goodwill, the Salvation Army, and DAV. (Call first as business hours can be sporadic.)

Thanks to all of you who have supported the Career Closet with your donations and volunteer time. We hope you’ll answer the call when we are able to resume our mission: supporting women with confidence and clothing as they enter the workforce.

New Gallery Series: Kim Dawson

We have a brand new Plymouth Gallery Series! Kim Dawson's beautiful fluid acrylic pieces are up in our gallery and on our website now through the month of February! You can view this art gallery virtually and read more about Kim Dawson here: plymouthchurch.com/worship/arts-at-plymouth/kim-dawson-virtual-gallery/.

This month, we will also be offering some in-person opportunities to see this gallery exhibit. Space is limited. To sign up for a slot, visit: tiny.cc/Kim-Dawson-Gallery.
You are invited to sign up for the Lent Series for four Saturdays in March, when we as Plymouth members, learn about our history as a church in the Des Moines community and how that relates to the Urban Renewal that happened to our own local African American community on “Center Street”.

This series is sponsored by the Anti Racism committee, along with a grant from the Plymouth Foundation. Our guide will be Dr. Madison DeShay-Duncan who teaches at Iowa State and has been working on the documentary “The Center Street Story – An Urban Renewal Retrospective.” We will use Dr. DeShay-Duncan’s astute insight in how urban renewal affected the Center Street in our own city.

We will examine our own conscience and participants will seek to better understand what it means to be a neighbor, how we can build bridges across color lines and what is the specific role for Plymouth Church.

Sign up as soon as possible as space will be limited. Sessions will be held Saturday mornings on March 6, 13, 20, and 27 from 10 a.m. to noon. This will be a memorable and wonderful education series. Participation is free but limited to Plymouth church members. We hope to see you there!

To sign up, visit: tiny.cc/Social-Injustice-Class.

Shrove Tuesday Virtual Pancake Supper

Tuesday, February 16 from 7-7:30 p.m.

The Plymouth Deacons invite you to the first ever Shrove Tuesday on-line extravaganza!!!

Well…that might be over-stating it a bit, but we do hope that you can join us for some pancake fun and fellowship on Shrove Tuesday. We miss seeing you at church each weekend and feel this is a great opportunity to get together and do what we do best – Grow in love of God and neighbor. We will have some trivia to quiz your knowledge about Shrove Tuesday, Lent, maybe even pancakes? All are invited!

In addition to the pancake fun and fellowship, we are also asking for donations to the Good Samaritan Fund. All monies raised will go to this fund which helps people who find themselves temporarily stuck in a place of immediate need. Problems that, for many of us may be nothing more than an inconvenience, can be enough to tip a family on the edge over the edge. That’s why this fund is so important. It allows our ministers to help people directly, when they’re most in need. The process is simple, just a need, a willingness to ask, and the ability of a blessed church to give.

With the events of the past year, the need is greater than ever. Please give as generously as you are able. All are welcome to join! We hope you will join us on Zoom Tuesday, February 16 from 7-7:30 p.m.

Use this link to join: zoom.us/j/99461884163
New Hope for Plymouth's Sibling Church

Ebenezer Baptist in Cuba

BY: CHUCK OFFENBURGER

Plymouth’s sibling church in Cuba, Ebenezer Baptist, is squeezed economically but there is indeed new hope.

The global COVID pandemic, a withering of tourism, Cuban currency restructuring, and continued harsh relations between the U.S. and Cuban governments have Iglesia Bautista Ebenezer de Marianao – the sibling church in Havana of Plymouth Congregational UCC – struggling in very tough times.

“It sounds like it’s getting more and more desperate, with each new challenge that’s piled up on them,” said Emily Chafa, co-chair with Jan Campbell of Plymouth’s Cuba Partnership Team, which coordinates the relationship with the Ebenezer congregation. “But they’re hanging on and hopeful that with the new (U.S.) administration, some restrictions will be eased.”

Campbell noted that with the drop in tourism to Cuba, there are very few groups booking stays and meals at Ebenezer’s attached Martin Luther King Jr. Center, which is like a big dormitory with a cafeteria and meeting space. “That’s been the source of most of Ebenezer’s church operating funds,” she said. “The three pastors have had to find other ways to supplement their income, and I think the church has had to cut way back on its out-reach to their neighborhood and in their other ministries.”

Four delegations of Plymouth members have traveled to Cuba and stayed at the MLK Center since 2013, and twice Plymouth has hosted people visiting from Ebenezer church. It is affiliated with a group of progressive Cuban Baptist congregations. Ebenezer has only about 250 actual members, but it ministers to a much larger crowd of people in the surrounding Marianao neighborhood of west-central Havana.

U.S. relations with Cuba have a very checkered history. For 60 years, the U.S. has enforced an economic blockade of the island country of 11 million people, trying to undermine the Cuban government. When President Barack Obama led the U.S., many of the restrictions on Cuba were relaxed, and the nations announced they were moving toward normalizing relations with open trade and travel. But under President Donald Trump, the U.S. position toward Cuba became oppressive, to the point that with a week left in the Trump administration, Cuba was added to the U.S. list of “states sponsoring terrorism.” Campbell said that move was “wrong on every level. If anything, it’s been the U.S. that’s been the perpetrator of illegal actions, not Cuba. They are a people who are just trying to exist – to have lives with enough food and jobs so they can raise their kids. It’s not an adversarial kind of country at all.”

With the Biden administration, Chafa said she is “hopeful that the relationship with Cuba can be improved. Maybe it’s my optimistic nature, and sometimes I’m unrealistically optimistic – for example, I’m a Cubs fan. But at least a couple of the Biden cabinet members have had interests and experiences with Cuba, going back to their own involvement during the Obama administration. One of those is Iowa’s Tom Vilsack, who is Secretary of Agriculture again. With the dire need in Cuba now, I am hopeful that U.S. restrictions can be rolled back and people can resume visiting there.”

Both said they’d like to organize another delegation from Plymouth to visit Cuba later this year, if such trips become possible again soon.

For more information about Cuba Partnership Team activities, please contact:
Emily Chafa at emilychafa@msn.com or 515.975.1825.
Jan Campbell at jancampbell@me.com or 515.314.0344.
Triangulating Between Cuba, New England, and Africa in the Art of María Magdalena Campos-Pons.

The Cuba Partnership Team invites you to a virtual talk with Dr. Jennifer Josten about contemporary artist María Magdalena Campos-Pons. This talk will be held over Zoom on Monday, February 22 from 7-8:30 p.m. You can learn more about Josten under "About the Speaker" here on the Plymouth website: plymouthchurch.com/news/cuban-art-talk.

Campos-Pons is renowned for her artworks that combine installation, performance, photography, painting, and video. Born in Cuba in 1959, she was raised in a former slave barracks on a plantation in Matanzas before entering Cuba’s national art school system. She emigrated to Boston in 1991 during the economic crisis following the collapse of the Soviet Union, known as Cuba’s "Special Period."

Dr. Josten’s talk will focus on Campos-Pons’s 2015 exhibition Alchemy of the Soul, Elixir for the Spirits at the Peabody Essex Museum, an institution founded by the East India Marine Society in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1799. She will discuss how Campos-Pons’s multi-part sculptural and sound installation metaphorically invoked the economic system known as the Triangular Trade, in which sugarcane was harvested by enslaved peoples of African descent in Cuba, other parts of the Caribbean, and southern U.S., transported to New England where it was distilled into rum, and shipped to Africa to be traded for enslaved peoples who were forcibly taken to the New World and sold, thus continuing a cycle of exploitation from which New Englanders continued to profit long after their direct participation in the slave trade ended.

Dr. Josten is interim chair and associate professor in the History of Art and Architecture Department at the University of Pittsburgh. Jennifer is a Des Moines native who grew up at Plymouth Church, sang in Matins Choir and graduated from Roosevelt High School. She also will speak about how she became interested in Cuba, and what it has meant to teach Cuban art in the era of BLM.

If you would like to register for this talk, visit: tiny.cc/cuban-art-21.

For more information about the speaker, artist, resources, and photos, visit: plymouthchurch.com/news/cuban-art-talk.

Contact Cuba Partnership Team member Alicia Claypool, apclaypool@aol.com, with any questions about this program. This event is co-sponsored by the Anti-Racism Committee, the Welcoming Migrants Committee, Arts@Plymouth, and Board of Music & Fine Arts.
During this closure, we have many virtual offerings available to you throughout the week on a variety of platforms! Email, Facebook Live, Zoom, and YouTube. On this page, you will find a list of all of our regular weekly offerings during the month of February!

If you would like to receive our email offerings, visit: eepurl.com/dhGrYv, and fill out the form with your first and last name and your best email address.

Below, you will find links for easy access to our website, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube Channel.

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

MONDAYS...

Monday Moderator Minute
On Mondays, you will receive an email update from our Moderator, David Johnson, and Moderator-elect, Jodi Gruening.

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...

Your Faith @ Home
On Tuesdays, you will receive an email with the week’s scripture, a journal prompt, staff recommendations, and ideas for you.

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 Rushing Kimball for bible study on Zoom. To join, visit the Plymouth website, click Events at the top of the page, and select Wednesday Bible Study for the link.

THURSDAYS...

Plymouth Weekly
On Thursdays, you will receive an email with a list of highlighted activities going on at Plymouth Church.

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

Thursdays Together
At 7 p.m., join other church members on Zoom for a time of informal fellowship. To join the conversation, visit the Plymouth website, select “Events” at the top of the pages and look for “Thursdays Together” on our calendar.

SATURDAYS...

Communion Saturday
Join us each Saturday, except the first Saturday of the month, on Zoom at 5 p.m. We will gather to take Communion together and have a short time of fellowship. To join us, visit the Plymouth website, scroll down to “Join Us for Online Worship” and click “Saturday Communion.”

Weekend Worship Service
Our Weekend Worship Service will be available beginning at 5:30 p.m. on our Facebook Page each weekend.

SUNDAYS...

Weekend Worship Service
Our Weekend Worship Service will be available beginning at 9 a.m. on our YouTube Channel each weekend.

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.”

Lenten Book Study
Beginning Feb. 21, join LeAnn Stubbs and Brian Leckrone for a book study from 4:30-6 p.m. Registration required. More details on page 7.
CURRENT HAPPENINGS

LENTEN BOOK STUDY
How shall people of Faith think about the Covid 19 Pandemic? One year of COVID 19. A health disaster coupled with a disastrous response. One year of isolation and frustration and way too many deaths. Do we just put this behind us, move on, and hope for the best? Or do we lean into a future of promise and new life, grounded in the wisdom of our faith?

Join Pastor LeAnn Stubbs and Stephen Minister Brian Leckrone for Plymouth’s Lenten Book Study, as we take up the brand new book, Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a time of Pandemic and Beyond.

**Lenten Book Study:** Sunday afternoons, 4:30-6 p.m. from February 21 to March 28
**Book:** Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a time of Pandemic and Beyond by Matthew Fox.
**Register:** To register visit, tiny.cc/LentBookStudy21. We will send you the ZOOM link, book details, and additional resources.

Please contact Brian Leckrone at bdleckrone@gmail.com if you have any questions.

ASHES TO GO
As we move into the season of Lent, your Stephen Ministers are offering a time of blessing, prayer and an imposition of Ashes. Please come to receive the mark of the cross on this special day, **Wednesday, Feb. 18 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.**, at the Circle Drive entrance on 42nd Street. Ashes and a blessing will be provided as you remain in the comfort of your car.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED
Do you have free time during the week and are looking for something safe you can do? Plymouth is looking for volunteers to assist our church staff in covering phone shifts during the week. If you would like to learn more or are interested in volunteering, please contact Emily Tripp: etripp@plymouthchurch.com.

NEW WORSHIP STREAMING SYSTEM
Plymouth has a brand new way of engaging with our Weekend Worship service. Instead of watching our service on Facebook or YouTube, you can now listen from your cell phone or land line! To do this, call 833.612.1926!

PLYMOUTH SANCTUARY MEDITATIONS RETURN!
Sanctuary Mediations are coming back beginning Feb. 1! If you have been missing being in our building, we encourage you to register for a half-hour, masked, socially-distanced space in the sanctuary to meditate alone or with members of your immediate household. You will only be able to enter the sanctuary through the north Ingersoll entrance to the Narthex; parking is available on the upper parking deck. Time slots available are:
- **Tuesdays from 5:30-6 p.m.**
- **Sundays from 1-1:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesdays from 10-10:30 a.m.**

To sign up for a slot to meditate in our Sanctuary, visit: tiny.cc/Sanctuary-Meditations

PLYMOUTH WOMEN’S SCHOLARSHIPS
The Board of Plymouth Women Scholarship Committee will award scholarships in the spring of 2021 to college students who are preparing for a career in service. The estates of Susan B. Turner, Opal Jordan, and Mary and Frederick Royal fund these scholarships.

Visit plymouthchurch.com/news/2021-scholarship for a link to a fillable-form PDF of the application. Please fill out the application and submit it to jonandlisa@mail.com by March 31, 2021.

MORAL MONDAYS IOWA
Moral Mondays IOWA is held virtually this legislative session. You can watch and participate through Zoom or you can watch on Facebook. It will be streamed to the Moral Mondays IOWA Facebook page. Moral Mondays highlight the work in the Iowa legislature that supports the moral good through policies of equality, fairness and justice. The topic and speakers for each Monday can be found on the Moral Mondays IOWA Facebook page or on the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa website. The Plymouth Peace Committee is a co-sponsor.

DMARC’S VIRTUAL HUNGER SIMULATION
Plymouth Church is hosting a virtual Hunger Simulation on **Saturday, February 13 from 10-11 a.m.** This event is suitable for adults and families. For better comprehension an adult supervision is recommended for children under the age of 12.

DMARC’s Zoom Hunger Simulation is an interactive 45 minute experience to learn what it’s like to live with food insecurity. In the Hunger Simulation, you step into the shoes of a person experiencing food insecurity. Participants will learn of significant barriers our neighbors face in accessing assistance; ways that the DMARC Food Pantry Network is offering support; and how you can help.

Please register by emailing amarsh@strategicamerica.com, no later than February 12. This virtual activity has capacity of up to 100. Plymouth’s Food Pantry, Food Buddies, Shelter Meals and Board of Benevolences appreciate your interest and participation.
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