After the celebration of Easter Sunday on April 4, we get to revel in the season of the Eastertide until Pentecost on Sunday, May 23.

Our theme for the season, Joy Made Complete, comes from the Gospel of John. When Jesus speaks to his disciples for the last time, he tells them he wants their joy to be complete right before reminding them of his commandment that they love one another as he has loved them. This message is echoed in Paul’s letter to the Philippians where he reminds followers of Jesus that our joy is complete when we look out for the interests of others.

Plymouth Church, this season, we hope you will find ways to experience Joy Made Complete—in God’s love for you and your love for all of creation. Our Joy Made Complete Guide can be found here: plymouthchurch.com/joy-made-complete.

It includes information about: yard signs, the pet blessing, outdoor worship, Earth Day observance, Immigration testimony, member testimonies, activities for your family, book studies, and more. No matter what your interests or personal calls, we hope you find life-giving ways for Joy Made Complete during the Eastertide 2021.

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JOY MADE COMPLETE: EASTER 2021
CONDOLENCES

• to all those who have lost someone to COVID-19.
• to the family and friends of Vi Robinson.
• to Shana Johnson whose father died.
• to Connie Broich whose mother died.
• to the family and friends of Sue Burt.
• to Jim Green whose father died.
• to Calvin Utt whose grandmother died.
• to the family and friends of Mary Susan Gibson.
• to the family and friends of Jim and Betty Wise.
• to Charlotte Forsyth whose husband, Larry, died.

Joy of Living the Questions

BY: KAREN JESKE

Yes, we are barely past Easter, but that means it’s also time to plan ahead for the summer. This summer at Plymouth we will celebrate a faith in which we are invited to talk to God about our joys, our fears, our doubts, our anger, and all of our questions. In fact, we would like to use your questions to organize a summer sermon series titled, Living the Questions. To do this, we need your help!

We are inviting you to share with us: Your questions for God. Your questions about our Faith. Where you struggle with doubt. What questions you have about being a part of the Plymouth community.

The easiest way to submit your questions is to use the online form we have created, but you can also send an email, regular mail, or a video.

Here are ways you can submit your question:

• You can find a link to the form in the Plymouth Weekly emails for the next few weeks or in the News section at plymouthchurch.com.
• You can send an email to Karen Jeske at kjeske@plymouthchurch.com.
• You can mail your questions to Karen Jeske at: Plymouth Church 4126 Ingersoll Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50312
• And if you feel like sharing a video of yourself asking a question that may become part of a virtual worship service, please also email Karen Jeske at kjeske@plymouthchurch.com and she will help you arrange this.

We would love to have your questions by Monday, April 26. Thank you so much!

Easter Special Offering

Dear Plymouth Members,

As you prepare to celebrate Easter, 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.

Recipients of this year’s Easter Offering are:

• Dorothy's House
• Central Iowa Shelter and Services
• Fatherhood Outreach
• Sleep in Heavenly Peace
• Bhutanese Community in Iowa
• Trinity Las Americas United Methodist Church
• Hawthorn Hill

This year’s Easter Offering will continue through Eastertide, culminating on Pentecost weekend, May 23.

If you would like to donate to this offering, you can do so online here: plymouthchurch.com/give. Please select the Easter Offering under “Donation Type,” then click the yellow “Donate” button below, and fill out the PayPal form. You can also mail a check or cash with “Easter Special Offering” on the memo line to:

Plymouth Church Attn: Nancy Bassett
4126 Ingersoll Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50312

Thank you for your generosity,
Plymouth Board of Benevolences
Joy Made Complete:
Stories for the Easter Season

THE PROJECT:
Stories are catalysts to create and share meaning and grow community. During Eastertide (the season immediately following Easter), Plymouth is exploring JOY. When Jesus told the disciples he would make their joy complete, he had some notion of both how important and how fleeting joy can be. From the silly stories when you laughed so hard your stomach hurt, to the challenges that have taught you to savor joy when it appears, we want to hear your stories about JOY.

QUESTION/PROMPTS:
Joy found me when… Can you finish this sentence? If so, go for it! If that feels too broad or you need help homing in, take a look at the prompts below and choose one that speaks to you. See if you can fill in the blank in two sentences or 35 words or less. What else do people need to know to really get it? Growing out from this kernel will be easier than trying to cut down a bigger story.

• I laughed so hard my stomach hurt when…
• I felt joy when I least expected to when...
• I thought I’d never feel joy again when…
• I knew my joy was NOT complete when…
• I jumped for joy when…

COACHING & DIRECTIONS:
• Prepare a three-minute video sharing your story. It’s best to record in landscape mode rather than portrait.
• 3 minutes is approximately 350-400 words if it’s written out, but we hope you will practice and film your video without using notes, or with minimal notes.
• Share it with Lindsey (lbraun@plymouthchurch.com) for support and feedback!
• If you don’t know how to start, try starting in the middle of your story. Drop us right into the middle of the action!
• Imagine your story on a storyboard or as a comic strip. What three main scenes or images do people need to see and understand to “get” it?
• Think about your senses in the moment (or period of time). What could you smell, feel, hear, see? Set the scene for us and help us be there with you.
• What’s at stake?
• Make sure there’s a beginning, middle, and end.
• Check to see that the “end” really is the end to the story you just told. (Sometimes our desire to wrap things up with a nice bow leads us to tack an ending on that doesn’t belong to our story)
• When your video is complete, please upload it to the Dropbox link here: tiny.cc/plymouth-dropbox

Outdoor Worship is Here!
Beginning April 11, we will be adding a weekly in-person, outdoor worship service each Sunday from 9-9:45 a.m. on the upper level parking deck at Plymouth. Masks are required at all times. Registration is not required, but encouraged to ensure a space. Spaces are limited. Register here: tiny.cc/outdoor-worship-21.
Immigrant Rights Weekend
April 24 & 25, 2021

On April 24 and 25, 2021, Plymouth will celebrate Immigrant Rights Weekend, sponsored by the Welcoming Migrants Committee. The United Church of Christ has designated Immigrant Rights Sunday as an opportunity to lift up immigrants: to learn about their concerns, honor their contributions to our country and communities, hear their pain, pray for their well-being, and listen to hear where God is leading us regarding issues of immigration.

Congregations are encouraged to include stories about immigrants in their worship service and explore avenues to advocate for immigrant justice.

Welcoming the stranger among us as native born is part of our faith tradition, for we too were once strangers (Exodus 22:21, Leviticus 19:33, Deuteronomy 10:17-19). However, too often the immigrants among us are rejected, treated as outcasts and placed on the margins of society.

On Immigrant Rights Weekend, Plymouth will welcome Reverend Dr. Randy Mayer, to deliver the sermon for the Saturday night/Sunday services. Dr. Randy Mayer is the Senior Minister at The Good Shepherd United Church of Christ (Sahuarita, Arizona), where he has served for the past 19 years. When Randy began to look for a church to pastor, he and his wife Norma dreamed of being as close to the US/Mexico border as possible. Randy has carefully blended his love of church camp and mission work into a very unique ministry of action, compassion, and inclusion of all. Randy is known in the Santa Cruz Valley as a musician, community organizer and a steady, progressive voice. He is a founding member of most of the border humanitarian groups and seeks to follow and teach about a “God That Is Still Speaking.” Randy and Norma reside in Sahuarita with their two boys, a dog, a cat and a yard full of packrats.

The Saturday night/Sunday services will also feature music from a border musician, as well as photographs taken by members of the Plymouth delegation (led by Pastor Nikira Hernandez-Evans) that participated in the Faithful Witness at the Border in 2018. Reverend Dr. Randy Mayer will also join Plymouth for the April 25 Fellowship Forum.

Leading up to Immigrant Rights Weekend, the Welcoming Migrants Committee co-sponsored a three-week book study of The Line Becomes a River by Francisco Cantú with Plymouth Faithful Readers Book Group, and sponsored the I Was a Stranger 40 Day Challenge as part of the Practice Makes Plymouth Lenten Guide. The latter involves daily reading and reflecting on a short Bible passage that relates in one way or another to the theme of immigration. The Welcoming Migrants Committee also advocates on an ongoing basis at the state and national level supporting bills and policies that improve the lives of immigrants and refugees, and opposing those that discriminate or are punitive towards our Latinx neighbors.

Surprise: RENEW is Still Meeting!

Plymouth’s RENEW Adult ELL program is one of the few Adult ELL programs in Des Moines to continue meeting after the pandemic caused the building to close in March of 2020. At the time, we surveyed our teachers and students to determine if they wanted to keep their classes going with online/distanced learning. About half said yes while others chose to wait until the building reopened and they could meet in person. Our classes involve a one-to-one or small group tutoring approach for learning English or studying for the Citizenship test.

There were challenges since many had no internet service or computer. We were determined to make it work which included some students having class using only the telephone and some meeting with zoom on their smart phone. We even gained new students during the closure. Our fall session from September to December 2020, logged 532 class hours with 29 students and 15 teachers. However, like everyone, we look forward to the time we can meet in person again.

Questions? Email: plymouthrenew@gmail.com.
Sixth Annual Pet Blessing

It is finally spring and Earth Day is coming up so it is a great time to celebrate! Plymouth pet parents and families plan to bring your furry family members to the Sixth Annual Pet Blessing service on Saturday, April 17 at 2 p.m. The event will be held on the upper level parking lot (east of the church). In case of inclement weather, the event will be held in the lower parking level. All animals are welcome as long as they are either on a leash or caged. Pet parents are required to wear a mask and maintain social distancing during the ceremony. You do not need to be a Plymouth member to attend, so invite your neighbors and friends the next time you are out walking your dog!

We understand some pets are not comfortable in a group setting with other animals, but you can still participate by bringing a picture of your pet with you to the Pet Blessing. We also encourage those families who have experienced the loss of a beloved furry family member to bring a photo of their pet to be honored during the ceremony.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 17 and join us for this special and fun event for your ENTIRE family—human and furry (or feathered/scaled as the case may be)!

Homeless Assistance Team

The Homeless Assistance Team (HAT) raises funds for Board of Benevolences’ activities including furniture pickup and Central Iowa Shelters and Services (CISS) meals. While furniture pickup is not currently active, due to COVID restrictions, CISS meals provided by Plymouth United Church of Christ on the 26 and 27 of every month continue. Many Plymouth members have participated at one time or another in serving evening meals at the shelter. Over the last year, while the shelter has been closed to volunteers, support has continued as each church board has contributed funds toward those meals.

There are a few months every year that do not get covered by one of the boards. In these situations, the Board of Benevolences has used HAT funds to support these meals.

If you are interested in supporting HAT activities, you can do so online here: plymouthchurch.com/give. Select “Other” under “Donation Type,” include “HAT” in the “Donation Note” box, then click the yellow “Donate” button below, and fill out the PayPal form. You can also mail a check or cash with “HAT” on the memo line to: Plymouth Church Attn: Nancy Bassett 4126 Ingersoll Ave. Des Moines, IA 50312

Plymouth has supported the CISS for over 25 years, an effort that is greatly appreciated by both the shelter and those they serve. Melissa Gradishnig, Volunteer Coordinator at CISS, describes Plymouth’s continuing commitment as “awesome.” We pray toward the day when it is safe for volunteers and the vulnerable folks served by CISS to meet face-to-face again.
ONLINE WEEKLY OFFERINGS

STAY IN TOUCH!

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 April!

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.

MONDAYS...

Monday Moderator Minute: On Mondays, you will receive an email update from our Moderator and Moderator-elect.

Weekly Kick-Off: At 12:30 p.m. join Karen Jeske on Facebook Live, and she will offer a short preview to the coming weekend’s worship.

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, and Plymouth staff recommendations.

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

TUESDAYS...

SATURDAYS...

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

SUNDAYS...

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

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, visit the Plymouth website, and click the Fellowship Forum icon.

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 members on Zoom for a time of informal fellowship. To join, visit the Plymouth website, click Events at the top of the page, and select Thursdays Together for the link.

SUNDAYS...

Easter Sunday: We will have a pre-recorded service available beginning at 9 a.m. on our YouTube channel and Facebook page.

We are also offering three in-person services. These services will be 30 minutes long and at 9, 9:45, and 10:30 a.m. Easter morning. All will be outdoors, distanced, and masks will be required. Please note that space is limited, and registration will be required. Use the links below to register for one of those services:

- 9:00 a.m.: tiny.cc/easter-1
- 9:45 a.m.: tiny.cc/easter-2
- 10:30 a.m.: tiny.cc/easter-3

HOLY WEEK OFFERINGS

Walk the Labyrinth: Plymouth’s Labyrinth this year will be open by reservation only from 12-6 p.m. on April 1-3. Find more information here: plymouthchurch.com/news/walk-the-labyrinth.

Maundy Thursday: This service will be pre-recorded and available beginning at 5:30 p.m. on our YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Good Friday: This service will be pre-recorded and available beginning at 6 a.m. on our YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Easter Vigil: On Holy Saturday Plymouth will have an in-person Easter Vigil service at 7 p.m. Registration is required. Find more information here: plymouthchurch.com/news/holy-saturday-easter-vigil
CURRENT HAPPENINGS

DIGITAL LIBRARY
Have you been missing the cozy comfort of the Plymouth Library and Reading Room in our Center for Spiritual Growth? Now you can access digital books from your home! Go to plymouthchurch.overdrive.com and set up your login. You may sign up for an Instant Digital Card on your smart phone using the Campaign Code: puccwinter20. Remember to select United States for your phone country code. If you need help signing up, email the Library Committee (overdrive@plymouthchurch.com).

STEPHENV MINISTRY
What is Stephen Ministry? Our Stephen Ministers are trained members of Plymouth Church who are available to help bring a spiritual presence into your life through caring, listening, and prayer. If you are struggling with something in your life and looking for someone to walk it with you, please reach out. Contact LeAnn Stubbs at 515.255.3149 or lstubbs@plymouthchurch.com to discuss having a Stephen Minister assigned to work with you.

NEW PHONE 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 1.833.612.1926!

VIRTUAL CONCERT OF "CALLING ALL THE CHILDREN HOME: SONGS OF THE SPIRIT, FAITH, AND INCLUSION"
On Saturday, May 1, 2021, 6:30 p.m., Plymouth Church will be a partner and “affiliate venue” for an online, streamed concert presented by John McCutcheon. Tickets are $20 each and Plymouth Church will receive 30% of all revenue to benefit the Arts@Plymouth.

John McCutcheon, the renowned folksinger, Quaker, and one-time seminarian, has never shied away from spiritual and religious imagery in his music. One critic described him as “someone who can talk about God without creeping you out.” His songs of dignity, courage, and compassion are rooted in a generations-deep faith. He’ll tell stories and sing about what he thinks is his most subtle and important work. Save the date and watch for more information to purchase tickets!

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: PLYMOUTH GALLERY
The Plymouth Gallery has a brand new exhibit on display now until May 1. This exhibit is a collection of 15 images of Christ’s last three days as told in the Gospels. We invite you to enjoy art spanning eight centuries, accompanied by scripture and prayers. Much like our February exhibit, you will be able to schedule a half-hour slot to visit this exhibit in-person during the week! Visits are limited to six people in your family or “bubble.” Masks are required at all times in the building. When visiting, you will enter through the Circle Drive entrance off of 42nd St. at your scheduled time.

Visits are open in 30-minute increments from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. During Holy Week, the Gallery will also be open on Friday, April 2.

For more information about signing up, visit: tiny.cc/stations21.

OPERATION: FRIENDSHIPS
A young adult book study on taking care of yourself and cultivating more fulfilling relationships.

Starting on Thursday, April 15 at 7 p.m. on Zoom, Plymouth Young Adults will be having a four week book study on “The Art of Showing Up: How to Be There for Yourself and Your People.” If you are a young adult, join us as we discuss the many challenges of forming deeper relationships in the arduous season of young adulthood.

If you’re interested, email Pastor Rushing at rkimball@plymouthchurch.com! You will be responsible for purchasing your own copy of the book.

PRACTICE RADICAL LOVE YARD SIGNS!
We’ve spent the past five months learning more about what it means to Practice Radical Love Everywhere and Always. We’ve also waited many weeks for spring to arrive! Now that the ground is thawed and we are more prepared to practice radical love everywhere and always, let’s share this good news with our neighbors.

We have a limited number of Practice Radical Love yard signs available. We will distribute these in the Lower Level of the parking garage on Saturday, April 10 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and on Sunday, April 11 from 1-3 p.m.

When you arrive, just pull through the lower level of the parking garage and we will safely and quickly load a sign into your backseat or trunk. We will be masked and practicing careful distancing and limited contact during the distribution.

CHANCEL FLOWERS
You may notice flowers during our Weekend Worship services. If you would like to donate flowers, visit: tiny.cc/chancel-flowers. When you talk to your florist, please arrange to have the flowers delivered by noon on Thursday. This will allow us to get them in place before the service is recorded on Thursday afternoon. If you have questions, please contact Diane Hayes at her email: dhayes@plymouthchurch.com.