

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

First Sunday after Epiphany:
Baptism of Christ



January 7, 2024

9:30 am

We Practice Just Peace: doing justice, seeking peace
We are Open and Affirming: welcoming LGBTQ+ people

We are an Anti-Racism Church

🎵 We Listen for the Still Speaking God

Our faith is 2000 years old; our thinking isn't.

Please inquire with people before assuming they are okay with physical contact.

GATHERING

Prelude Angels We Have Heard on High with Clementi's Sonatina No. 2, Allegro
arr. Carolyne M. Taylor

Welcome & Announcements

Please sign the red friendship pad as it is passed to you and return it to the center aisle noting your neighbor in the pew. You may leave your email if you would like to receive our weekly newsletter.

If you want to know more, email the office at office@uccplymouth.org.

On Communion Sunday the children begin downstairs in Sunday School and come up for Communion.

Introit We have observed his star at its rising John Ferguson

*Those who are able may stand.

***Call to Worship** (Based on) W.H. Auden Liturgist – Carol Stewart

One: Why are you following this star?

Voice 1: To discover how to be truthful now

Is the reason I follow this star.

Many: God, we seek to reflect your truth.

One: Why are you following this star?

Voice 1: To discover how to be living now

Is the reason I follow this star.

Many: Christ, we seek to serve one another.

One: Why are you following this star?

Voice 1: To discover how to be loving now

Is the reason I follow this star.

Many: Holy Spirit, we seek to embody Love.

One: Why are you following this star?

Many: *To discover how to be human now*

Is the reason we follow this star.

***Hymn** We Three Kings of Orient Are PH (red) #143

Passing of the Peace

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Let us pass the peace among us, as you are comfortable.

Since it is the season for colds and Covid, please touch elbows or simply say "Peace,"

*Unison Prayer of Invocation

Gracious God,
on this Epiphany Sunday,
help us to be as persistent in seeking you
as the Magi of old,
who followed a star to the Christ child.

As we pray and sing to you,
open our hearts to your guiding Spirit;
receive our expressions of gratitude—
for Christ, for life, for love,
and for the gift of worshiping you. Amen.

Moments of Confession, including silence for personal reflection

God's Promise of New Life

One: God knows that we can become overwhelmed by sadness, fear and anxiety; at such time we may not recognize the signs of God reaching out to us. The forgiving love and wise guidance of the Spirit are always with us.

**All: Thank you, God, for the moments of revelation in our lives,
for the epiphanies that enlighten and inspire us. Help us to persevere
in building your beloved community, with courage, compassion, and
creativity. Amen.**

Sung Response

NCH(black) #126

*Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of Nations, guided by Christ's natal star:
Come and worship, come and worship, worship God, give thanks and sing.*

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

Scripture

Isaiah 60:1-6

Matthew 2:1-12

One: The Word of God for the people of God. May we feel the Spirit stirring our hearts and uniting us as one in Christ.

All: Amen.

Meditation

“Follow that Star”

Rev. Ruth Martz

*Hymn

Love Came Down at Christmas

NCH (black) #165

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Holy Communion

Invitation and Welcome to the Table

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to the Holy One.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise!

Prayer of Consecration and Words of Institution

Sharing of the Bread and Cup (By Intinction)

This morning Communion will be by Intinction, which simply means “dipping in.” Please come forward in a single line down the center aisle and receive the elements then return to your seat by the side aisles.

**The bread is gluten free and nut free: the grape juice is non-alcoholic.*

Communion Music

***Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of this Communion meal
that renews our spirits and our call to serve.

Like the Magi, we offer you our gifts:

our pledge of nurture for your children;

our commitment of resources to carry on your ministry;

our sacrifices to be joined with your own,

our thanksgiving for your birth that brings hope to the world;

We bring our gifts here, so that your love may be

widely shared, clearly spoken, and joyfully heard,

throughout God's wondrous creation. Amen.

Offertory Anthem *We invite you to remember your support for the ministry of PCUCC.*

Hallelu!

Stephen Paulus

Down in a valley, sing hallelu!

Mary had a baby, sing hallelu!

What did she name him, sing hallelu!

Named Him Jesus, sing Hallelu!

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God, all creatures here below

Praise God above, you heavenly host:

Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**

God of seekers and doubters, bless these gifts

so that the world may know that you are always appearing.

Bless our mouths and our hands,

so that your love might appear in all that we say and do.

In the name of Wisdom we pray, Amen.

Prayers of the People

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer *(debts/debtors)*

All: Our Father**, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.

**We believe that God is revealed in persons of all genders and sorts; we also honor tradition.

SENDING

***Hymn** Arise, Your Light is Come NCH (black) #164

***Pastoral Benediction**

Choral Benediction Alleluia John Ferguson

Postlude Joy to the World with Haydn's Sonata in D arr. Carolyne M. Taylor

The Postlude ends our gathered worship and sends us into the world where our true service begins.
Feel free to let the music lead you out, or stay to listen, however the Spirit moves you.

Please join us downstairs after worship for refreshments and fellowship!
Today's Coffee Hour is sponsored by the Mission & Social Outreach Committee.

Keeping in Prayer:

Prayers for Bill Torrey as he recovers from a fall
Prayers for Alice Carey, friend of Alice O'Connor, who will be undergoing radiation therapy
Prayers for Kristin, friend of Alice O'Connor, who has recently been diagnosed with cancer
Prayers of healing for Beverly McClain, longtime friend of Eleanor Spencer
Prayers for Paulette Brace's son, Shawn Cassington, for ongoing medical issues
Prayers for the family of Tony Amodeo, friend of the LaPrads, who recently passed away
Prayers of comfort and strength for Ruth & Dale Mosher
Prayers for Sage Pirnie and her family, granddaughter of Diane Arsenault and Pete Pirnie
Prayers for Ellen who struggles with cancer, family member of Ruth & Dale Mosher
Prayers of healing for Sue Switaj
Prayers for our partner church in Zimbabwe, Masvingo UCCZ

*If you have a prayer request please write on the yellow card in the pews and place it in the offering tray,
or send an email to plymouthpastor@uccplymouth.org.*

This Week and More at PCUCC

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Monday, January 8 | 10:00 am Book Group |
| Tuesday, January 9 | 7:00 pm AA Meeting |
| Wednesday, January 10 | 11:00 am Lectio Divina |
| Thursday, January 11 | 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal |
| Friday, January 12 | 8:00 pm AA Meeting |

CHURCH LIFE

Church Snow Policy: If the Sunday morning Worship service is cancelled due to snow and/or ice, notification will be announced by 7:00 a.m. in the following ways:

1. An all-church email sent out
2. The church Facebook page
3. WMUR closings announcement

Preaching Schedule:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| January 7 – Rev. Ruth Martz | January 14 – Alison Thatcher |
| January 21 – Rev. Ruth Martz | January 28 – Rev. Campbell Lovett |
| February 11 – Alison Thatcher | |

Book Group is reading The Exceptions: Nancy Hopkins, MIT, and the Fight for Women in Science by Kate Zernike during the month of January. Join the discussion on Monday January 8 and 22 at 10am. Contact Kathy Henning for more information: henkat52@gmail.com.

Lectio Divina: All are invited to gather Wednesday mornings from 11 a.m. to noon for a Bible study modeled on Lectio Divina, the sacred reading of scripture. We'll begin with the Gospel of Mark, the first gospel written, and read through it listening for God's Still Speaking voice. Please join us. Rebecca Larson will lead us.

Sunday School focuses on Bible lessons, outreach projects, and family activities. The children will learn how to use the gifts God gave them to positively impact their community. Volunteers are always welcome! Please contact Jennifer for more details at faithformation@uccplymouth.org.

FROM MISSION & OUTREACH

Request from Pemi Valley Habitat for Humanity: Dale Mosher has asked if any church members or groups would be willing to bring a hot lunch for the volunteers working at 61 Pleasant St, Plymouth. The volunteers work on Thursday, Friday (max: 8 people), and Saturday (max: 4 people). Suggestions are a hearty soup, stew, pasta, chili, chicken pot pie... Lunch should be delivered between 12 and 12:30 p.m., along with paper plates, plastic utensils, and napkins. "Cooks" are welcome to stay for lunch with the crew. The students at Holderness Academy have volunteered to bring a hot lunch on Sat. Dec 9, and each Saturday in January. Please sign up by contacting Ruth Martz (ruthm.joy@gmail.com or 603-630-7936). Thank you!

FROM FINANCE

Support PCUCC with no cost to you! Purchase a **Hannaford Gift Card** in the amount of \$100, \$250, or \$500 by contacting Linda LaPrad or Ann Thurston. For every card purchased from the Finance Committee, the church receives 5% with no additional cost to you.

We will offer the option of meeting digitally indefinitely. You may also catch our services (one week delayed) on Sunday nights on PBTv at 7:00 pm. (Local channel 1302.) Please check Constant Contact and the Facebook page for ongoing updates.

Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday 9:00-2:00

If you have a family emergency and want to talk with a pastor, please call Rev. Ruth Martz at 603-630-7936 or you may call Eileen Torrey at 603-252-7513.

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Alison Thatcher, Office Administrator | office@uccplymouth.org |
| David A. Williams, Director of Music | musicdirector@uccplymouth.org |
| Ashley Rose, Organist, Pianist | organist@uccplymouth.org |
| Jennifer Byam, Director of Faith Formation | faithformation@uccplymouth.org |
| Ann Thurston, Treasurer | treasurer@uccplymouth.org |

Guest Preacher: Rev. Ruth Martz

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
4 Post Office Square, P.O. Box 86 Plymouth, NH 03264
(603) 536-2626 - office@uccplymouth.org - www.uccplymouth.org

Celebrating Birthdays in January in our Community

If you have an upcoming birthday or anniversary, please email office@uccplymouth.org

| | | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| Rohan Magrath | January 1 | Steve Majeski | January 22 |
| Hanna Starck | January 15 | Sophie Kelsey | January 26 |
| Ashley Rose | January 16 | Peggy Martin | January 27 |
| Butch Castor | January 18 | | |

