



the BELL

January 19, 2018

Dear Plymouth,

Epiphany is a designated season on the Christian calendar that celebrates the coming of God into the world. Epiphany is a Greek term that means manifestation or appearance. It is a season that affirms God comes as Child, as light, to reveal wisdom and saving grace for all the world. As expressed in John's gospel: **"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."** (John 1:5).

When speaking of Epiphany, John Westerhoff (*A Pilgrim People*), boldly declared **"God makes us a new people and our world a new world."** He further issued a challenge. In response to God's initiative in Christ, **"we are to live so that when people look at us, they will see a manifestation of the life they long for and dream about."**

This charge gives me pause. I'm not sure what people see when they look upon the church. Do they see a community of hope? Do they see a kind and considerate people, dedicated to fostering peace? Or do they see an unbecoming people, a people who display more fear and contempt than faith and compassion?

A new year lies before us, full of unscripted days. Every day is an opportunity to engage in the quest of being and becoming, to embrace the grace of what the poet e.e. cummings called **"the supremely welcome mystery, the mystery of growing: the mystery which happens only and whenever we are faithful to ourselves."** It was cummings who reminded, **"Miracles are to come...they are by somebody who can love and who shall be continually reborn, a human being..."**

I hope the time we share is full of adventure, with ministry that makes a positive difference in the lives of many people. I hope we keep working and praying to be a resilient community, weathering the challenges that come with change, even as we strive to chart a course of life fully consistent with the love of Jesus. And I hope that when people look at us, they will be curiously attracted. I hope they see a manifestation of what they long for and dream about, a community full of love and laughter, grace and mercy, spirit and truth.

Sincerely,
John P. Gardner

WINTER SUNDAY SCHOOL

During this winter session our classes are busy learning stories about Jesus' early ministry.

In February our Youth Class will be exploring "Hands on Judaism" stations. As with our past explorations of world religions, everyone is invited to make their way upstairs during this unit to explore the stations independently and learn about our neighbors-in-faith. We'll be wrapping up this session with a visit from woodworker Sam Lipscomb on March 4.

Thank you to all who help create our warm Sunday school community on these cold winter mornings!

— Katie Watson



Plymouth Music Series Continues!



**Wednesday, March 21, 2018,
7:30 pm**

Bach's Birthday Bash

Join us to celebrate the 333rd birthday of the world's most famous composer, Johann Sebastian Bach.

**Thursday, May 3, 2018,
7:30 pm**

Men's Glee Club of Pittsburg

The University of Pittsburg Men's Glee Club comes to Fort Wayne as part of their Midwest tour. The program features classical and contemporary pop music in a cappella arrangements.

July 13-22, 2018

Plymouth Music Series Summer Arts Festival

Concerts are presented at Plymouth Church. All Music Series concerts are free and open to the public. Freewill offerings and donors help to underwrite the costs for concerts.

2017 Tax Reminder

Getting ready to prepare your federal tax return for 2017? Remember: the IRS will allow you to deduct the donations you made to Plymouth only if they were dated and postmarked in 2017.

As long as you itemize your deductions, you can generally claim 100 percent of your church donations as a deduction.

**SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
for
TUITION & FEES FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT**

The Grants and Scholarships Committee has the pleasant responsibility of awarding scholarship grants for tuition and fees for academic credit from the earnings generated by several endowed funds.

Completed applications with all supporting materials must be received in the church office by the respective due dates.

Incomplete applications are ineligible for consideration.

By February 15:

The **Richard Nelson Kent Memorial Fund** provides educational grants for tuition and fees for academic credit for members of the United Church of Christ in the Northeast [Indiana] Association and other qualified applicants who are at least 16 years of age and entering into or continuing ecological studies, conservation biology, or other environmentally related studies.

The **R. Donald and Genevieve M. Sinish Fund** provides awards for tuition and fees for academic credit for 16-to-24-year-old members of Plymouth Church.

The **Van Gorder Scholarship** is awarded annually for tuition and fees for post-secondary education leading to a degree, certificate, or license for a graduating senior who is a member of Plymouth Church.

By April 15:

The **Richard C. Hess Peace Studies Scholarship** will award a \$1,000 tuition and fees scholarship for a college student majoring in peace studies or a related program.

To request application packets for these funds or to receive additional information, call the church office (423-9424) and leave your name, phone number, and e-mail address so one of the members of the Grants and Scholarships Committee may respond to your request.

~WELCOMING GROUP~

Sunday, February 4

11:30am to 2:30pm, Amistad Room

If you have been attending Plymouth for several months and your faith journey is leading you to explore becoming a member, this is a one-time required session.

Whether you are confident, confused, or curious, our time together is focused on orientation, conversation, interpretation, and exploration. It is an opportunity for you to ask questions and to meet others who are considering affirming their formal relationship with Plymouth Church, UCC. Please contact Rev. Ruth E. Phillips, rep@plymouthfw.org, or 423-9424, ext. 322, to register.

An accurate number is needed for the light lunch that will be provided by Congregational Life Board.

Plymouth Green Team: January's Task of the Month

Insulate Your Water Heater

Install an insulating blanket on your water heater. Set thermostat to 120°. Although water heaters are insulated, they can lose heat and waste energy if located in an unheated space or designed with minimal insulation. If your water heater feels warm to the touch, you will save money and have more hot water by adding more insulation.

Advanced: To save more energy on water heating, consider a solar water heater (which qualifies for a 30% U.S. tax credit), tankless water heater, or geothermal pre-heating options. These also eliminate the risk of damage from water tank leaks.

Water heater blanket kits are available for gas or electric water heaters which are non-allergenic (no fiberglass) and provide up to 97% radiant heat loss. You can also make your own water heater blanket, which can be thicker and cost even less to install.

What else you can do:

Cut back on hot water use by limiting showers to 5 minutes, washing laundry in cold water, and washing dishes efficiently.



A Very Merry Thank You!

Charles Van Camp deserves our Kudos for his one-man contribution of putting up all of Plymouth's outside lights, garlands, and wreaths to grace the building with the beauty of the Christmas season. Not only that, he single-handedly removed all the outside décor before bad weather precipitation settled in recently. We are profoundly grateful to Charles for donating his time and talent in this way!

Our thanks is extended also to *Michael Thomas*, decorating coordinator, for his eye for beauty and his coordinating of all the inside Christmas decorating plus organization of the storage area.

There were several additional volunteers who helped with one or both the decorating and undecorating. Thanks to all of you!





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- 1 Tucker Miller
Terri Stumpf
- 2 Bethany Binkley
Kathryn Diekhoff
Mike Hollingsworth
- 4 Scott Callaghan
- 5 Chloe Boyko
Bob Jensen
Sydney White
- 6 Adam Colclessor
Elaine Drummond
Elyse Jaurigue
Mary Voors
- 7 Tony Kell
Ricky Talarico
- 8 Claire Greer
Barbara Gregory
- 9 Tina Logan
Ella Moore
- 10 Mary Jo Stoffer
- 11 Brian Eltzroth
Kyle Miller
Maddox Shaw
- 13 Andrew Brooks
Mark Glassley
- 14 Todd Binkley
- 15 Carol Shedd
Carol Walther
- 16 Ron Hays
January Simpson
- 17 Donetta Cooper
Laura Rudolph
Amy Worcester
- 20 Dan Kaufman
- 21 Karen Jenkins
Peg Schilb
Max Hilmer Watson
- 22 Felicity Nicholson
- 23 Mary Nance
- 24 Larry Jenkins
- 25 Frances Turner
- 26 Brittany Ramsey
- 27 Lee MacSorley
- 28 Kate Blake
- 29 Charlie Belch
Cher Phelps-Griswold
- 31 James Evans, Jr.
William Wilch

2018 Annual Congregational Business Meeting

The Bylaws of Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne, Article V - Polity, Section #2 - Annual Congregational Meetings states the following: *“There shall be an Annual Business Meeting in January to adopt an annual budget and to receive reports from all officers and Boards of the Church.”* On **Sunday, January 28**, we will gather as a church for our Annual Business Meeting.

Of further interest, the Bylaws in Article IV - Membership, Section #4 - Rights and Privileges of Members in Good Standing - reminds all members of the following: “A. Act and vote in all meetings of the Congregation...D. Express a voice in all church matters.” This Annual Business Meeting is your opportunity to act and vote and express your voice/ask your questions as a member of this wonderful church.

On **Sunday, January 28** we will recognize and install our newly elected board members and leaders during our 10:00 am worship service. Immediately following worship, we will have the opportunity to enjoy a delicious lunch, *Casa d’Plymouth*, prepared and served by our youth. This luncheon is also a fundraiser for our youth programs.

Following lunch, we will conduct our Business Meeting - reviewing and approving the 2018 Budget, receiving the Annual Report of the church, and hearing updates from leadership and our pastors. If you have interest in the business matters of the church and you don’t happen to be a member, you are welcome to join us for lunch and to listen in on the presentation and discussion. ALL are welcome.

Won’t you join us on this important day at Plymouth Church? We hope you include this date in your calendar and plan to attend.

Beth Walker,
Moderator

Concerning The Holy Land.



Dear Plymouth:

For the past few years the month of January has been a time to focus our prayers upon the Holy Land, especially the work of Pilgrims of Ibillim (Israel) and Bright Stars of Bethlehem, which includes the Diyar Consortium, including the Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture (the occupied West Bank, Palestine). We are connected and supportive of both these groups through Plymouth Benevolence. The need for such support continues to be urgent.

Turmoil in the Holy Land is nothing new, but a recent pronouncement that the staff of 20 organizations may be denied entry to Israel because of their support for the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement is quite troubling. One of the organizations singled out on the list is the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). A second organization, Jewish Voices for Peace, has also been named on the list.

The Quakers have a well established history in the holy land, dating from 1869, when a school supporting girls education was started in Ramallah (Palestine). Quaker belief has consistently offered support for communities facing oppression and violence around the world. In 1947 the work of the AFSC was honored with the Nobel Peace Prize, in part for supporting Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust. Such advocacy work continues today with the AFSC supporting the call for BDS from Palestinians who have faced over fifty years of occupation, and decades of human rights violations.

In response to being named on the list, the AFSC issued a statement saying, **“At a time when the Israeli government is moving to expand settlements, redefine Jerusalem, and annex portions of the West Bank, support for nonviolent activism that seeks freedom, equality, and justice is critical...as long as these and other human rights violations persist, we will continue to support Palestinian led boycott, divestment, and sanctions efforts as effective nonviolent tools for realizing political and social change.”**

It is our fervent prayer at Plymouth Church to see peace in the Holy Land. For Israelis. For Palestinians. For Jews. For Christians. For Muslims. For the religious. For those who identify as secular. May we continue to pray for our distressed mission partners in the Holy Land; may we continue to push for peace, until the human rights of all are recognized and respected.

Sincerely,
John P. Gardner

Hello from your Church Office!

This little note is actually two fold. I want to first say big and bursting **Thank You!** for accepting me into the position as Secretary. I can say it's never a position I thought I'd have, but I am learning SO MANY valuable tools, traits, tasks... you name it, I'm learning it and I am very thankful. Also, now when someone asks me if I can navigate Microsoft Office Suite I can say yes and mean it!

Secondly, I want to remind you that if you want blurbs in the bulletin for worship, I need your blurb no later than 4:00 pm the Thursday before! You can email that to me: EASenter@Plymouthfw.org and I'll be sure to find a snug spot for your information.

Also, the next printed Bell deadline is March 14!

Again, thank you for welcoming me in this position!

— Erica Anderson-Senter
Secretary/ Communications
Associate

Women's Retreat

All the women of Plymouth and your female friends and family are welcome to attend the Women's Retreat on April 14, 2018! It will be held at the Epworth Forest Conference Center. Allie Meriwether Brown will present the program on Enneagram personality types and the spiritual significance for our individual lives!

A summary of the upcoming program follows:

“At its most basic, the Enneagram is a personality typing system, but for centuries, people have found it to be much more: a meaningful tool for personal insight, relational growth, and spiritual formation. The Enneagram uses nine types to describe nine distinct ways of experiencing the world, and encourages every person to wake up to our truest selves by looking directly at our lenses, instead of just looking through them. By understanding our view of the world and what motivates us, we are able to more fully embrace our true nature which bears God's own image.

Allie Brown was certified to teach Enneagram workshops through the International Enneagram Association. In June of 2017, she attended 30 hours of workshops at Enneagram Spectrum Training in Chicago, taught by Dr. Jerry Wagner, a psychologist and Loyola University professor. Allie received an M.A.: Theological Studies from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in 2016 and has been deeply challenged and encouraged by her study and practice of the Enneagram for the past five years.”

Mark your calendars now — this is a retreat that shouldn't be missed!

Plymouth Green Team: February's Task of the Month

Insulate Water Pipes!! Here's how!!

(from http://eartheasy.com/live_cheapheat.htm)

There are various materials for insulating pipes, but the easiest to use is pre-slit foam pipe insulation. It is available at most hardware stores and usually comes in three-foot lengths. Look for the size that fits the diameter of your pipes, and choose the one with the highest R-value.

Simply snap the insulation over the pipe and run a strip of duct tape over the seam where pieces butt together. Join the split so it is facing downward on horizontal runs, and tape the long seam as well. Cut short lengths of the foam insulation with a razor knife. For corners, cut the insulation at 45 degree angles and wrap with duct tape.

Do not wrap too tightly as it will lose some of its insulation value. Any part of the insulation that is outside should be painted.

While you're at it, insulate the cold water pipes too—this will help keep them from freezing in unheated areas or during cold weather if you're away from home (In areas of sustained freezing temperatures, the pipes will ultimately freeze; the insulation will only slow the process. The only way to prevent freezing is to drain the water or add heat (i.e. heat tape).

Wednesday Night Live Study Group

6:45 - 7:30 pm

Resumed January 17 - March 21



Join Rev. Ruth E. Phillips in the Amistad Room after WNL dinner for engaging conversation on Between the Dark and the Daylight by Joan Chittister, OSB, as our study guide (purchase or borrow the book from your preferred source, thought not required.)

“There is a part of the soul that stirs at night, in the dark and soundless times of day, when our defenses are down and our daylight distractions no longer serve to protect us from ourselves,” writes beloved author, Joan Chittister. “It’s then, in the still of life, when we least expect it, that questions emerge from the damp murkiness of our inner underworld... These questions do not call for the discovery of data; they call for the contemplation of possibility.”

Between the Dark and the Daylight explores the concerns of modern life, of the overworked mind and hurting heart; the paradoxical - and often frustrating - moments when our lives feel at odds with everything around us. Chittister contends that only by embracing the contradictions may we live well amid stress, withstand emotional storms, and satisfy our yearnings for something transcendent and real. With her elegance, wit, and spirit, Joan Chittister's simple and poignant meditations reveal how we can better understand ourselves, one another, and God.

(Now and through the Lenten Season)



*Sympathy,
Congratulations,
& New Life*



New Life is welcomed in the birth of a son, Jaxon Randall Lozano, November 13, to proud parents Izabelle Peckham and Jose Lozano. Delighted grandparents are Eric and Joyce Black

New Life is welcomed in the birth of a daughter, Ryleigh JoLynn Minchski, December 16, to delighted parents Amanda and Meredith Minchski.

New Life is welcomed in the birth of a son, John Briscoe Escosa, IV, on December 23, to proud parents Sarah Beth and John B. Escosa, III. Delighted grandparents are Linda and John B. Escosa, II.

Congratulations to Brian Army and David Craker who were united in legal marriage in a ceremony on December 27 in the Plymouth Chapel, officiated by Rev. John P. Gardner.

Sympathy is extended to Ann Borne and family on the death of husband and father, Tim Borne, on October 27.

Sympathy is extended to family and friends of Barbara Powell who died on November 6.

Sympathy is extended to Michelle Starnes and family on the death of her sister-in-law, Peggy Summers, October 31.

Sympathy is extended to Kibwe Cooper and family on the death of his aunt, Barbara Jean Glenn, November 14, Chicago, Il.

Sympathy is extended to Michelle and David Grim, Riley, Mariah, Emily, Tyler, Andrea on the death of Michelle's grandmother, children's great-grandmother, Kathryn Stoll, on November 16 in Avilla.

Sympathy is extended to Jody and Kim Feasel, Zachery, Jacob, Samuel Feasel and extended family on the death of mother and grandmother, Joanne "Janie" Feasel, November 23.

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Frances Schnitzer, who died December 31.

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Ruth Smith, who died January 2.

Sympathy is extended to Marge Feedback on the death of her twin sister, Marilyn Sprengel, January 12 in Ohio.

During the month of January, we are invited to pray for **Pilgrims of Ibillin** (Israel); **Bright Stars of Bethlehem**, and the **Diyar Consortium**, including **Dar al-Kalima University College of Arts and Culture**, of ministries (Rev. Mitiri Raheb, West Bank, Palestine), partners in ministry through Plymouth Benevolence.

Plymouth people in our prayers:

- A.J.Calkins,
- David Cornwell
- Marge Cornwell
- Brad Crowder
- Bill Deans
- Terry Dougherty
- Elaine Drummond
- Jodee Smith Ellett
- Gail Escosa
- Jim Evans
- Marcia Federspiel
- Paul Furtner
- Yvonne Kaiser
- Jeannette Kent
- Bernice Koutcher
- Sheldon Lockwood
- Janet Markley
- Larry McDonald
- Kerry Mills
- Deb Cochran Mulherin
- Jacqueline Sanders
- John Shannon
- Marylynn Sloop
- Sheryl Stallman
- Jim Stedman
- Dick Stumpf
- Chris Week

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**Plymouth Congregational
Church of Fort Wayne**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Phone: 260-423-9424 · Fax: 260-423-9426

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Houseplants clean and filter indoor air naturally. NASA scientists found that certain plants remove 90% of chemicals in the air in only 24 hours. Plants to use include: Aloe Vera, Bamboo Palm, Boston Fern, English Ivy, Ficus, Gerbera Daisy, Peace Lily, Philodendron.



Looking for our email addresses?

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Building Maintenance Manager

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Vision Statement

Adopted October 2011

Praying for guidance for the journey

... Honoring the mystery of God

... Responding with spirits renewed

... Moving courageously toward wholeness.

Mission Statement

Adopted October 2011



Plymouth Church is an inclusive Christian Community welcoming you as you are, supporting you in your own Journey with God, and challenging you to live out the teachings of Jesus, individually, collectively, globally.

No Matter Who You Are, or Where You Are on Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here.