



FLAME

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

September 25

Join in the Sartain Celebration

By Rosanne Monten

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www.plymouth.org

Ten years ago, we met Jeff Sartain for the first time as our Minister of Member Care. What luck!

Plymouth's search committee found in Jeff a candidate who brought diverse skills in ministry, social work, pastoral care and non-profit fundraising. Jeff's recommendations from those days echo the man we have come to know: passionate, loving, smart, joyful, savvy, humorous and dedicated.

The intervening years have brought growth, change, challenge and an ever deeper relationship among Jeff and his co-workers, and the congregation. In Jeff's more recent work as Executive Minister, he has re-organized responsibilities, streamlined processes and helped focus faithful energy on membership and stewardship.

Jeff's infectious love of hymn singing and liturgy, his unassuming faith, his commitment to personal growth and excellence in all things and his delightful



sense of humor make our church stronger and our lives richer. He is a teacher with great gifts to offer and he has generously shared so much of himself in his sermons.



Jeff is a blessing to Plymouth. Our congregation would not be who are today without his place in our family. Please join in celebrating Jeff's first 10 years with us on September 25 during worship and in Guild Hall thereafter.

New spaces for Church School, new Choir School program; page 4.

New Healing Minnesota services, page 2.

Cultivating Body, Mind and Spirit: Fall 2011

From a trip to the Philippines to studying New Testament Greek, Plymouth offers a wealth of adult learning opportunities this fall. Members and friends of Plymouth were mailed a flyer with the dates, titles and presenters for weekly Adult Forums and programs from Spiritual Enrichment and Religious Exploration committees.

Seek details on the website (www.plymouth.org/learning), invite your friends and participate in these

stimulating events.

Only a limited number of booklets will be printed for those without computer access. They will be available at the church.



Jessica Allen speaks 9 a.m., Sept. 11 about a Minnesota-Philippines Partnership

Minister's Message



Chris Bohnhoff

This year's Rally Sunday—the beginning of Plymouth's program cycle—bears the burden of also being the 10th anniversary of a day so horrific that even its numeric designation—9/11—is enough to evoke an acrid cloud of feelings: terror, grief, hatred, rage and helplessness. The chasm of evil that opened up before America that day drew us inexorably into its ravaging maw, and we went into a spiraling freefall of war, economic ruin and political polarization from which we haven't even begun to recover.

How, then, are we to redeem such a day when we gather to worship? What may we do when we come together on Sept. 11—returning from vacations, resuming the rhythms of our shared life, refreshing our fellowship with one another—to celebrate our church's life while remembering the awful realities of 9/11 and its aftermath? How can these two realities co-exist?

Actually, it isn't as difficult a question as it might seem at first blush. Plymouth's very existence and our mission as a progressive congregation call us to speak of reconciliation, healing and hope to a world whose ears are desperate for just these gifts. "Progressive Faith Healing the World" is the theme we've chosen for this entire year at the church . . . a theme that will guide our worship, our study and our service in the coming months.

To say "Progressive Faith Healing the World" is not to claim that our particular type of religion is the sole answer to the world's problems. In fact, the phrase is not a claim at all, but a calling. It is an

announcement that we know the work we are meant to do . . . along with others who find themselves similarly called.

Let me mention one particular expression of our focus on healing in the world. As most Minnesotans know, we are about to enter an election cycle in which the people of the state will be asked to rule on whether all citizens will have access to the institution of marriage or just one segment of the population—heterosexuals. It promises to be a bruising battle with lines drawn, emotions roiled and stakes high. At Plymouth, we are planning a series of monthly, evening services in which we will seek to stand with the GLBT community and others who may feel embattled during this campaign. The first Healing Minnesota service takes place Sept. 25, at 5 p.m.

All are invited to join us as we remember our common humanity. All of us will be seeking—in worship—the gifts of patience, compassion, nonviolence, courage and humility so that we can be our better selves during the public debate. These will be worship services—not campaign rallies—where we will seek God's peace and healing for all.

Progressive Christianity, with its message of inclusion, openness, honesty, tolerance and diversity, can play a vital role in the healing of our world. This will take, however, deep commitment, abiding energy, hard work and active faith. My hope is that all of us at Plymouth will, in this coming year, both experience healing and find ourselves becoming agents of healing in the world. What more audacious, fitting aspiration could we have??

By James Gertmenian



By Philip Brunelle

Grace Notes

Rally Day marks the return of the Plymouth Choir to the loft with the singing of Parry's "I Was Glad"—so appropriate as we come together again. Also, in tribute to 9/11 the Choir will sing Ian Kellam's poignant "Agnus Dei," composed in memory of this day. Of course, as I begin my 43rd year with you I will again play Bach's "Prelude and Fugue in D minor" as the prelude.

Hymn singing is always a joyous occasion at Plymouth Church and I look forward to another year of lusty singing. As you know, my desire is that though we are inside, we use our "outdoor" voices! The children's and youth choirs begin rehearsals along with the handbell choirs; you will be hearing them as the fall season continues.

Looking ahead, I am pleased that our choir friends from Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church will be with us on November 20 for the morning service. And next spring a new church opera by Stephen Paulus will be part of our worship...but, more about all of this later!

Progressive Faith Healing the World

At the worship service on May 1, church members were invited to write a brief "Gratitude and Giving" reflection on what they appreciate about Plymouth and what leads them to support this congregation. These gratitude notes were then posted on poster boards, producing a tangible display of our great affection for Plymouth and our commitment to keeping this church vibrant. Members wrote more than 4,000 words describing this community's value to them.

They said they were grateful for:

The sense of community, faith and commitment and the friendship my children receive from youth programs here

Progressive Christianity, music, art, good friends and inspiring sermons

Children's involvement, especially in the music, and for those talented and generous adults who lead and teach them not only to sing but why we sing

All Plymouth does to promote social justice as it makes our community a better place for all to live

A congregation that acts on its faith and partners with the community to bring about justice

Thought-provoking beliefs, traditions, humor, "deep bench strength" of the pastoral staff

An inspiration place, a healing place, a welcoming place

As we enter this new church year, we'll encounter new reasons to be grateful for our church home and become reacquainted with the reasons we've encountered before. We'll be reminded that expressing our gratitude with our time, our talents, our devotion to one another and our financial support is critical to keeping our words of gratitude flowing.

Our gratitude will translate into generosity as we attend small group gatherings, learn how to submit our pledges online, celebrate our early pledges and offer our gifts in worship.

Together we'll ensure that Plymouth's healing voice of progressive faith will be heard in our homes, our communities and in our world.

Doing Good Tours, Near and Far

If These Walls Could Talk—Minneapolis

Can you hear the stories within the walls of your house of worship? Gather with others to celebrate the history of Minneapolis downtown congregations and to raise money to fight homelessness by touring three prominent downtown congregations.

Come inside on September 17, 2011, to join the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness on a tour of houses of worship along Hennepin Avenue.

The tour begins at Temple Israel at 4:30 p.m., then moves to Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church at 5:45 p.m., and ends at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral at 6:45 p.m. Learn about the sanctuaries, architecture, religious symbolism and the work the congregations are doing together in the city. Enjoy delicious food and beautiful music from the religious traditions of these worshipping communities.

Join together with people from many downtown congregations and the



community on this tour to raise money to continue the fight to end homelessness. Hear about the innovative initiatives of downtown congregations. Revenues go to benefit the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness.

Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. To purchase tickets, go to www.dceh.org or contact Heidi, Heidi@dceh.org or 612/242-4670.

Cuba Connect Is Planning a Trip

Would you like to travel with us on the next planned trip to Cuba in February 2012?

Please join us on October 2 for an afternoon fiesta celebrating those who have been to Cuba and those who would like more information for the 2012 trip.

We are expecting special guests from Cuba to be at the fiesta.

So please mark October 2 on your calendar and visit with us at the Guild Hall table for more exciting information, beginning Rally Sunday, September 11.

Plymouth Church School, Choir School—A New Season Begins

When the new program year begins, the Church School and Choir School will be celebrating a new look and even more enhanced programming.

September 7, 2011 - Welcome Home Plymouth

Potluck - 5:30 p.m. All families are invited to share a meal (and a dish) with other families and welcome in the new year together. This evening will provide an opportunity to meet others, to learn about new programs for children and to register children for both Church School and Choir School classes.

Church School programs resume on Sunday, September 11.

First Service resumes with its welcoming worship emphasis for children and families. First Service meets at 9:50. Children are invited to attend First Service with their families and then go to Church School.

Childcare will continue for children infant through two years of age but will be relocated to more spacious new quarters in Room 209. The nursery area is being expanded to accommodate our growing population of very young children.

Classes for children three years of age through 6th grade continue to follow curriculum developed from the Godly Play and Faith Practices curricula.

Offices for the Children's Program staff have been relocated to the second floor of the education wing, allowing for a stronger presence and communication.

Church School Locations

Child Care (infant thru 2 years) Nursery/Room 209	
3 year olds	Room 104
4/5 year olds	Room 103
Kindergarten	Room 102
1 st Grade	Room 101
2 nd Grade	Room 201
3 rd Grade	Room 202
4 th Grade	Room 203
5 th /6 th Grade	Room 204
Junior High	Room 207
Confirmation	Room 205
Children's Program Workroom	Room 206
Children's Program Director	Room 200
Children's Program Assistant	Room 208



A new Choir School and Wednesday Family Night

All Choir School programs are moving to Wednesdays with a special emphasis on gathering together to make music, serve and connect. A new schedule for Choir School welcomes Youth Choir to Wednesday evenings, a new dance choir and a time for families to gather. Special occasional music and arts programs will also be added as the year goes on.

Choir School begins September 14

6:00 (to 6:20) p.m.	Young Voices (3-5 yr. olds) Room 207
6:00 (to 6:25) p.m.	Cherub Choir (K-2 nd grade) Room 205
6:30 (to 8:30) p.m.	Childcare (2 nd grade and younger) Room 209
6:30 (to 7:00) p.m.	Chorister Choir (3 rd -6 th grade) Room 205
6:30 (to 7:20) p.m.	Coventry Bells (7 th -12 th grade) Bell Room (original bldg.)
6:30 (to 7:00) p.m.	Genesis Dancers (K-2 nd grade) Room 207
7:00 (to 7:30) p.m.	Alleluia Dancers (3 rd grade and older) Room 207
7:30 (to 8:10) p.m.	Bells Jubilee (3 rd -6 th grade) Bell Room (original bldg.)
7:30 (to 8:30) p.m.	Youth Choir (7 th -12 th grade) Room 205
7:00 p.m.	Family Gathering Time— Jones Commons (families are invited to gather for conversation, dessert, coffee, juice)

It's a great new year for Plymouth children, youth and families.

—Jo Holcomb, Director of Children's Programming

How We Help Those in Need

By Jeffrey Sartain

“If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother or sister in need, but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?”: 1 John 3:17

Plymouth does a great deal to help those in need by working to address the root causes of long term poverty and the unnecessary suffering it creates.

We also seek to be a compassionate and healing presence in our neighborhood for those with immediate needs. More often than once a week someone will contact the church seeking some form of immediate assistance. Our staff are trained and equipped with resources to help them. While we cannot meet every immediate need, we strive to be compassionate and respectful and to offer help. We also strive to avoid doing harm by enabling irresponsible and unhealthy behavior.

One of our key partners in this ministry is The Dignity Center, a program of Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church. Plymouth provides financial support to this organization through its Benevolence Committee and, in the coming months, we also will make our congregation aware of volunteer opportunities to help clients help themselves. The goal of The Dignity Center is to help clients regain stability and move towards self-sufficiency. Rather than strive to meet every presenting and immediate need, Plymouth together with The Dignity Center, strives to leverage the circumstances that have caused an individual to seek help and point them to resources that can make a difference in the long-term.

One current need at The Dignity Center is for attorneys with three or more years of civil legal experience, once a month from 9 to noon on a Wednesday or a Friday. To volunteer, contact Muria Kruger muriak@yahoo.com.

One question our members often ask is what to do when someone asks them for spare change. First, feel confident that you, through your church, indeed offer real help through the Groveland Food Shelf, weekly Sunday evening meals (Third Sunday meal is at Plymouth), spiritual nurture and guidance from our clergy, The Dignity Center and many other programs. Then, remember it is ok to say no. Acknowledge the person with a nod or eye contact, say “No,” “Sorry,” or a respectful response such as: “I’m sorry but I don’t give money on the street.”

If you receive a request for money in our parking lot or in our church buildings, please inform the receptionist at the front desk and, if possible, offer a description of the person. We hope more and more to know the names of those people in our neighborhood who are in need so as to guide them to long-term solutions. We want to know their real circumstances and needs. If a person requesting money becomes aggressive, tell the receptionist immediately, or call 911.

New in Outreach: Families Moving Forward

Families Moving Forward is an emergency shelter program that merged with Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation. FMF shelters families with children who are homeless, until they are able to find a home.

September 18-25, Plymouth Church joins 40 congregations who host homeless families for a week at a time. Four families with children will be spending a week in our second-floor classrooms.

Learn more about this volunteer opportunity—or sign up to serve—online:
www.plymouth.org/about/families_moving.php.

A note about Plymouth’s Outreach staffing

In the coming year the Board of Outreach and Plymouth’s staff will assess our outreach programming and staffing needs. Meanwhile, Jeff Sartain will serve as the liaison to the Outreach Board and to our joint housing effort with Westminster Presbyterian Church, “Housing 150.” Shannon Kearns, pictured at right, who is our Youth Director, will take on more hours with the added title, “Interim Community Ministries Coordinator,” working with Jeff to address other outreach needs, such as the walk-in ministry, relationships with The Dignity Center, Stevens Square Community Organization and other neighborhood organizations and concerns.



Calendar ~ September 2011

1 Thursday

9:00 Needlers
10:30 Meals on Wheels
12 noon Clergy Members of Plymouth
5:30 Global Connections
6:30 Drop-In
6:30 Wider Church Relations Committee

2 Friday / 3 Saturday

4 Sunday

9:30-11:45 Childcare
10:00 Blood Pressure Screening
10:30 Sanctuary Service
12:00 Youth Committee

5 Monday

Building closed for Labor Day

6 Tuesday

9:45 Knit A Bit
10:00 Archives Committee

7 Wednesday

9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
1:00 Drop-In
2:00-6:30 Farmers Market
5:30 Children, Youth & Families potluck dinner
6:00 Church Council
6:45 Spiritual Enrichment-Yoga
7:00 Plymouth Choir

8 Thursday

9:00 Needlers
10:30 Meals on Wheels
10:30 John Edgerton: Ecclesiastical Council and luncheon
5:30 Global Connections
6:30 Drop-In

9 Friday

7:00 The Vault Coffee House
7:30 *Sound of Music* Opening

10 Saturday

10:00 Confirmation Parent Retreat
7:30 *Sound of Music*
8:00 Songs of Hope, remembering 9/11 (see facing page)

11 Rally Sunday

8:30 Board of Stewards
8:45-11:45 Childcare
9:00 Adult Bells Rehearsal
9:00 Adult Forum
9:50 First Service
10:30 Sanctuary Service
11:50 Rally Day Picnic
12:00 Youth Committee
1:00 *Sound of Music*

12 Monday

9:00 & 7:00 Needlers
2:30 Compassionate Communication practice session
5:30 Buildings and Grounds
6:00 Board of Deacons Retreat
6:00 Home Retreat Meeting
6:30 Plymouth Center Network of Spiritual Progressives—Minnesota Chapter
6:45 Spiritual Enrichment-Yoga

13 Tuesday

9:45 Knit A Bit
12 noon Benevolence Outreach Committee
4:30 American Indian Initiative
6:30 BeFriends

14 Wednesday

9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
1:00 Drop-In
2:00-6:30 Farmers Market
5:00 Fine Arts Board
5:00 New Testament Greek
5:30 Katy's Cafe
6:00 Choir School—see detailed schedule, p. 4
6:00 Board of Deacons
6:15 Time Together for Boards
6:30 Childcare
6:30 Board of Membership
6:45 Spiritual Enrichment-Yoga
7:00 Plymouth Choir
7:00 Board of Children, Youth & Families

15 Thursday

9:00 Needlers
10:30 Meals on Wheels
12 noon Plymouth Church Women
6:30 Drop-In & Keyboard Music Club

16 Friday

7:30 *Sound of Music*

17 Saturday

7:30 *Sound of Music*

18 Recovery Sunday & Outreach Sunday

8:45-11:45 Childcare
9:00 Adult Bells Rehearsal
9:00 Adult Forum: Two presentations; Jackman & theater
9:30 Outreach Sunday
9:50 First Service
10:30 Sanctuary Service
11:50 Reception Fine Arts Gallery
11:50 Katy's Cafe

1:00 *Sound of Music*
4:30 Third Sunday Meal

19 Monday

9:00 & 7:00 Needlers
6:00 Compassionate Communication practice session
6:45 Spiritual Enrichment-Yoga

20 Tuesday

9:45 Knit A Bit

21 Wednesday

9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
1:00 Drop-In
2:00-6:30 Farmers Market
4:00 BeFriends
5:00 New Testament Greek
5:00 Trustees Personnel Committee
5:30 Katy's Cafe
6:00 Choir School—see detailed schedule, p. 4
6:30 Board of Member Care
6:30 Board of Outreach
6:30 Trustees
6:45 Spiritual Enrichment-Yoga
7:00 Plymouth Choir

22 Thursday

9:00 Needlers
10:30 Meals on Wheels
12 noon Women's Meeting
6:30 Drop-In

23 Friday

7:30 *Sound of Music*

24 Saturday

7:30 *Sound of Music*

25 Sunday

8:45-11:45 Childcare
9:00 Adult Bells Rehearsal
9:00 Adult Forum
9:50 First Service
10:30 Sanctuary Service—Jeffrey Sartain's anniversary
11:50 Katy's Cafe
1:00 *Sound of Music*
5:00 Healing Minnesota service

26 Monday

9:00 & 7:00 Needlers
2:30 Compassionate Communication practice session
6:45 Spiritual Enrichment-Yoga

27 Tuesday

9:45 Knit A Bit
7:00 Man Salon (offsite)

Bulletin Board

Islam, Shariah & Democracy

Dr. Charles Amjad-Ali, director of Luther Seminary's Islamic Studies Program, and Dr. Tamim Saidi, vice president of the Islamic Resource Group, present "Islam, Shariah & Democracy" Monday, September 19, 7-9 p.m. at Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad in Minnetonka. Facilitated small group discussion follows at this free Minneapolis Area Interfaith Initiative event.

Habitat for Humanity, Oct. 4-8

Our final Habitat for Humanity project this year will spruce up two older homes in Minneapolis. A Brush With Kindness program channels our energy and spirit to do minor repairs, clean up and paint older homes. Not as physically demanding of the standard Build week, it allows us to work together to improve the lives of homeowners and contribute to the community. We need cooks, too! Come sign up at the HFH Table in Guild Hall after service any Sunday this month or call Bonnie Herr (612/345-4782) or John Davenport (612/926-8290) for more information.

Plymouth Choir Openings

If you are interested in singing in the Plymouth Choir this fall, please contact Philip Brunelle to see about openings and set up a time to audition. 612-547-1450.

28 Wednesday

- 9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
- 1:00 Drop-In
- 1:00 Loring-Nicollet Meals on Wheels Committee
- 4:00 BeFrienders
- 2:00-6:30 Farmers Market
- 5:00 New Testament Greek
- 5:30 Katy's Cafe
- 6:00 Choir School—see detailed schedule, p. 4
- 6:30 Spirituality & Healing
- 6:45 Spiritual Enrichment-Yoga
- 7:00 Plymouth Choir

29 Thursday

- 9:00 Needlers
- 10:30 Meals on Wheels
- 12 noon Women's meeting
- 6:30 Drop-In

30 Friday

Eat Street Players: Sound of Music

The Sound of Music appears on the Howard Conn stage September 9 and runs through September 25. Among the most popular musicals ever produced, this family classic tells the tale of the Van Trapp Family Singers as they find love and then escape from the brutal Nazi regime in World War II. Featuring fabulous music such as *Climb Every Mountain*, *Edelweiss* and *You Are Sixteen Going on Seventeen*, the show will be performed on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 and on Sundays at 1:00.



The Sound of Music is filled with Plymouth members; directed for the stage by Michael Sheeks, with vocal direction by Mary Laymon, orchestral direction by Randall Davidson, scenic design by Larry Rostad and dramaturgy by Jo Holcomb. The cast features Chris Deutsch as the Captain, Bill Marshall as Max Detweiler, Mary Laymon as the Mother Abbess and also includes Rachel VanScoy, four members of the Church family, Mitch Thomsen, Nancy Pearson, Denise Eng, Miranda Kettlewell, and Naomi Karstad. For ticket information, visit www.eatstreetplayers.org.

Sew Good: Have Extra Fabric?

Plymouth members Judy Walker and Birdie Cunningham are coordinating a sewing workshop to benefit Lydia apartments and Nicollet Square. In preparation for the workshop, they are asking members to donate one yard or more of cotton fabric and/or new standard size bed pillows. Donations can be made on October 9 at an info table following service, or placed in a drop box next to the information desk starting in September. Please contact Judy Walker with questions: judy.walker56@gmail.com.

Songs of Hope

Remembering 9/11: One hundred voices from the Downtown Interfaith Community, the Interfaith Chorus of Minneapolis Children, Minneapolis Youth Chorus, and Minnesota Sinfonia join for a commemorative concert, 8 p.m., September 10, at the Basilica of Saint Mary, Hennepin Avenue at N. 16th Street, Minneapolis. The free concert features *Chichester Psalms* by Leonard Bernstein, choral works by Stephen Paulus and Michael Mendoza, and readings and prayers from the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Universalist traditions.



**PLYMOUTH
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PARISH REGISTER

DECEASED

Maurice Louis Boudreau
Husband of Alice Benjamin
Boudreau; brother-in-law of
Marjorie Benjamin Peterson and
Duane Peterson
Candace Crozier
Sister(-in-law) of Ed and Caryl Crozier;
aunt (-in-law) of Cherise and Bill
Barnes; great-aunt of Rachel, Claire
and Nathan Barnes
Sue Hodder
Mother(-in-law) of Kent and
Judy Hodder; grandmother
of Mike, Drew, Annie and
Bob Motch and Will Hodder;
mother(-in-law) of Laurie
and Ed Greeno;
grandmother of Christopher
and Jonathan Greeno
Eleanor McConnell
Mother of Nancy McConnell
Patti Uppgaard
Daughter of Bob Uppgaard
Lowell Weber
Husband of Lillian Weber
Robert "Bob" White
Husband of Adrienne White

*We treasure their memory and in
faith we entrust our loved ones to
God's eternal care.*

BEREAVED

Hope Esparolini, death of husband
April Hollander, death of mother;
Sam and Nick Parker, death of
grandmother
Rob Williams, death of father

MARRIED

Melkamu Gobosho and Bezunesh
Jimma

BAPTIZED

Indira Grace Ambur and Kiran
Jackson Ambur, daughter and
son of Sumanth and Jennifer
Heiser Ambur

Rocco Alan Kreykes, son of Sarah
Alane Berg and Nathan Scott
Kreykes

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:50 FIRST SERVICE IN THE CHAPEL

Resumes Rally Sunday, Sept. 11. All
are welcome, especially children.
Service ends at 10:20.

10:30 SERVICE IN THE SANCTUARY

Preaching:

Sept. 4 James Gertmenian
Sept. 11 James Gertmenian
Sept. 18 James Gertmenian
Sept. 25 Barbara Lundblad



THE FLAME

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