

# Annual Report 2018



*Over 160 years of daring spiritual community, transforming the world with love . . . now more than ever*



**Plymouth**  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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Cover images of Plymouth people primarily by Mark Christman;  
upper left photo is by Nina Jonson.

## Moderator's Report

This year has been another time of significant change for Plymouth—with all the challenges and excitement that change brings. We've experienced the departure of Carla Bailey and Jeff Sartain. We've welcomed Paula's new role as Acting Senior Minister, Beth's official call and the addition of Annette Abel as our business administrator. And, now, we welcome Rev. Daniel Wolpert to Plymouth as our new Interim Minister.

As I reflect on my second year as your moderator,



I continue to find myself feeling incredibly grateful for all the ways Plymouth people come together to make ours a vital congregation. I've seen each person bring their gifts forward—whether that be serving on a board or

committee, singing in the choir, teaching in the Church School, volunteering for Third Sunday Meals or one of the many other ways people contribute to the life of our congregation. Thank you for all you give to our life together. I also want to thank our clergy and staff for the value they bring to Plymouth.

This year, I particularly want to thank the Transition Planning Task Force for their thoughtful leadership as they've helped us navigate through this time of change. In addition, I want to recognize the incredible efforts of the Interim Minister Search Committee.

As we look to our future, we have much upon which to build. A newly formed leadership group, the Growth Task Force, will be working with clergy, staff, lay leaders and the congregation to develop a vision and plan for Plymouth's future. This promises to be an exciting time in our life together.

—Claire Kolmodin, Moderator

## Leadership Council

### Chair's Report

This church year has been a very challenging one not just for the Leadership Council, but for the whole of Plymouth Congregational Church. The theme of "transition" has been one that has touched every effort of the Leadership Council. The year has also been one of rebuilding for several boards,

and significant focus was dedicated to clarifying the roles of Boards, the Leadership Council, the Deacons and the congregation, in a way consistent with Plymouth's Governing Policies.

As almost everyone will recall, in the first half of the church year Plymouth was faced with the departure of both its Senior Minister as well as a key Minister who had served Plymouth for many years. This was an emotionally (and operationally) jarring set of events in the life of the church, and the impact of these was felt deeply by the entire church. To understand how to address the impact of these



departures, the congregation was asked to complete the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) survey. The response to the survey was overwhelming, and the feedback provided by the congregation helped articulate areas of focus for Plymouth.

Around this time, the Leadership Council also launched a formal Transition Planning Task Force, made up of Plymouth members nominated from within the congregation. This task force was charged with defining a plan for managing this time of transition. Several important recommendations arose from the work of the Transition Planning Task Force, including seeking an "intentional" Interim Minister, who would guide Plymouth in the healing process.

Another theme expressed in CAT survey responses was a desire to formulate a strategy to sustainably grow Plymouth membership. This effort will be undertaken in the coming church year by the Growth Task Force, which will report to the Leadership Council and work closely with the Interim Minister, the Transition Planning Task Force, Boards, Deacons, Plymouth clergy, staff and the congregation. The task force's work is expected to take six months and will touch virtually every aspect of Plymouth.

As we look toward a new church year, I'm confident in the strength and passion of Plymouth to continue to bind us all together under a common humanity. It is an exciting moment in Plymouth's life: one that has the potential to reflect great credit upon its members.

—Chad Freeburg, Chair

## Acting Senior Minister's Report

This has been a year of change. A number of you have told me how you hate change. I understand. Change can be difficult, particularly if it means adjusting to the loss of a spouse or a leader or the way things used to be. This year we experienced the departures of Senior Minister Carla Bailey at the end of August and, in December, Minister for Community Engagement Jeff Sartain. With these losses, we find ourselves in a time of transition. Transition is the way we come to terms with change. While it sometimes feels chaotic, it cannot be rushed, and there are many things for us to work on in preparation for the future.

In January, I accepted with humility the Deacons' invitation to be acting Senior Minister during this time of transition. I have served Plymouth for almost 15 years, so I bring the experience of knowing the congregation. Working with the Deacons and Leadership Council, we have accomplished a number of things in the last five months. We hired Annette Abel as business administrator, established a Transition Planning Task Force, extended a full-time call to Rev. Beth Faeth as Minister of Congregational Care, hired Nina Jonson as Program Manager, created the Interim Minister Search Committee, hired as intentional Interim Minister Rev. Daniel Wolpert, formed a Growth Task Force and created a Communications Working Group.

Some goals during this time of transition are to deepen our spiritual connection, examine what it means to be a beloved community, try some different leadership models and explore issues of sustainability for the church. We have much to do, and I am grateful for the hardworking staff and clergy that show up every day and do their work. I am also deeply inspired by the number of laypeople on boards and committees who are serving the church and the community in a myriad of ways. To be the church is to serve our community, and that has not stopped during this time of transition.

A highlight this year has been the 160th anniversary of the church. We hosted a weekend of activities from a dance on Saturday to a cook out, silent auction and cake and ice cream celebration on Sunday. It was a joyous occasion!

One hopeful challenge that presents as an opportunity is that the 9:45 chapel service will soon outgrow the chapel and will need to move to the sanctuary. This

move prompts a Sunday morning schedule change. In spite of all the change and transition, these are exciting times. It is my hope and prayer that together we discern what God is calling us to next. I count it an honor and a privilege to serve you during this time of transition.

—Paula Northwood

## Minister for Congregational Care's Report

In March, I completed a full year of ministry with Plymouth, moving from part-time to full-time in October 2017. On April 15, in the midst of an epic April snowstorm, 200 of you braved the elements and voted affirmatively to call me as a settled, full-time minister. I officially (and happily) lost the "Transitional" in my title!

My primary responsibility as Minister for



Congregational Care is to make sure members of the Plymouth community are being cared for in a pastoral way. This happens through visits and phone calls, conversations over coffee, emails and check-ins on Sunday mornings. I am grateful for the team who shares in this work—Paula, Seth, Nina,

our BeFriends, lay visitors and more. If you or someone you know could use support from the church in some way, please let me know. Plymouth Church is a caring community, and I have witnessed in my short time here the many ways you reach out to one another in times of need. Thank you!

I support the Board of Community Life and the Board of Worship, and I am grateful for the fine work these boards do on behalf of the congregation. All aspects of worship, fellowship and programs are thoughtfully considered, and both boards are framing their work by taking seriously the priorities lifted up through the CAT survey: to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church, to make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to the church and to create more opportunities to form meaningful relationships. These directives have led the boards to make bold decisions about Sunday schedules, church gatherings and programs. I also am the staff liaison to the BeFriends, the Mortality Project and

the Strobel Drop-in Center—all vibrant ministries at Plymouth that offer the gifts of education, understanding, relationship building and faith renewal.

Still a newcomer, I welcome opportunities to know you better. Please don't hesitate to call, email or stop by my office for conversation. This has been a memorable year for all of us at Plymouth, and I am grateful for the way the Spirit continues to direct us—through faith, fellowship and freedom—into a future filled with a commitment to justice and hearts full of hope.

—Beth A. Faeth

## Director of Spiritual Formation and Theater's Report

I am grateful to this Plymouth community for its energy, resilience and love as we have all experienced change. My own position at Plymouth has shifted from Director of Children and Youth Ministry to the Director of Spiritual Formation and Theater. This expanded role means that I am connected to the broad work of the Board of Spiritual Formation and oversee the education and spiritual formation of people of all ages. I am also responsible for the operations and mission of the Conn Theater in the Howard Conn Fine Arts Center and exploring how Plymouth can use the art of theater as a means of spiritual exploration.

Our Sunday Forum and Spiritual Exploration



Committees' work continues to be a blessing for us all. Sunday Forum brings us extraordinary speakers who provide us a broader vision of the work being done in our communities. Spiritual Exploration continues its vibrant work of connecting us with resources that may deepen our spiritual lives in

ways that may have been unexpected, yet are life-giving.

A great joy this year has been in the hiring of Nina Jonson to be our Programs Manager. Her role is to manage and implement the many and varied programs of the church from Church School to Families Moving Forward. Her abundant love, energy and care have made her an essential piece of our Plymouth staff in a few short months.

This fall, we launched 100 Hands on Wednesday evenings. This intergenerational time of community and outreach grew quickly and engaged many at Plymouth. Hundreds of hands have helped serve our immediate neighbors while also building relationships with each other.

Our Church School continues to expand and grow. Our 6th and 7th graders had a year of multi-faith learning, spending a month each on Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, Mormonism, Hinduism and Buddhism. Our 4th and 5th graders, in addition to exploring the Hebrew Bible, learned to be Ambassadors to our church community and were commissioned on May 13. Our Little and Big Lights dove deep into the themes of our Sundays with games, crafts and stories. The 1st and 3rd graders learned how to take the themes out into the communities they inhabit. All in all, our young people played, learned, loved and engaged with each other in ways based in Plymouth's progressive Christianity.

This has been a year of change, growth and budding seeds that will bear fruit in the fertile soil of this congregation.

—Seth Patterson

## Organist-Choirmaster's Report

Having completed my 49th year as your Organist-Choirmaster, I am happy to send this report with thanks to everyone at Plymouth for your support and encouragement. In addition to serving as organist and director of the Senior



Choir, I coordinate the music of our other choirs, vocal and handbells. I also serve as liaison to the Fine Arts Board, provide special music at Strobel Drop-in Center events, plan the Summer Music Series and assist with music for special occasions. Of course, this would not happen without the marvelous support of Carolyn, my wife of 52 years!

We are blessed to have a great team of musicians on our staff: Sonja Thompson, Mary Laymon, Marie Scholtz, Siri Keller, Cammy Carteng, Ann Tandy-Treiber, George Maurer and Laura Caviani. We are also fortunate to have five amazing soloists: Maria Jette, Jenny French, Lisa Drew, Dan Dressen and James Bohn, as well as our wonderful Adult Choir,

who inspire us every Sunday!

This year marked the 10th anniversary of Plymouth's Summer Music Series, which had great attendance every week. We opened with Cantus, then music of Rodgers with Hart and Hammerstein (Bohn/Drew/Jette/Vern Sutton/Thompson) and closed with Twin Cities Bronze Handbell Choir. It was also marvelous to have instrumentalists join us over the course of the year: Anthony Ross, Beth Rapier, Merilee Klemp, Randall Davidson, Ann Buran, Lynn Shackelford, Karen Canon, Zhen Tu, Sanford Moore, Becky Weis, Tim Brunelle, Joe Weismann, Debbie Hendricks, Diane and Greta Hallberg, the JOLA guitar quartet, Lynne Aspnes and Emma and Jacob Taggart. A special treat was inviting composer John Rutter to join us for an April Sunday conducting the choir in his own music—a thrill for us all!

As always, the Adult Choir celebrated special anniversaries, including Dominick Argento's 90th birthday, and once again shared a Sunday at Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church with their choir and another Sunday with both at Plymouth. Our Chorister Choir joined with the youth choir from Westminster Presbyterian Church and plans to repeat this collaboration next year.

It has been another rich and wonderful year of music for one and all!

—Philip Brunelle

## Board of Community Life

This past year has been filled with renewed energy, joy and devotion as the Board of Community Life continued its work to build and enhance a sense of welcome, care and belonging at Plymouth. Whether someone is a first-time visitor or lifelong member, we want all to feel welcomed and a part of our community. Our work involves the oversight of numerous groups and committees, including new member classes and receptions, support ministries, fellowship groups, all-church events and recruitment and management of volunteer opportunities.

After taking some time off to recruit a sustainable volunteer force, the **Guild Hall Hospitality Fellowship Group** reinstated the weekly formal

coffee and tea service in Guild Hall following the Sanctuary service, which encourages fellowship and new connections.

Successful intergenerational church events—the **Christmas Festival Reception** and **Spring Fling Dance**—were fun all-church celebrations. This year, we partnered closely with the Board of Spiritual Formation's Christmas Craft Workshop group and look forward to even closer partnerships in future years.

We honored many of our beloved members at the October **50-Year Member Celebration**, recognizing those who have been part of the Plymouth community for 50 or more years. For others who haven't quite reached that tenure, we celebrated our second annual **Member Reunion** in February—this year inviting all those who joined in a year ending in "8."

We also recommissioned our wonderful **BeFrienders**, who minister to all by offering a compassionate and supportive presence to anyone in need, by recognizing and recommitting to them during a service this spring.

We continued our **New Member Programs**, inviting prospective members to attend an informational session about Plymouth and welcoming those who decided to join. This year, the classes were offered during the Sanctuary service, a time change that was determined to be a success.

Finally, our board renewed our commitment to be **Ambassadors** for Plymouth—doing what we can to make everyone feel welcome by reaching out to new faces and help people make connections to groups or programs—and hope to spread this practice to others.

—Emi Bennett Vo, Chair

## Board of Finance and Administration

The Board of Finance and Administration (BFA) had a busy 2017–2018 church year. Chief among the BFA's work was the fiscal year 2019 annual budget. Before tackling the budget itself, the BFA worked on improving the process for developing and adopting Plymouth's annual budget. In the fall of 2017, Deputy Treasurer Ray Martin prepared, and the BFA approved,



procedures for preparing the annual budget that make the process more inclusive and less rushed. Using the new procedure, and relying heavily on the excellent work of Acting Senior Minister Paula Northwood, Mr. Martin and Business Administrator Annette Abel, the BFA helped shape the fiscal year 2019 annual budget and joined Rev. Dr. Northwood in recommending that budget to the Deacons. In doing so, the BFA noted that, although the budgeted 7.8 percent draw from the church's commingled investment fund was necessary under the church's current circumstances, that percentage draw is not sustainable in the long term. The BFA will continue its work next year to help ensure Plymouth achieves long-term financial sustainability.

The BFA is also responsible for the nuts and bolts work of reviewing Plymouth's annual audit, reviewing and approving the monthly financial report and overseeing the use and accounting of Plymouth's restricted and designated funds. Regarding the latter, the BFA, again with the assistance of Mr. Martin, approved policies that will help ensure sound and financially compliant management of Plymouth's various funds.

The BFA oversees the Archives, Building and Grounds, Investment, Legacy Giving, Personnel and Stewardship Committees, all of which performed their functions with excellence this year. Many thanks to Personnel Committee members Lani Bennett (chair), Sue Dosal and Bob Grams for reenergizing the committee and helping the church navigate its way through what can only be described as a busy personnel year at Plymouth. Many thanks, also, to Stewardship Committee co-chairs Rick Neville and John Schenk and their fellow committee members for running an innovative and successful annual pledge campaign, helping to hold the total dollar amount of pledges close to steady in a very challenging environment.

—Eric Olsen, Chair

## Board of Fine Arts

The fine arts play a vital role at Plymouth, from the music in the Sanctuary to the seasonal embroideries that grace Guild Hall, from the art gallery collections that challenge our perspectives to the poetry readings that enrich us, from the stained glass that surrounds us to the floral arrangements that mark our seasons: Plymouth is indeed infused with art.

**Literary Witnesses**—This was an exciting year. Literary Witnesses was originally inspired 20 years ago by Sam King, who returned for an anniversary celebration, sharing poems from the pulpit and conversations in the Chapel. A Literary Witness 20th Anniversary book was published with writings from the authors who have participated over the years. The panel discussion “Can Poetry Save Lives?” was led by Gregory Orr and Sam King.

**Gallery Exhibitions** continue to highlight the diverse skills of our community with new shows throughout the year, including paintings, drawings, pottery and sculptures. The art gallery is a welcoming space and introduces Plymouth to people in the community throughout the week.

**Docents**, guides to our beautiful church, conduct tours on the first and third Sundays, September through May, after the second service. Tour participation was down somewhat from last year but the docents continue to learn about historical objects and art in the church. Please consider a tour if you haven't taken one: They're excellent!

**Film Club**—Attendance is growing, with audience members showing greater interest in social-activism themed films and with more groups interested in using film to highlight their topics.



For example, guest host Caring for Creation's *Troubled Waters* environmental documentary—with the speaking event immediately after it by the film's director—had one of the best turnouts in the 15-year history of the Film Club. An innovation this year was to show more films during the season if there is a group or individual who wants to guest host a film.

**Theater**—The theater plays a vital role in the Plymouth community. Investments were made in the physical space to improve sound quality and rates and schedules for the coming year were reviewed with the goal of expanding usage. The committee is exploring programming opportunities, as well as having the theater space assessed for upgrades by colleagues from the theater world to better determine its status and potential.

**Flowers**—A new florist, Best Wishes Floral, was selected for the Sunday morning Altar and Guild

Hall arrangements. The winter surprise snowfall made Easter decorating a challenge, but a dedicated group made spring break forth!

All music activities are addressed in Philip Brunelle's report.

—John Kulstad, Chair

## Board of Outreach

This year has been marked with transition, inspiration and action, and, while it has had its bumps, I am so proud to have been a part of the Board of Outreach during this time.



We had our annual potluck and were blessed to have Street Song join us, a choir which aims to unite voices for harmony and unity (it's an entity of the Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness) and John Cole, director of the Dignity Center, as speaker. We have

20 working groups, committees and programs under our purview, which are all doing incredible work in the community. We refined the criteria for the Sandbo Fund and, going forward, will actively identify organizations (or individuals) who could benefit from assistance. We were also blessed to have Paula Northwood as our staff liaison.

We started this year by trying to better understand those around us. We attended neighborhood association meetings, brought in representatives from our working groups and committees and people from outside organizations, such as guests from the local Oromo community. We toured the Groveland Food Shelf, learning their operations and hearing about their short- and long-term needs and concerns. We learned more of the dedicated work of the members for Caring for Creation and witnessed the quick rise and importance of 100 Hands. We had regular updates on the Lydia Apartment expansion from Beacon Interfaith Housing and were brought immediately close to the work of the new Immigrant Welcoming Working Group (IWWG) through an urgent request.

Through IWWG's involvement this year with the Interfaith Committee on Migration (ICOM), we learned of an undocumented worker who was injured on the job. His family relied on his income for their support and they needed help. Working with ICOM, our board approved two months'

financial support for the family, allowing him to heal and return to work. Without the connection between IWWG and ICOM, we would have never known of this urgent need. In addition to their work with ICOM, the IWWG is working with the MN Immigration Rights Action Community (MIRAC) in its support of the Minneapolis Sanctuary Platform. The Plymouth Congregational Board of Outreach stands with the IWWG in this support.

All of our working groups and committees are doing extraordinary things for extraordinary people every day. It has been an honor to witness their work, their dedication and their never-ending spirit—as well as that of my colleagues on this board, with whom I have had the infinite privilege of working with and learning from over the course of these years together.

—Beth Comeaux, Chair

## Board of Spiritual Formation

It was another year of growth and change in Spiritual Formation, as we strive to put together the best programs for a vibrant congregation today and into the future.

The Christmas Festival was a spectacular success! A joint planning committee with the Board of Community Life was established in the fall and has continued to meet this spring. A plan for a sustainable, vibrant annual Christmas Festival is being created.



Spiritual Exploration continues to offer a variety of quality programs. This year, the committee launched three sessions of small group, short-term, prayerful experiences called Reflection Circles. They were well received and well attended.

Sunday Forum provided many excellent Sunday Morning speakers, although at times attendance dropped. Ways of attracting more people were discussed.

Having revised the curriculum in elementary Church School last year with great success, this year the focus was on the middle grades. Confirmation included both ninth and eighth graders. Beginning next year, the standard will be eighth-grade



Confirmation. The sixth and seventh graders began a new program focused on understanding multiple faiths, their similarities and differences. Each month focuses on a different faith and includes a guest speaker and a trip to a house of worship. Next year they will focus on service and alternate back to the multi-faith class the following year.

The high school program attendance improved from the previous year. It will be the focus of continued revision next year. Many ideas were discussed.

Finally, we worked with the Board of Worship on a Sunday morning schedule change that allows for two services and a separate, all-ages education and fellowship hour sandwiched between. There were a great many discussions on the topic so that we could fully understand the impact on our entire congregation and make the most informed decision possible.

—Ging Wiandt

## Board of Worship

The Board of Worship spent the past year revisiting our mission with an eye toward expanding our service to Plymouth Church. We explored what it means to be in worship, how the various components (i.e., hymns, prayers, sermons) contribute to the worship experience, how to balance our love for tradition with the energy that can come with



change and how to continue to include our children in worship settings.

We identified language, practices and assumptions that have often relegated First Service to a lesser position, striving to achieve equity between our two services so that attendees at each will have an enriching worship experience. We added fellowship concerns to First Service so that more members would be aware of church projects, task forces and opportunities for community and for outreach. We also provided activities on the Wednesday evenings during Lent to encourage more reflection on the meaning of that season.

With the Board of Spiritual Formation, we explored revising the Sunday morning schedule so more members could participate in both adult and

children's education opportunities, First Service would be expanded from 30 to 50 minutes, and intergenerational activities would be encouraged.

The new schedule will launch in the fall of 2018 with First Service at 9 a.m., education and fellowship at 10, Second Service at 11, and Guild Hall fellowship at noon. We acknowledged that the new schedule may not be perfect, but, with support from the clergy, elected church leaders and many members of the congregation, we felt it would help Plymouth address the priorities identified in the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) survey.

The board has been grateful to work with Beth Faeth, the clergy liaison for the board, and we look forward to the upcoming year when we'll have a full board with nine members. We are also grateful to Karl Jones for his role as the liaison to the Second Service Worship Hosts Committee (ushers and greeters) and Jasper Jonson and Rossi Clem for their work as the First Service Committee.

—Karen Barstad, Chair

## Archivist's Report

The Archives' first priority this year was the completion of the Bovey Room renovations to house Plymouth's archival records. The purposes of the renovation are to: 1) provide sufficient space to store and preserve 160 years of Plymouth's history and beyond, 2) improve space for Archives volunteers to work and 3) improve access to Plymouth's historical records and stories. The custom cabinets and vitrines blend with the original 1908 architecture and include shelving suitable for archival storage.

A planned spring opening was delayed due to water damage caused by a broken boiler pump seal in the attic area. Insurance covered the repairs, but volunteers were without access to the room for six weeks. Extensive cleanup was also needed. The formal opening is now scheduled for September 16, 2018. The Archives will then have open hours for visitors to browse, ask questions or research a topic; and times the room can be used for meetings.

The Archives continued its oral history initiative designed to capture the memories and stories of long-time Plymouth members. Approximately 40 interviews have been completed over the past two years. The project to date has focused on 50-year members, but any Plymouth member wanting

to share memories and experiences at Plymouth should contact the Archives (archives@plymouth.org).

Volunteers continued cataloging Plymouth's collections of documents, scrapbooks, memorabilia and recordings and transcribing fragile 19th-century governance documents so that the contents are preserved. Scanning of old board directories is complete.

Requests for information continued to increase as more people become aware of Plymouth's archival collections. We are looking forward to a grand opening of the new archives location on September 16, 2018, and a new phase in which we can better integrate Plymouth's history into the life of the church.

—*Mary Welfling, Archivist*

## Covenant Partners' Report

Plymouth's Covenant partners are clergy in ministries other than in local churches, such as chaplaincy. They need to have a connection to the local church who ordained them. Our covenant partners are Karl Jones and Catherine Duncan.

Since November 2014, **Karl Jones** has been engaged in a relationship as an ordained minister covenanted with Plymouth through his work as a chaplain with the Good Samaritan Society. In addition to his work for their long-term care facility in Robbinsdale, he has been working with three metro-area hospitals and, more recently, a hospice program. In each setting, he works as a chaplain on a part time, as-needed basis, serving as part of a team providing weekday and on-call coverage to meet a wide variety of religious and spiritual needs. In addition, in each setting, he has played a role in the training of and mentoring of students. He continues to find it a privilege to enter into conversations with patients and their families and the staff who care for them.

As a Plymouth member, over the last year, Karl has been active on the Board of Worship and coordinated the work of ushers and greeters, as well as serving on the Transition Planning Task Force and the committee that was formed to search for an intentional Interim Minister.

Rev. **Catherine Duncan**, M.A., was ordained at Plymouth in 2010. She is a covenant partner with Plymouth Church. This covenant recognizes her call to specialized ministry. Catherine and Paula

Northwood led a Family Spiritual Direction group this spring that was well received. Plymouth plans to continue to offer Family Spiritual Direction with Catherine's guidance. Currently, Catherine works part time for Newbridge Health and Wellness as a social-emotional, spiritual care provider. Newbridge is an integrative holistic outpatient clinic located in Edina. Catherine also has a private practice as an Integrative Spiritual Consultant. Catherine is a certified spiritual director, chaplain and energy healer and works with mind-body therapies, tapping (EFT) and aromatherapy. Visit her website at [www.learningtolive.org](http://www.learningtolive.org) and spiritual blog for Natural Mental Health at <http://bit.ly/LivingFromHeart> and follow her FB page @catherinelearningtolive

## Staff Milestones



Cammy Carteng,  
Director, Adult  
Handbell Choir  
30 years



Lisa Drew, Plymouth  
Soloist  
15 years



George Maurer,  
First Service Music  
Director  
5 years



Paula Northwood,  
Acting Senior  
Minister  
15 years

# ***Minutes from the June 4, 2017, annual meeting—for approval***

Claire Kolmodin, Moderator

Eric Olsen, Parliamentarian

Claire Kolmodin called the meeting to order at 11:51 a.m. and made introductory comments.

## **Actions taken:**

- Motion to approve minutes from congregational meeting of June 12, 2016 passed.
- Motion to accept 2018 budget passed.
- Motion to approve nominees for boards and lay leadership passed.

## **Agenda and Minutes**

Hymn

“Forward Through the Ages”, verse 1, #383 in *The Pilgrim Hymnal*

## **Invocation**

Paula Northwood provided the invocation.

## **Minutes from the June 12, 2016, annual meeting**

Brian Siska made a motion to accept the minutes of this meeting. Motion was seconded and passed. There was no discussion.

## **Roll Call of the 50-Year Members and Deceased Members, Celebration of Staff Milestones**

Beth Faeth read the names of members who have died since last year’s annual meeting, followed by a moment of silence and concluded with a prayer.

Jeff Sartain read the names of new 50-year members. He also announced two staff anniversaries.

## **Senior Minister’s Report**

Carla Bailey explained that the membership has dropped from 2,200 when she was an associate minister, approximately 30 years ago, to just over 1,700 today. Carla explained that the motivation for growth at Plymouth comes from love and not from a desire to increase revenue.

She explained that she and the staff have carefully examined the intent for each part of our investments and endowment. Carla thanked the work of the staff for the many ways that they do their work, along with all members of the church who do the work of the church.

## **Moderator’s Report**

Claire expressed her appreciation for the contributions that the congregation has made.

She explained how the Deacons have held listening sessions in the past year and will continue to listen to add to the work that the boards at Plymouth are doing. We will be addressing the questions of who we are and who do we want to be.

## **Leadership Council Report**

Chad Freeburg substituted for Lynn Moline, Leadership Council Chair, who was unable to attend. Chad expressed appreciation for the work the Leadership Council has done in the operation of Plymouth. He recognized the members of the Leadership Council and all board members.

## **Budget for Fiscal Year 2018**

Jim van Iwaarden moved to approve the budget. Motion was seconded.

Jim thanked Ray Martin, Carla Bailey and Diane Merz for their work in developing this budget.

Jim Rogers commended the transparency of the current budget. He expressed concern about our contribution to the UCC of \$10,300, since we are not a member of the UCC.

Nikki Lewis wanted to know why the UCC contribution is in the budget. Carla explained that we are a member of the Minnesota Conference of the UCC and that the amount contributed is consistent with past years. Bill Davini explained that we do have membership in the Minnesota Conference and that we derive a significant benefit from that membership. Pat Born suggested that the Deacons take this matter under consideration.

Karl Jones suggested that concern over the contribution to the UCC stems from the congregation’s lack of understanding of how much we benefit from our association with them.

Lynn Truesdell expressed his pride in the UCC for standing up for liberal religion and human rights.

Meg Gisslen also suggested that the Deacons address the issue of the UCC contribution. She asked what was included in program expenses and expressed concern that this amount is less than the 2017 budget. Carla explained that this was the “stuff” of programs like materials as opposed to personnel. Meg also stated her concern about the excess withdrawal against the endowment. Carla discussed that we are still looking for a tenant

for our education wing, and that the 2018 budget represents a conservative forecast.

Dee Hallberg shared the view that this budget is very transparent and her appreciation that we are paying our staff adequately. She addressed the great importance of outreach and the 10 percent contribution we make to charitable programs.

Nina Jonson said we should not talk so much about how long we've been at Plymouth because even new congregants are important, too.

Charlie Lloyd asked that we contribute more during the Sunday offering because it adds up.

Motion passed.

### **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Chad Freeburg substituted for Lynn Moline. Chad noted two nominees who have been approved by the Leadership Council but were not listed in the posted list of nominees: Nancy Geertz-Larson for Worship and Collin Smith for Community Life.

Chad made the motion to accept nominees for boards and lay leaders.

Motion passed.

### **Other Topics for Discussion**

None

### **Closing Comments**

Claire made closing comments

### **Closing Prayer/Benediction**

Carla provided a closing prayer.

Claire Kolmodin adjourned the meeting at 12:51 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted, Brian Siska, Clerk*

## ***Minutes from the April 15, 2018, special meeting—for approval***

Claire Kolmodin, Moderator

Eric Olsen, Parliamentarian

Claire Kolmodin called the meeting to order at 11:42 a.m.

### **Actions Taken:**

- Motion passed that the requirement to convene a search committee to fill the position of Minister be waived in this case due to the existence of a preferred candidate who is already filling that role.

- Motion passed that Plymouth Congregational Church call Beth Faeth as a Minister with our Congregation.

### **Agenda and Minutes**

#### **Invocation**

Paula Northwood provided the invocation.

#### **Moderator Comments**

Determined that a quorum was present. Three members are participating remotely.

Claire introduced Nancy Siska to describe how the work of the Transition Planning Task Force led to the actions being proposed today. She described how calling Beth was a means of creating more stability during a time of transition, eliminating the risk of having only one called Minister (Paula) and placing a skilled, highly regarded and very caring person in that role.

#### **Call of Beth Faeth as Minister**

- Motion was made and passed that the requirement to convene a search committee to fill the position of Minister be waived in this case due to the existence of a preferred candidate who is already filling that role.
- Motion was made and passed that Plymouth Congregational Church call Beth Faeth as a Minister with our Congregation.

Claire Kolmodin adjourned the meeting at 11:52 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted, Brian Siska, Clerk*

## ***Proposed changes to the bylaws, Section 8—for approval***

Underlines represent additions or changes in case; strikethrough represents a deletion.

### VIII. CHURCH STAFF

2. All ministers shall be called by the Congregation, except for interim and transitional ministers (all ministers are referred to in these Bylaws as "Ministers"). When any position of a called Minister is vacant, the Deacons shall appoint a Ministerial Search Committee from among the members of the Congregation to be elected by the Congregation. As to the Senior Minister, the Ministerial Search Committee shall consult with the Deacons as to compensation and other contractual terms of hiring, and then submit the candidate to the members of the Congregation for their approval. As to all other

called Ministers, the committee shall recommend its candidate to the Deacons and the Senior Minister and upon approval by the Deacons and the Senior Minister, the Deacons shall recommend the candidate to the members of the Congregation for their approval. The selection or removal of a called Minister shall require the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members in attendance at a meeting of the Congregation called for that purpose. The Deacons may select interim and transitional Ministers without a Congregational vote, using any process for making the selection the Deacons determine. The term of employment of an interim or transitional Minister shall not exceed 24 months without the vote of the Congregation required for the selection of a called Minister.

The changes represented in this amendment are:

- In the first sentence, added “by the Congregation, except for interim and transitional ministers (all ministers are referred to in these Bylaws as “Ministers”).”
- Following the first sentence, lower case “minister” and “ministers” is changed to “Minister” and “Ministers.”
- Added two new final sentences: “The Deacons may select interim and transitional Ministers without a Congregational vote, using any process for making the selection the Deacons determine. The term of employment of an interim or transitional Minister shall not exceed 24 months without the vote of the Congregation required for the selection of a called Minister.”

### 3. Employment Agreement of the called Ministers.

The Deacons shall establish the employment agreement with the Senior Minister. The Senior Minister shall present an employment agreement for ~~Associate~~ all other Ministers to the Deacons for their approval. The Deacons shall review each Minister’s agreement with him or her annually. Any amendments to the employment agreements must be in writing and signed by the Moderator and the Minister.

The change represented in this amendment is:

- In the third line, “Associate” Ministers is changed to “all other” Ministers.

# Plymouth Church Community Fund Committee Report

The Community Fund is responsible for distributing funds to support organizations that are of special interest and importance to members. The fund is an annual appropriation from Plymouth's budget. The 2018 fund was \$150,000. (The 2017 fund was also \$150,000.) Paula Northwood is the committee's clergy liaison.

The committee considers five criteria in making funding decisions, reflecting interests of our congregation. Those five criteria are:

- The organization supports the mission/purpose of the Community Fund Committee;
- The organization is a good steward of our gift;
- The organization is a program, core group or committee of the Board of Outreach;
- The organization is one that Plymouth draws on for support, or it oversees and supports our clergy/programming staff;
- The organization is one in which we work collaboratively with other congregations.

This year's Christmas Offering (\$53,986) was shared with 3 organizations:

- Iglesia Emmanuel Baptista, Cuba, for hurricane relief and rebuilding: \$6,000;
- Whittier International Baccalaureate Elementary School (for two wall murals, created by a local artist, involving participation by students and families): \$23,993;
- Farhio House (shelter for Somali women and children): \$23,993.

This year's Easter Offering (\$28,411) was given to Third Sunday Meal.

Following is a list of the organizations that received gifts through the Community Fund this year:

## **Economic & Social Justice**

Haven Housing (previously Ascension Place)	\$5,000
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative	\$20,000
Dignity Center	\$5,000
Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness	\$6,000
Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches	\$5,000
Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center* (vandalism)	\$500
Division of Indian Work	\$10,000
First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, Texas* (gun violence)	\$500
Groveland Emergency Food Shelf	\$26,000
Habitat for Humanity	\$10,717
Kaleo Center (United Theological Seminary)	\$2,500
Loring-Nicollet Meals on Wheels	\$2,000
Minnehaha Academy* (explosion and fire)	\$500
Minnesota Council of Churches	\$5,000
Minnesota InterFaith Power and Light	\$1,000
Sew Good Goods	\$1,000
Simpson Housing Services	\$8,000
Total Economic & Social Justice	\$108,717

## **Global Outreach**

International Village Clinic	\$7,500
OneVillage Partners	\$7,500
United Church of Christ—Global Missions	\$6,000
Total Global Outreach	\$21,000

## **Progressive Faith**

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Ciego de Avila, Cuba	\$3,000
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities	\$20,000
Total Progressive Faith	\$23,000

*\*One-time gift*

## Memorials

We have received gifts in memory of the following people.

Jon Bergerud  
Joy Bumgardner  
Ralph Colby  
Jane Hall  
Scott Harman  
Lee Johnston  
Ellard Larson  
Jim Martineau  
Alice Ohnesorge  
George Reid  
LaVonne Souther  
Linde Treiber      **Memorial gifts total: \$23,020**

## Legacy Gifts

We are grateful for receiving legacy gifts from the following people's estates in the last year.

Mary Lou Loud Estate  
Ruth Smith Estate  
Franz Ucko Estate

**Plymouth Congregational Church of Minneapolis**

**Operating Fund (Cash Basis)**

	FY2017	FY2018	FY2018	FY2019
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	FORECAST	PROPOSED
<b><u>OPERATING INCOME</u></b>				
Pledge Related	1,728,277	1,650,000	1,578,000	1,511,000
Open Offering & Not Pledge Related	204,635	170,000	178,400	178,000
Christmas and Easter offerings	Pass through, see figures below			
<b>Support from Congregation</b>	<b>1,932,912</b>	<b>1,820,000</b>	<b>1,756,400</b>	<b>1,689,000</b>
Leases, Fees & Other	170,620	175,000	191,650	190,650
ELZE School		-		42,000
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>2,103,532</b>	<b>1,995,000</b>	<b>1,948,050</b>	<b>1,921,650</b>
<b><u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u></b>				
Compensation	1,108,952	1,154,845	1,213,000	1,085,612
Benefits	255,052	290,005	243,000	273,750
Interim and Transition				50,000
Office & Administration	170,074	181,500	185,000	201,300
Building Improvements, expensed	55,892	170,000	84,264	40,000
Utilities and Overhead	276,274	295,100	324,400	331,800
Donations to Outside Organizations				
Community Fund	158,000	150,000	150,000	100,000
Christmas and Easter offerings	Pass through, see figures below			
Board and Programs	74,435	87,875	80,225	97,875
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>2,098,679</b>	<b>2,329,325</b>	<b>2,279,889</b>	<b>2,180,337</b>
<b>Net Cash Flow from Operations</b>	<b>4,853</b>	<b>(334,325)</b>	<b>(331,839)</b>	<b>(258,687)</b>
Building improvements, capitalized	104,150			160,000
<b>Cash needed from Commingled Fund</b>	<b>(99,297)</b>		<b>(331,839)</b>	<b>(418,687)</b>
Christmas & Easter Offerings - pass through	89,173	n/a	72,495	n/a









**PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

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