

# Annual Report 2019



**Plymouth**  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



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# Moderator's Report

My first year as Moderator, and fourth as a Deacon, has been busy, exciting, worrying, informative and transformative, which is perhaps just as it should be. Right up front, I want to say that the progress Plymouth has made over the past year-plus has been remarkable. The visible things, like changes in worship service times, abundant activity at the 10



o'clock hour and work we have done on racial justice have created a tangible positive energy around Plymouth.

Our period of interim work with Dan Wolpert has reminded us how deep our spiritual yearning runs and opens a door toward future spiritual growth.

Even our embroidery discussions, which many approached with a sense of trepidation, demonstrate how we are moving toward justice as a congregation and how we can talk to each other productively and respectfully about difficult issues.

Rewinding to a year ago, it seemed that one of the most important tasks of the Deacons and all of church leadership was to build the congregation's confidence in our new governance system. In my report to you here, I really want to focus on that and underscore how diligently the leadership of the church has been doing that work. I believe that nothing is more important in the work of the Deacons than the integrity of our work. If the congregation believes that its elected leaders are operating with an agenda that does not reflect the wishes of the congregation, then the difficult work we face together moving into an uncertain future will be nearly impossible. I see this quality and dedication in the work of groups throughout our church.

One of the most important ways integrity has been present at Plymouth is the consistent way that we've tried to keep the Purposes of the Church foremost in our work, complemented by the wise focus by the Clergy, who have been preaching and teaching about the Purposes since last fall. The Deacons have also coordinated closely with the Leadership Council, keeping the linkage between the Deacons' governance role and the operational work of the Boards. This has been especially true in our racial justice work. Finally, the Deacons have spent considerable time defining our role and in monitoring the organization's performance against our governing policies.

There is much to be pleased with at Plymouth and many dedicated people who are deserving of our gratitude.

—Brian Siska

# O Volunteers!

## Thank you!

We appreciate each and every one of you who has given your time and talent to Plymouth in ways that are obvious or quiet or somewhere in-between, to help make ours a flourishing faith community: Thank you!



Archives Committee; Beacon Committee; Bus Drivers; Office & Front Desk Volunteers; Chapel Singers; Choir; Christmas Festival Team Leaders; Flower Committee; Gallery Committee; Gardeners; Gun Violence Prevention Group; Habitat for Humanity; Hospitality; Library Team; Memorial Committee; Needlers; Nursery; 100 Hands; Racial Justice Initiative; Third Sunday Meal Hosts; Ushers



JoAnne Alkire  
Steve Andersen  
Bev Anderson  
Rolan Anderson  
Tom Anderson  
Jim Arnold  
Latricia, Sixton & Rainer Askew  
Mary Aspnes

David Astin  
Sue Astin  
Annette Atkins  
Nancy Bares  
Karen Barstad  
John Berg  
Mike Bird  
Tom Bird  
Cyn Bloom  
Tom Bloom  
Pat Born  
Lynnette Black  
Paul Bondhus  
Chuck Bottemiller  
Kristin Bottemiller  
Carol Brandenburg  
Larry Brandts  
Kris Broberg  
Tina Broberg  
Martha Brown  
Carolyn Brunelle



Tim Brunelle  
Andrea & Mark, Henry & Spencer Bubula  
Sonia Cairns  
Cynthia Callanan  
Linda Causey  
Jim & Sandy Christenson  
Cristo Rey students: Brian, Tony  
Rossi, Garry, Iris &

Terry Diebold  
Don Doberstein  
Anne Dorgan  
Dan Dougherty  
Rolly Ehrenberg  
Josh & Denise Elfstrum  
Annika Feia  
Katherine Ferrand  
David Fillman  
Glenace Edwall  
Jane Eichten



Astrid Clem  
Jack Cole  
Jim & Tomie Conaway  
Jo Cunningham  
Lisa & John Daniels  
Gregg Daubert  
Cheryl & John Davenport  
Fran & Jerry Davis  
Yvonne Decker  
Barb Deneen  
Chris Deutsch

Roxanne Ezell  
Jill Ferguson  
Marjorie Ferris  
Emily Flood  
Grace Forbord  
John Geertz-Larson  
Maria Gisselquist  
Meg & Wayne Gisslen  
Beverly Gores  
Tim Graham  
Bob & Jean Grams



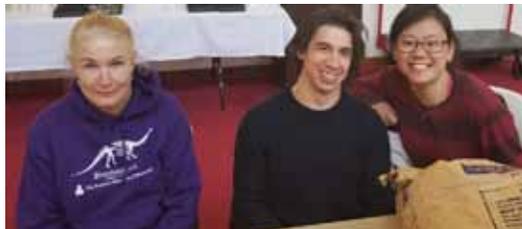
Diane, Jon, Greta &  
 Andrew Hallberg  
 Elizabeth Hannaher  
 Ann Harding  
 Pat & Steve Harlan-  
 Marks  
 Deb Hendricks  
 Jill Hennesen  
 Bonnie Herr  
 Chris High  
 Dawn Hofstrand  
 Joe Holmberg  
 David Homans  
 Camille & Eve  
 Horstmann  
 Doug Hoverson  
 Carole & John  
 Humphrey  
 Anne Ingvoldstad  
 Elizabeth Jarrett  
 Andrew, Emily Jarrett  
 Hughes & Gwyneth  
 Jarrett  
 Nina, Jasper, Zinnia  
 & Adella Jonson  
 Dave Jorstad  
 Suzanne Joyce  
 Karina Karlén  
 E. J. Kelley  
 SuLin Kelley  
 Annie Krishnan  
 John Kulstad  
 Dan Langelett  
 Tom LeFevere  
 Lois Larson  
 Susan Larson  
 Mary Laymon  
 Anne & Charlie Leck  
 Sally Lehmann  
 Jim Leslie  
 Paul Lohman  
 Patrick Lopez de  
 Victoria  
 Ruth Lull  
 Hazel Lutz  
 Judy Madron  
 Aimee Maidi  
 Kristin Makhholm  
 Elsie Martin  
 Ray Martin  
 Lee Mauk  
 Ned McCraine  
 Susan & Jonas Meillier  
 Boni & Clark Miller  
 Gerald Mindrum



Penelope Needham  
 Jill Nelson  
 Julie Neraas  
 Jan Neville  
 Susan Nicol  
 Wendy Nilsson  
 Bev Norris  
 Vicki Oeljen



Eric Olsen  
 Jennifer O'Neill  
 John Ostroot  
 Kathy Heller-Ostroot  
 Joan Parsons  
 Maggie Pastarr  
 Linda Paulson  
 Carol Politis  
 Kathy Quick  
 Janeen Rae  
 Barbara & Bill Read  
 Karen Reed  
 Lisa Reed



Shirley Rutherford  
 Zach Saida &  
 daughter Illy Yassin  
 Mary Kay Sauter  
 Orv Sauter  
 Anne Savereide  
 Bill Schafer  
 Roxie Schenzel  
 Catherine Shreves  
 Sheri Sheeks  
 Janet Selim  
 Mark Sheriff  
 Craig Shulstad  
 Roger Sisson  
 Ward & Ramona Sly  
 Joan Smiley  
 Heather & Tony Smith  
 Karen Sonnenberg  
 Barb Souther  
 Gary Specker  
 Chuck Steiner  
 Mary Steinson  
 Judy Stinson  
 Jerry Storck  
 Susan Marie Swanson  
 Ann Tandy-Treiber  
 Maureen Tanis  
 Paul Tanis  
 Tannon Tople  
 Jean Tracy  
 Vallie Tracy  
 Parker Trostel  
 Carol Truesdell  
 Lynn Truesdell  
 Greg Venell  
 Theresa Voss  
 Mary Vujovich

Marcia Wahl  
 Rachel, Kevin, Leif &  
 Sanna Walker  
 Dawn Wanous  
 Gingie Ward  
 Charlie Weismann  
 Henry Weismann  
 Joe Weismann  
 Brad Wieman  
 Betty Ann Wiens  
 Melissa Wiklund  
 Mary Welfling  
 Derek Witte  
 Margi Youmans  
 Nicki Zeidner  
 Lynn Zentner



Please note that this is a first pass at listing all who pitch in at Plymouth—not a comprehensive list. We did not include all those who contribute their time and talents to our many committees and board service, however, as their efforts are reflected in the board reports that follow.

Please send in the names of groups or individuals we have missed to [churchinfo@plymouth.org](mailto:churchinfo@plymouth.org), with the word “Volunteer” in the subject line.

## Leadership Council Chair's Report

The Leadership Council has had a busy and productive year. The Council, which includes our ministerial team, led by Paula Northwood, Acting Senior Minister, enjoyed a rich partnership throughout the year with the Deacons and Moderator, Brian Siska. The teams have worked well together to create and implement new ideas and ensure stellar execution of the daily, weekly and monthly activities on the docket. By all accounts, it is a year in which we can all be proud.

The new Sunday schedule, introduced in September, seems to be a success. We are extremely pleased with the significant increase in growth in First Service, the 37 percent increase in church school attendance and the vibrant Sunday Forum schedule and participation. We are thankful to the Boards of Worship and Spiritual Formation for their courage and dedication to excellent implementation. The Boards are now working together to reimagine the Christmas Festival. The vision is to move to an all-church, all-generations opportunity to celebrate Advent, with broader participation from boards, youth and members.

One overriding question has guided us this year: “What does the 21st-century Plymouth Church look like, feel like, act like?” We have framed the question in the contexts of growth, racial justice and radical hospitality. We are wrestling with the challenges that all mainline Protestant churches have with being relevant and vital. We want to understand the changing trends in church attendance and make sure that our programming is meeting the needs of both current and potential members. The Growth Task Force, led by Lynn Moline, began its work in the fall to address some of these questions. They had a very productive year and have generated more than 100 excellent ideas for growth.

The Racial Justice Task Force became the Racial Justice Initiative, because we now know that we are making a long-term commitment as a church to better understand and embody racial justice. The Racial Justice Initiative members have partnered and are meeting with the Boards. They are working with the Boards on how to engage with racial justice issues and will be an ongoing resource to the Boards.

The Leadership Council, in conjunction with the

Deacons and Moderator, has been deeply involved in the exploration of racial justice at Plymouth this year. In 2015, Plymouth Church made a commitment to work on racial justice issues. What became clear in fall 2018 was that both guests and Plymouth members found images in the embroidery *Churchmen in the New World* hurtful. Since then, we have been engaged in a process of listening, learning and discerning. Many hours have been spent in listening sessions, workshops, sermons, education sessions, field trips, individual learning activities, movies and performances. The process has been open, transparent and respectful.

Our learnings have been broad and deep. We've garnered a deep appreciation for the embroideries and the Needlers. We understand that the intention of the embroideries when they were created in the 1970s was to tell the story of the history of Congregationalism and Plymouth Church. We now also understand the hurtful impact the embroideries have today because they are not entirely historically accurate and portray a dominant white culture that appears not to include Native and Black people.

Most people in the congregation agree that we have to do something to address the issues that have been raised. There are differences of opinion about what we should do. The Leadership Council is in the final stages of creating an action plan with next steps for racial justice in general, and specifically the four embroideries, to be shared with the congregation in the weeks ahead. This is not the end—it is the next stage of our journey in defining what racial justice really means for Plymouth, holding true to our purpose to serve people in need, advance human rights and further social, economic, racial and environmental justice. For many of us, this has been and will continue to be a deeper exploration of our spirituality. Our hope is to continue in an ongoing dialogue to educate ourselves and build community in this shared learning.

—Deb Fowler

## Acting Senior Minister's Report

Growing up in a large family meant having a large dining room table. If I, or one of my siblings, showed up with a friend, we just added another leaf to the table. There was always room for one more. That's the way it was with the table that Jesus set. That's the way we as the church set the table. All are welcome; no one is excluded.

This year we have explored what it means to offer radical hospitality. Part of offering hospitality meant

changing the Sunday morning schedule. In doing so, we saw an increase of attendance at the First Service, and we doubled attendance during our 10 a.m. education time. We hired an interim minister, Dan Wolpert, to guide us through a time of discernment and healing. We installed Beth Faeth as our Minister for Congregational Life and Worship in October. The Growth Task Force came up with over one hundred ideas for growth—implementation will begin in the fall. We celebrated Philip Brunelle’s 50th anniversary with many joyous musical events.

We made a deeper commitment to our Racial Justice Initiative, which led us to examine our embroideries and what they say about us as a church. We created a Radical Hospitality Committee to examine the ways we relate to our neighbors and to explore ways that we might be more welcoming. A new Contemplative Life practice group has begun convening.



Plymouth continues to give more than 10 percent of our pledged dollars to neighborhood and global organizations through our Community Fund and money designated to Outreach from our last Capital Campaign. We are financially strong.

The Deacons and Leadership Council have explored working more closely together and examined what kind of leadership model we want for the future. The Ministerial Search Committee was nominated, and the slate was confirmed on April 28.

There is good energy in the church and a growing sense of anticipation for what the future holds. All this has been accomplished by a dedicated group of people which includes staff, lay leaders and you. I offer my heartfelt thanks for the times you helped add another leaf to the table. Pull up a chair and enjoy this radical hospitality!

—Paula Northwood

## Report from the Minister for Congregational Care and Worship

April 2019 marked a full year in my “settled” role as Minister for Congregational Care and Worship, this fact commemorated by my installation as a minister at Plymouth on October 14, 2018. A lasting memory of that day is looking out at the congregation

while taking covenantal vows and seeing the faces of so many I have grown to love over the last two years. The front row that morning was filled with our “pew clergy” (retired ministers who are now members of Plymouth) in brightly colored stoles, bearing witness to the remarkable journey ordained ministers are privileged to travel. How blessed am I to bask in the glow of their wisdom and experience, how blessed am I that my journey led me to Plymouth.

Clergy and staff wear many hats at Plymouth. My



primary areas of focus are pastoral care and worship. Knowing that we have a large number of elderly members now unable to get to church on a regular basis, I am working with several others to develop a care team that will help build connection

between the church and those homebound.

Along with the Board of Community Life, I facilitate our New Member program, and it has been a joy to welcome many into our faith community this year. My worship work includes creating the schedule for preaching and lay reading; choosing the music and writing liturgy for First Service and all special services; and developing our worship themes, a new concept this year. The congregation has given good feedback on the introduction of themes that shape the entirety of our Sunday mornings (Radical Hospitality, Witnessing, Purposes of the Church, etc.). This style of thematic worship will continue. I also work closely with the Board of Worship to support our two excellent and distinctive worship experiences each Sunday morning.

My portfolio also includes supporting our BeFriender Ministry and the Mortality Project and supervising the Strobel Drop-In Coordinator (Larry Johnson) and program. The clergy team has often stretched outside our job descriptions to provide ministerial presence to all facets of our life together, and I am glad to also support the Immigrant Welcoming Working Group and the Gun Violence Prevention Group. It is a gift to have so many people engaged in the most significant work of justice and faith.

I look forward with joyful anticipation to where God is leading us, and I am grateful to serve in your midst.

—Beth Hoffman Faeth

## Director of Spiritual Formation and Theater: Report

I am grateful to this Plymouth community for its energy, resilience and love, as we all experienced the many types of transformation this year. My position as Director of Spiritual Formation and Theater has been exciting and full. My responsibilities this year have included all aspects of our Spiritual Formation programs, The Conn Theater, the Racial Justice Initiative, Caring for Creation Committee, 100 Hands and the relationship with Academia Elze.

The Board of Spiritual Formation has overseen the addition of our Sundays @ 10 programs, which debuted this year. We have seen an increase of adult participation across all Sunday programs and especially at our always excellent Sunday Forums. The Spiritual Exploration Committee presented many wonderful classes, workshops, retreats and book groups to deepen our collective spiritual journeys.



Our Church School also continues to grow in energy as regular weekly participation has doubled since last year. The children and youth explored the same themes as our worship services and deepened their relationships with each other and with the church. They were led in this exploration by 44 amazing adults: 32 teachers and 12 friends of the classroom.

The Theater Committee has spent the year rethinking the ways in which we relate to The Conn Theater and its users. This includes a change in fee structure, simplifying the way we schedule, investments in equipment and a broad invitation to the large theater community of the Twin Cities. This is ongoing work and will continue in the coming years.

The Racial Justice Initiative has shifted its focus this year to the work of examining the church as a system that has power and influence. This involves working with the Leadership Council and the six Boards to imagine how we can use our resources and presence more consciously in anti-racist ways.

Caring for Creation continues to lead us in the care of and the justice for our increasingly vulnerable planet. 100 Hands provides a meaningful and fun space for relationship-building, as we serve our immediate neighbors on Wednesday evenings.

Our preschool, Academia Elze, continues to grow as it nourishes the minds of preschoolers and toddlers. They have expanded to three rooms and will occupy four by August. It is a blessing to have this important work done in our building and a joy to hear their voices all week long.

I am honored to do this work for Plymouth and am humbled by the joyous seeking of Plymouthites of all ages.  
—Seth Patterson

## Organist-Choirmaster's Report

Greetings to everyone as I complete my 50th year as your Organist-Choirmaster—I am delighted and amazed! In addition to serving as organist



and conductor 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.

We are blessed to have a great team of musicians on our staff:

Sonja Thompson, Mary Laymon, Marie Scholtz, Siri Keller, Ann Tandy-Treiber, George Maurer, Laura Caviani and our new-this-year handbell director, Tim O'Grady. We also have our superb soloists—Maria Jette, Jenny French, Lisa Drew, Dan Dressen and James Bohn—as well as the splendid Adult Choir who inspire us every Sunday!

This year marked the 11th anniversary of Plymouth's Summer Music Series: The New Standards opened on July 10; they were followed by our Plymouth quartet and Sonja Thompson presenting "A Leonard Bernstein Spectacular"; Minnesota Orchestra cellist Anthony Ross performed on July 24; and the series concluded with the George Maurer Jazz Group—a wonderful variety of music for the community and all of it free!

I am grateful to the guest instrumentalists who performed in our worship services including Anthony Ross, Beth Rapier, Tim Brunelle, Joe Weismann, Diane Hallberg, the JOLA guitar quartet, Evren Ozel, Nygel Witherspoon, Christopher Kachian, Zhen Tu, Christopher Brunelle, Ann Buran, Emma and Jacob Taggart, Max Wolpert and Sarah Hubbard, Jill Olson Moser, Debbie Hendricks and Scott Anderson.

Finally, it was wonderful to have the series of special 50th anniversary concerts, including Honegger's **King David** performed by the combined Plymouth Choir and St. Mark's Cathedral Choir; international piano soloist **Angela Hewitt**; French organist extraordinaire **Daniel Roth**; a program of favorites sung by **Plymouth's five soloists** and a **new hymn** commissioned from Jim Gertmenian and David Evan Thomas. And a special treat for me was to hear six new anthems commissioned in honor of Carolyn Brunelle—the only person who has been with me in the choir loft for 50 years and my dear wife!

Thank you all for making this year so special—for your support and encouragement. Now I look forward to year 51!  
—Philip Brunelle

## Interim Minister's Report

*As he completed his time at Plymouth, Daniel Wolpert summed up his goals and accomplishments.*

**Staffing:** We have spent a fair amount of time looking at the ministry staffing model of the church and looking at how to move the ministry work towards an increasingly collaborative model. As you have seen over these past couple of years, this model is something the folks at Plymouth support and appreciate. I believe that the gentle transition to Lead Minister, with other transitions then possible in the future, is a good approach.

With so much going on at Plymouth, I believe you will need to continue to evaluate all of your staffing to see what fits best for the work you do, and what support is needed in order to prevent staff burnout and overwork.

**Governance:** As I said early on, I think your Governance system is fine and will continue to serve you well into the future. I have seen great growth in the self-understanding of the system and the work of all the Boards and Committees this year. Obviously changes will continue to occur, but you are generally in good shape in this regard.

I received a great deal of excellent feedback about the Purposes of the Church class. I think that all of the emphasis on the Purposes this year has been very good and healthy for the church. I would encourage you to continue to lift up the Purposes and continue to refine your understanding of them for your context.

**Worship:** From my perspective, one of the best things that has happened this year is the increase in communication about worship, both between the

pastoral staff and Philip Brunelle and also between the staff and the Worship Board and service committees. There is now a great deal of open conversation about worship, which I think is great and will only serve you well into the future. I would encourage you to read my Space Between from May 3. I think that the issue of two distinct worship services and the effect that has on a congregation in terms of creating “two congregations” is a significant one and is worth paying attention to as time goes on.

**Healing:** Healing is a life-long journey. We are never fully healed. This being said, my main assessment of the healing work this past year comes from the dozens of comments made to me by congregation members about the increase in positive energy, openness, relaxation and engagement over the past year. I believe that the community is doing a lot of good healing work, and that this can continue.

I believe that how the embroidery situation has been, and will be, handled is also a great opportunity for healing. Many of us have noticed how this current situation has triggered some flashbacks to the Carla situation in terms of how a big decision is handled by leadership. Such triggering can be an opportunity for healing if the new situation is dealt with differently than the old situation. Many people have praised us all for how the embroidery conversations have been handled, and I think this is a very good thing. I would encourage you all to keep this potential for healing in mind as you move forward in your decision-making process.

**Theology:** It is my great joy to announce that God is frequently mentioned in Plymouth meetings! As



with the Purposes classes, I have gotten much good feedback on the theology and spirituality work that I have done here. Many have approached me with much excitement regarding their growth in theological reflection and well as spiritual life and practice. The development of the new contemplative practice

group, and its possible adoption by the Board of Spiritual Formation, is a beautiful thing. I would encourage you to continue to think theologically and practice spiritually in all that you do.

**Future:** As the old song goes: “The future’s so bright, I gotta wear shades.”

As we have discussed at length, the future of the Church as an institution presents numerous

challenges, yet I believe Plymouth is in a great position to engage life as a 21st-century Church. Specifically:

- Although they have been challenging, the embroidery conversations have been transformative for many and will be very helpful for Plymouth as it seeks to move forward in a diverse city and neighborhood.
- I think you have an outstanding search committee who will do an excellent job representing Plymouth to the world of pastoral candidates.
- Your theological openness is perfectly suited for the theological needs and desires of our time.
- You have tremendous resources in people, property and money and can leverage these to do whatever you discern God is calling you into.
- We have done a great Growth process, which has resulted in a large list of specific possible directions and also a general framework for what is helpful in terms of growth. This is a terrific resource for the future.
- We have done some excellent visioning work, which will be helpful moving from here into the next phase of your congregational life.
- You have fabulous staff who are well-suited to the work of this church and who apply themselves with great energy and intelligence. Again, this will continue to serve you well as you move forward into the future.

All of this doesn't mean that you don't have many challenges to face and old habits to be transformed. You do. But I hope you also have tremendous faith in yourselves, your gifts and skills, and the presence of God with you, which will allow you, if you engage them with courage, wisdom, and honestly, to meet anything that comes your way.

Blessings to you all.

*Peace, Daniel Wolpert*

## Board of Community Life

The Community Life Board had another busy year, as we continue our 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.

We were happy with the success of our intergenerational church events—the Christmas Festival reception and Spring Fling dance. We again worked closely with the Board of Spiritual Formation's Christmas Festival Craft Workshop group. Given the sheer amount of work it takes to pull off this event, we look forward to building up a more robust committee to ensure sustainability of this event. Our Spring Fling was great fun, complete with DJ, lights and good food on a Saturday night in May!

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. New this year, our youth Ambassadors and other youth volunteered to serve at the celebration. For others who haven't quite reached 50 years, we celebrated our third annual Member Reunion in February—this year inviting all those who joined in a year ending in 9.



We continued our New Member Programs, inviting prospective members to attend an informational session about Plymouth and welcoming those who decided to join. As a result of the worship schedule change, classes were held over two Sundays during the 10 am hour. We continue to evaluate the class structure and new member activities.

Two new initiatives fell under our board this year: 100 Hands and the Mortality Project. The 100 Hands gatherings, shared with the Board of Outreach, have been wonderful, life-giving additions to Wednesday nights. As it grows, we need to consider how to make it sustainable for the long term. The Mortality Project offered a number of thoughtful and important programs during the year.

*—Emi Bennett, Chair*

## Board of Finance and Administration

Chief among the Board's work this busy year was the fiscal year 2020 annual budget.

Relying heavily on the excellent work of Acting Senior Minister Paula Northwood, Treasurer Claire Colliander, Deputy Treasurer Ray Martin and Business Administrator Annette Abel, the BFA helped shape the fiscal year 2020 annual budget and joined Rev. Dr. Northwood in recommending that budget to the Deacons.

The BFA continues its work to help ensure Plymouth achieves long-term financial sustainability.

Projections indicate that the revenue pulled from return on investments (usually called "the draw") on Plymouth's commingled investment fund in the 2019 fiscal year will be much less than the 7.8 percent that was budgeted. The recommended 2020 fiscal year calls for an approximate 6 percent revenue used from investments ("draw").

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 Ms. Colliander, Mr. Martin and Ms. Abel, approved procedures that will ensure that the BFA is receiving adequate reporting on restricted and designated 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. The Endowment and Investment Committee, led by chair Todd Aldrich, oversaw an increase in Plymouth's commingled investment fund to approximately \$6.7 million.

Many thanks to Personnel Committee members Sue Dosal (chair), Lani Bennett and Bob Grams, who acted as personnel consultant to the Deacons by preparing the 360-degree employment review procedure for the Acting Senior Minister. Many thanks, also, to Stewardship Committee co-chairs Rick Neville and John Schenk and their fellow committee members for running a successful annual pledge campaign in an environment where pledging is decreasing. This year's campaign also included the successful 50th Anniversary Fund special campaign in honor of Philip Brunelle.

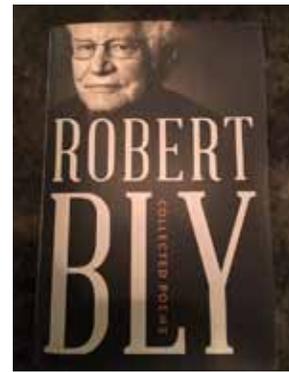
—Eric Olsen, Chair

## Board of Fine Arts

The Fine Arts Board (FAB) had a creative and productive 2018–2019 church year. We continue to expand the social role of the arts at Plymouth as we look for ways to provide spaces for diverse voices to be seen and heard.

**The Conn Gallery**—Every picture tells a story and this year the Conn Gallery told hundreds of them. The gallery continues to highlight the diverse skills of the community with shows throughout the year in diverse media, including painting, jewelry and pottery. As we expand our vision to new horizons, we opened the gallery to artists from Chad and Somalia. Members of Plymouth church were featured in a spring exhibition. The Conn Gallery is open throughout the week.

**Literary Witnesses**—Poetry is alive and well at Plymouth. Literary Witnesses hosted three wonderful



evenings of poetry and conversation, beginning with readings from ***The Collected Poems of Robert Bly***. Ed Bok Lee read ***Mitochondrial Night***, one of the 50 must-read poetry collections of 2019. The season finished with an emotional reading by Carolyn Forché from her timely memoir of resistance

and witness, ***What You Have Heard Is True***.

**Film Club**—Why go to a "drive-in" when you can go to a "sit-in" right here in Plymouth? The Film Club continues to provide thought-provoking and challenging films, including *Thirteen* and *After the Mayflower*. Screenings and discussions are in November, and January through April.

**The Conn Theater**—This was a busy year for the Theater Committee, which grew in number as well as increasing its focus. The Committee engaged in exciting dialogue about how Plymouth can live out the concept of radical hospitality. Ideas ranged from co-producing a production with smaller companies to allowing some companies to use the space at little or no cost. They are also looking for ways to better integrate with our surrounding community.

**Docents**—The docents are church historians, providing tours of our beautiful church on the first and third Sunday mornings September through May. The tours are after the Second Service. If you haven't taken a tour lately, please do: You are sure to learn something new about Plymouth.

**Flowers**—Visually beautifying the Plymouth community is the role of the Flower Committee, which works year-round providing weekly small arrangements made from Sanctuary and Guild Hall flowers for distribution to anyone in need of the cheer they provide. Additionally, the entire church is greened for the seasons of Advent/Christmas/Epiphany and blooms forth for Lent/Holy Week/Easter by the dedicated Flower Committee members.

All music activities are addressed in Philip Brunelle’s report.  
*—John Kulstad, Chair*

## Board of Outreach

The Board began the year with a potluck and some extended meeting time. This mixture of a social gathering with Board business was a good way for the members of the group to get to know each other while, at the same time, conducting some business.

In this same vein, the Board also participated in a two-day retreat in January. Dan Wolpert graciously accepted an invitation from the Board to lead and facilitate the retreat. This was a deeply spiritual event mixed with comradery and a bit of Board business—it was a great success!

Some of the key events and accomplishments of the Board of Outreach in 2018-2019:

- **Radical Hospitality:** The Board began the year asking the question, “What does it mean to be hospitable?” As a response to that question, a number of members of the Board became involved with the newly formed Radical Hospitality group (which formally became part of the Board in March 2019). One of the pending actions that came from this group is that Plymouth is currently investigating adding a shower and remodeling a rest room in the basement. This area could then be used for hospitality in ways that have not been available for Plymouth in the past.
- **Neighborhood Outreach:** Plymouth has made connections with Simpson Housing and St. Stephen’s Street Ministry to help us become more hospitable to folks who have been helping themselves to the use of our grounds for various reasons. The Board is excited to continue to develop these relationships as it puts us in our neighborhood in new ways and gives deeper meaning to radical hospitality.
- **zAmya Theater Project:** The Board approved a request to lease space at no charge to zAmya Theater. zAmya Theater is a unique creative process that brings together homeless and housed

individuals to create and perform a theatrical production. zAmya turns “homeless” from a word back into a person. Or persons. Living, breathing, laughing, singing persons. Who act—yes, act—in entertaining, genre-defying productions that are guaranteed to change your mind, if not your life.

- **Security at Groveland Emergency Food Shelf:** The Board worked with E. J. Kelley, Paula Northwood and Annette Abel to hire a security/hospitality person for the food shelf. This person is to be welcoming and will de-escalate potential conflicts. Plymouth will fund this position for two years with money designated for Outreach from the latest capital campaign.
- **UCC recommendation that Minnesota become a Sanctuary State:** This came to the Board from the Immigrant Welcoming Working Group, who wants us to endorse the idea, to show that we are behind this and want to support them in moving it forward. There was unanimous consensus from the Board to endorse this recommendation.
- **Racial Justice Covenant:** The Board created and approved a Racial Justice Covenant.
- **Hannah Campbell Gunderson** joined the Board in her new staff position as Outreach Coordinator.

*—Peter Eichten, Chair*

## Board of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual Formation is responsible for spiritual education that advances the Purposes of the Church. Programs reach persons of all ages, childhood to adulthood. We strive to hear all the voices of Plymouth and provide programming that is relevant, thriving and creative.

Committees that are part of the board include the Library; Sundays @ 10; Sunday Forums; Spiritual Exploration; Christmas Festival; and Children, Youth and Families. Opportunities offered through these committees encourage all to dream, listen, learn, question, build, grow, explore, dare.

With the change in the Sunday morning worship schedule, the Sundays @ 10 hour of programming became a primary focus. The dedicated and consistent hour allowed regular programming, such as the Sunday Forums, to continue hosting presentations that enhance the spiritual development and



further the mission of Plymouth. Sundays @ 10 also provided flexibility for additional presentations such as the Deacons Q & A and the Embroidery discussions to be added and readily available to the congregation.

Our Library Committee has coordinated with and supported programs with library resources. And, wow, you can access materials online!

The Spiritual Exploration Committee again offered a wide variety of experiential participative encounters for Plymouth pilgrims of all ages to deepen and enlighten their individual spiritual journeys. If you have an area of interest or idea you would like the Committee to explore bringing to Plymouth, please contact a committee member. They would like to hear from you.

Have you noticed children enjoying a church scavenger hunt, looking for Easter eggs, assisting with 100 Hands, sharing their statements of faith? These are a few pieces of evidence of a vibrant and growing Church School program.

The Christmas Festival was a highlight of the year. It is an exciting, energetic, beloved, all-church craft and food party in celebration of Advent. The Board is working with Board of Community Life and the Leadership Council to build sustainability for this joyous all-ages event.

Throughout the year the Board and Committees participated in two Leadership Day programs and developed a covenant for racial justice. Seth Patterson is a compassionate staff liaison with the Board.

*—Becky Dougherty, Chair*

## Board of Worship

This past year on the Board of Worship has been one of exploration. Living into the new worship schedule has allowed us to explore the essence of worship and how it can make ours a more welcoming, vibrant, just and relevant congregation.

First Service has flourished. Attendance has grown, and the mix of generations has expanded. We've looked at the best ways to use our space, how to use the talent within our congregation and how to embrace the wisdom of our children. The time of greeting one another during the service is holy chaos: It exemplifies the joy of being in community.

Second Service maintains the rich traditions that many of us hold so dear. Even so, we've introduced a time of greeting, and we've offered communion by intinction more frequently. In both practices,

we've sought to create greater connections among our members, musicians and clergy. The Second Service Committee, newly formed this year, has been exploring how to deepen our spiritual lives and contemplate the true meaning of worship.

Both First and Second Service have been enriched by the worship themes selected by our ministers. In the fall, the themes of radical hospitality, healing, giving and witnessing were explored. The new year launched an exploration of the Purposes of the Church with a focus on racial justice. The Board adopted its own Racial Justice Covenant in the fall, and we turned to it frequently as we explored what racial justice in worship might look like.



Plymouth's worship continues to be blessed by exemplary music. The jazz trios and choirs at First Service and the breadth of choral and instrumental music in Second Service have awed and enlivened those services. On those Sundays when the two services have been blended, we strove to ensure that the rituals of each are reflected.

The Board has been grateful to work with Beth Faeth, the clergy liaison for the Board. We are also indebted to the leadership of the First Service Committee (Jasper Jonson), Second Service Worship Hosts (Karl Jones), Communion Committee (Nancy Geertz-Larson), Second Service Committee (Maureen Tanis) and Memorial Committee (Katherine Ferrand and Lois Larson).

*—Karen Barstad, Chair*

## Archivist's Report

Two highlights of the year were the grand opening of the King-Thompson Archives and the dedication of the historic Nichols Memorial Window.



The renovation of the Bovey Room to house the Archives was a five-year effort to provide space for storage and preservation, volunteer work, public

access and use of Plymouth's rich archival holdings.

Many members and friends attended the open house on September 16, 2018. During Sunday open hours visitors now pass through to learn about Plymouth's roots and what the Archives has to offer. The new space creates opportunities for members and others to learn from and find inspiration in Plymouth's past and to help ground us as we chart a new future.

The November 18, 2018, dedication of the Henry Martyn Nichols Memorial Window culminated years of monitoring the preservation of stained glass windows installed in 1885 at Plymouth's Eighth Street church. Five of these windows were later donated to a church in Wayzata. When the building changed hands in 2017, the new owners agreed to return the window that memorialized our second minister Henry Nichols, a staunch abolitionist. The window is not only a quality example of period stained glass but also a reminder of Plymouth's social justice roots.

The Archives contributed to the 50-year member celebration and hosted a new member class and several church school activities. Volunteers made significant progress transcribing 19th-century records, thus preserving the content of fragile, difficult-to-read records. A review of early newsletters documented racial and social justice activities not recorded in other sources. Requests for information, especially from Plymouth staff, leadership groups and members continue to increase.

Two notable losses occurred this year. Long-time member and former volunteer and archivist Jim Thompson passed away at age 96. Jim was a well-known figure at Plymouth and devoted much of his retirement serving as Plymouth's official historian. The unexpected illness and death (February 2019) of committee member and volunteer Mary Ellingen has been an enormous loss for those of us who worked with her and relied on her energy, skills and commitment to Plymouth and its archives.

—Mary Welfling, Archivist

## Report on the Building and Grounds

Church of 10,000 Leaks—that's what we were tempted to call our dear Plymouth Congregational Church in early May, when a burst pipe caused dripping into Jones Commons. Jokes aside, the scene was sobering, because water is the enemy of every building, whatever era in which it was built.

Fortunately, our Building Manager Bryan Wheeler, and Public Safety Manager Malcolm Williams responded quickly and effectively to the problem. We are glad to report, moreover, that this kind of unexpected incident is not common at Plymouth Church.

We, as your Plymouth Property Manager and Business



Administrator, refer regularly to a forward-looking plan so that we can keep ahead of building issues whenever possible. Above all, we focus on essentials: preventing water infiltration and on

safety issues. In these efforts, we use technology, like the drone that took the picture of our roof (above) so we might better develop a new roofing project.

Plymouth Church always has a lot going on, inside and out, so we will mention just some of the work that has been done in last year. Green initiatives included replacing old-fashioned lights with LEDs and replacing five older toilets with more water-efficient types. The nearly immediate payback is good for the planet and good for our budget: We do our best to be good stewards of your money.

As many of you know, we and many other churches nearby were struck by copper thieves this year. We installed cameras, instituted overnight surveillance and replaced the stolen copper with aluminum; these steps have so far deterred additional thefts of copper.

This summer, our refinishing project in the Sanctuary, Guild Hall and the Parlor will renew 100-year-old floors. We are directing other work—and seeking out any new leaks—to keep this Plymouth Church building usable and beautiful for years to come.

In all that we do, we are aware of you, our congregation members. We deeply appreciate your support. Your absolutely essential funding, understanding and help contribute to making our church building and grounds as solid and attractive as possible. Thank you!

—Ed Curtiss, Property Manager,  
and Annette Abel, Business Administrator

## Racial Justice Initiative Report

This program year, in a commitment to the long-term nature of racial justice work as well as its importance to our spiritual growth, Plymouth's Leadership Council changed the Racial Justice Task Force to a Racial Justice Initiative (RJI). The RJI recommended, and the Deacons approved, several language changes in Plymouth's Governing Policies

to reflect the importance of racial justice issues.

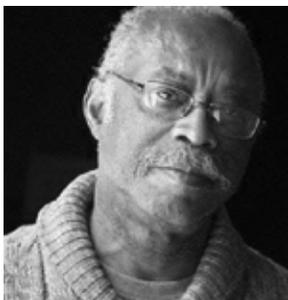
RJI members Ann Ludlow and Jasper Johnson led a six-session workshop starting in September 2018 entitled “White Privilege: Let’s Talk.” RJI member Peter Eichten led a training on racial justice issues for a joint Leadership Council–Deacons meeting in January 2019.

To increase communication among church boards and members about RJI efforts, individual RJI members met twice with each Church Board in winter and spring of 2019 to facilitate conversations about systemic racism in American society, invite each Board to adopt a racial justice covenant to guide their work and explore ways that each board’s work can address and dismantle systems of racism and exclusion.

The RJI also assisted the Church Leadership Council in developing recommendations for addressing the concerns about the Embroideries in Guild Hall, in particular the concerns about *Churchmen in the New World*. The Leadership Council is expected to adopt a final recommendation in May 2019.

RJI remains open to collaborating with outside organizations and providing venue and equipment to speakers or frontline organizations working for racial justice. Plymouth continues to host Discussions that Encounter (on racial justice issues) every fourth Thursday of the month and is also a member of the Sacred Solidarity Network, a collaboration with 11 other congregations working on racial justice issues.

In collaboration with the Hennepin History Museum, on January 13, 2019, Plymouth hosted Dr. Bill Green, Augsburg History Professor, who spoke to a full Plymouth Sanctuary on the topic of “Racism in Minnesota: How We Got Here.” In addition, Plymouth hosted Carlyle Brown (pictured at left), in The Conn



Theater on the evening of January 26, 2019. Brown presented “Acting Black: Demystifying Racism.” In February, RJI presented the film *Thirteenth* at the Film Club and brought in Nekima Levy-Armstrong, civil rights attorney, to discuss the issues

raised in the film, which traces mass incarceration of African Americans to its origins in the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Finally, the RJI is establishing a resource section for race-related issues in the Plymouth Church Library.

—Catherine Shreves

## Covenant Partners’ Reports

Covenant Partner **Captain Tara Bauer** writes:

“Greetings! I am on a one-year remote tour and stationed at Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. All our Air Force members are stationed here without any family members or spouses. One of my primary duties is overseeing the operation of our Airmen Ministry Center, which is open 7 days a week for over 40 hours, offering free beverages and refreshments, along with amenities like massage chairs, video games, table top games, ping pong, etc. We have a volunteer group of 186 Airmen who conduct 20 monthly events to approximately 1,330 visitors. Since we’re all away from our loved ones and locked down to base, it provides a great opportunity for people to connect with each other in a non-alcoholic environment and have some fun and good conversation. My tour ends in August, when my spouse, Charlotte, and I will reunite and move to our next duty station. Peace and grace to you all.”

Covenant Partner **Rev. Catherine Duncan, MA, BCC**, is an Integrative Spiritual Consultant. She left corporate health care and her position as a hospice chaplain last year and is working part-time for Newbridge Health & Wellness and also has a private practice. Catherine is passionate about whole person healing with a focus on emotional and spiritual health. With a reverence for exploring the sacredness and meaning of life, she companions individuals on their journey. She works extensively in chronic illness, life transitions, grief, loss and finding meaning and purpose. Catherine speaks on resiliency, self-compassion and self-care in the community. Catherine is a board-certified chaplain, spiritual director, energy healer and (EFT) tapping practitioner. She also works with Dynamic Neural Retraining System and mind-body therapies and aromatherapy. Learn more about her private practice at [www.learningtolive.org](http://www.learningtolive.org).

Covenant Partner **Jenni Eagleman** writes: “I am enjoying a great variety of experiences in my role as a Staff Chaplain at the University of Minnesota Medical Center. Every day I am reminded of the resiliency of humans as I sit with patients and families who have gotten the unexpected news that they have cancer or a relapse in their disease. I have the honor of helping families say good bye to their loved ones. As a Dakota woman, I also get to carry traditional medicines to the indigenous community who find themselves in our hospital. Thank you for partnering with me in this good, sacred work.

Phidamaya ye. (Thank you.)

In November 2014, Covenant Partner **Karl Jones** entered into a four-way covenanted ministry relationship between himself, the United Church of Christ, Plymouth and the Good Samaritan Society, his employer for his chaplain work. In May of 2019, he began working as a staff chaplain with HealthEast Hospice. (Though it will eventually work seamlessly with Fairview MHealth, operations are not yet fully integrated.) The geographic area of his work typically involves traveling to patients and their families in either their homes or facilities in St. Paul and its eastern suburbs. Since he is wrapping up his work with the Good Samaritan Society for their Robbinsdale location, he will soon be approaching Plymouth about entering into a new covenant relationship that will reflect his new ministry setting. He continues to find it a privilege to enter into conversations with patients and their families and to work alongside the dedicated teams who care for them. As a Plymouth member, over the last year Karl has been active on the Board of Worship and continued to coordinate the work of ushers and greeters for the Second Service. During the last year, he also served on the committee that led the search that resulted in calling Dan Wolpert as our intentional interim minister.



Emily Venell,  
Ministry Assistant  
for Hospitality,  
20 years



Cody Bourdot,  
Production  
Manager and AV  
Manager, 10 years

## Staff Milestones



Philip Brunelle,  
Organist-  
Choirmaster,  
50 years



Carole Humphrey,  
Director of  
Children's Dance  
Programs,  
30 years

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## Proposed Bylaws Revision, for approval

### **Rationale for revising our current bylaws**

Based upon a review of the governance system as part of the work of the Interim Minister, the Deacons recommend the following Bylaws revisions to paragraphs in section VIII, Church Staff, which accomplish several things:

- It is common practice to have a different process for selecting ministers who are called from those who are not called, such as transitional or interim ministers. Currently, our Bylaws do not distinguish between these different types of ministers. The revisions allow the Deacons to determine a process for selecting transitional or interim ministers that expedites the process and also provides that these ministers have a defined maximum length of service of 24 months, beyond

which they must be approved by the congregation.

- If it is determined by a search committee that the best candidate is already on staff at the church, they will have the authority to recommend that candidate to the congregation. Adding the capacity to hire from within gives Plymouth maximal flexibility and a wide range of options when hiring and developing staff that fits its needs.
- Changes “Associate Ministers” to “all other Ministers” in section 3.
- Changes to clean up punctuation.

**Current:**

2. Selection or Removal of the called Ministers. All Ministers shall be called. When any position of a called minister is to be 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.

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 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.

**Suggested changes, in italics:**

2. Selection or Removal of Ministers. 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, *or when there is a determination to add a new ministerial position,* 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 search committee may find their candidate through a search process beyond the Congregation or may recommend a current staff member or Minister for the open or new position.* 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 or 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 a vote of the Congregation.*

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 *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.

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## Minutes

### ***Minutes from the June 17, 2018, annual meeting—for approval***

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

Invocation—Dan Wolpert provided the invocation.

Minutes from the June 4, 2017, annual meeting and the April 15, 2018, Special Meeting. —Claire Kolmodin made a motion to accept the minutes of these meetings. Motion was seconded and passed. There was no discussion.

## **Roll Call of the 50-Year Members and Deceased Members**

Beth Faeth read the names of new 50-year members.

Beth 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.

## **Acting Senior Minister's Report**

Paula Northwood provided clarification about her current role. She explained that although we might experience discomfort during a transition, the important work of the church is being done, as is the interim work of healing and exploration of a sustainable ministry. She urged us to relax into this transitional time, which will likely last until next year.

- At the point we hire a new permanent minister, Paula plans to retire, whenever that is.
- Paula and staff are working to encourage growth, new vitality and focus on our spiritual needs. Part of this is experimentation with a three-clergy model.
- She invited the congregation to deepen their spiritual lives during this process and to feel free to speak with the Ministers about any needs they have.

## **Celebration of Staff Milestones**

Deb Fowler acknowledged important staff milestones, including Cammy Carteng, Lisa Drew, and George Mauer. She presented gifts to outgoing youth leaders Katie and Corbin Dillon.

She spoke of the outstanding service of Paula Northwood for the past 15 years and in her role as Acting Senior Minister. She also read a number glowing staff testimonials.

## **Moderator's Report**

Claire Kolmodin recounted the major personnel changes that have occurred during the past year.

Claire also recognized the Transition Planning Task Force and Interim Minister Search Committee for their work.

She acknowledged the work of the boards, task forces and staff for their work on Plymouth's behalf.

She discussed that how we engage in conversation with each other matters. Our conversations have been difficult over the past year. We should be conversing with genuine care and respect.

## **Leadership Council Report**

Chad Freeburg talked about his perspective of the Leadership Council as an insider. There has been consistent positive and caring energy among people on the council, and discussions were constructive and rich with insight. The Leadership Council accomplished much both during and outside of meetings and in working with other entities at Plymouth.

## **Budget for Fiscal Year 2019**

Jim van Iwaarden described the process for the creation of this budget and the people involved. He made a motion to approve the budget. Motion was seconded.

- Hazel Lutz expressed a concern about the reduction of contributions through the community fund. In the past, we have donated 10% of pledges to the community fund, but that is reduced this year. She stated her embarrassment at having to reduce our contributions to people in need.
- Kim Lutes noted that our outreach budget is being reduced by 33%, which she found appalling. She stated that this is a time of great need, and that we should reflect on our values here at Plymouth.
- Lee Mauk, outgoing chair of the Community Fund, explained that the community fund was \$250,000 three years ago and is now proposed to be \$100,000. The current proposal puts the Community Fund at 5% of pledges. He asked that we make a firm commitment to stay at 10% of pledged dollars.
- Hazel Lutz made a motion to amend the budgeted amount of donations to the Community Fund to 10% of pledge income. Motion was seconded.
- Al Trostel noted that Christmas and Easter offerings are not included in the budgeted amount of donations to the Community Fund, and that these increase the total % of contributions we make. He suggested we put more emphasis on raising funds through these offerings in the future.
- Hazel Lutz noted that the Christmas and Easter offerings were always in addition to the 10% of pledge income that was donated.
- Jim van Iwaarden noted that that Christmas and Easter offerings were traditionally treated as a pass-through and still are. He also stated that withdrawals from the comingled fund would increase by \$51,000 if this amendment passed.

This reduction would not affect the direct outreach work that we do.

- Dee Hallberg talked about how in preacher's families, the 10% to charity was always the first priority in the budget, and that Plymouth should also treat it that way.
- Claire Colliander didn't support the amendment because the Annual Meeting wasn't a good venue for discussing how we would fund the additional expense unless we did something simple like fund it from our investments. She felt that we should have a broader discussion about how we want to treat our Community Fund if we are committed to contributing 10%. She noted that the Community Fund is only the funds we send to outside organizations, not the in-kind or direct contributions we make.
- Kristin Bottemiller said we don't have an established giving philosophy. She offered a compromise to a lower percentage today, perhaps 8%, and to make a commitment to the amount we will contribute in the future. She also noted that we're not giving ourselves credit for all the charitable giving we do.
- Karen Barstad asked, in the spirit of Charlie Lloyd, that we contribute more during the Sunday offering to increase the funds we have to donate.
- Wayne Gisslen expressed concern about the amount we are withdrawing from our investments, and that it may affect the health of Plymouth and reduce the good we can do in the future.
- Ann Seltz supported the motion and made a motion to end debate. Motion passed.
- Motion to amend the budget to increase the Community Fund donation to 10% of pledge income did not pass. A hand count was called for, 85 nay's, 56 yea's.
- Nancy Gores asked if a "nay" vote for the proposed budget caused it to be revised so the funds are restored to the Community Fund in a way more prudent than withdrawing the funds from the comingled investment fund.
- Jan Rabbers made a motion that we have a pledge drive and allocate 50% of funds raised above \$1.5 million to the Community Fund. This motion was out of order.
- Jim Lenfestey talked about being impressed with volunteer effort on committees and boards at

Plymouth, and he called the question.

Motion to end debate passed.

Motion to pass the budget as proposed passed.

### **Amendment to Bylaws**

Brian Siska explained the proposed changes to the bylaws and made a motion to approve amendments to bylaws as follows:

#### 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 or 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.”

## VIII. CHURCH STAFF

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 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 changes represented in this amendment are:

- In the third line “Associate” Ministers is changed to “all other” Ministers.
- Motion was seconded.
- Nancy Gores expressed concern that this motion was premature and the bylaws changes should be re-visited after a thorough review of the governance system and ministry model done as part of the interim work. She also stated concerns that transitional ministers were included because they may become settled ministers with a less rigorous search process. She wondered if change to “all other Ministers” included transitional or interim Ministers. She said that we should bring all ministers to the congregation for a vote. Finally, she stated concern that this bylaws change did not involve congregation sufficiently in the search process for interim or transitional Ministers.
- Nancy made a motion that the original motion be postponed indefinitely, and discussion was ended. Motion seconded and passed.

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

Chad Freeburg made a motion to approve the slate of Deacons, Officers and Board Members.

- Bonnie Janda asked for clarification on Leadership Council Chair and Moderator. Chad added that chair-elect of the Leadership Council is Sarah Lehman.
- Nancy Geertz-Larson noted that people are being nominated to a second three-year term and asked if that indicated a problem. Claire Kolmodin noted that the bylaws allow two three-year terms and these people volunteered to serve another term.

- Chad asked for nominations from the floor, there were none.
- Motion passed.

Closing Prayer/Benediction: Paula provided a closing prayer.

Claire Kolmodin adjourned the meeting at 1:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Siska, Clerk

## ***Minutes from the special congregational meeting, April 28, 2019, for approval***

Brian Siska, Moderator  
Eric Olsen, Parliamentarian

Brian Siska called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m.

### **Actions Taken:**

1. Motion that the Congregation elect the Ministerial Search Committee appointed by the Deacons passed (full motion included below).

### **Agenda and Minutes**

Prayer—Paula offered an opening prayer.

Moderator Comments—Brian provided opening comments and reminded congregation of the purpose of the meeting

### **Search Committee Slate nomination**

The following motion was made by Katie Dillon: “In accordance with Article VIII, Section 2 of the Bylaws of Plymouth Congregational Church, the Deacons have appointed a Ministerial Search Committee from among the members of the Congregation to fill the position of Senior Minister (to be called Lead Minister). The Deacons’ appointees for this search committee are:

- o Chris Bohnhoff—Chair
- o Lani Bennett
- o Peg Birk
- o Peter Eichten
- o Deb Fowler
- o Kelly Hugunin
- o Jasper Jonson
- o Rob Reinhart
- o Anne Savereide

“On behalf of the Deacons, I move that the Congregation elect the Ministerial Search Committee

appointed by the Deacons.”

Motion brought forth by Deacons does not need a second.

Brian noted that the governing documents will be updated to reflect the term “Lead Minister” rather than “Senior Minister,”

Brian noted that the expectation for the Search Committee includes acting in good faith on behalf of the church and its members and to communicate thoroughly with the congregation.

Brian shared that the Deacons have provided a number of documents including a draft charter to the chair of the Search Committee.

Discussion:

- Congratulations on thoughtful work, approve of the motion
- Hope to prevent risk of negative ending to any future minister, particularly suggest the committee focus on the job description for the new Lead Minister
- Question regarding Lead vs. Senior Minister, hope it moves toward more collaborative model; Brian noted this is about team ministry and is truly how we have been operating: Lead Minister leads team, other ministers lead church; acknowledged Paula’s leadership in that direction
- Committee nominees introduced themselves
- Question was called and a vote was taken
- Motion passed

Brian Siska adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Dillon, Clerk

## ***Deputy Treasurer Appreciation***

Ray Martin, Jr., has served as the Deputy Treasurer since 2016 and now is stepping down. The position of Deputy Treasurer was created in the first year of our new governance so that there would be a Treasurer role on both the Deacons and the Board of Finance. Jim van Iwaarden, our former Treasurer, worked with the Deacons, and Ray has worked closely with the Board of Finance. Ray, with his professional background in nonprofit finance, has been a knowledgeable and consistent presence through the changes in the past few years.

He has spent hours digging into the details of Plymouth’s accounting, helping the rest of us better understand the financial picture. At the heart of all the work he has put in is a deep love of Plymouth. We are grateful for the role he has served and his dedication to Plymouth.

*–Claire Colliander, Treasurer*

## **Memorials**

We received gifts in memory of the following:

Barbara Brown

Mary Ellingen

Clint Hall

Dave Hanson

Irene Hauser

Tom Heller

Harry Hoffman, Jr.

Connie Keller

Robert & Shirley Larson

Ray Martin, Sr.

Judy Nelson

Jane Pejsa

Robert Thomale

Jim Thompson

Evelyn Thomson

**Memorial gifts total: \$6,525**

***No Legacy Gifts were received.***

## **Financials**

**PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
PROPOSED 2020 OPERATING BUDGET (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)**

	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Forecast	FY 2019 Budget	FY2020 Proposed
<b>REVENUE</b>				
<i>Contributions</i>				
Pledge income	\$ 1,615,257	\$ 1,517,000	\$ 1,511,000	\$ 1,500,000
Non-pledge income	166,940	205,000	159,000	215,000
Open Offering	23,655	28,500	19,000	28,000
Strobel Drop-in Donation	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
<i>Total Contributions</i>	<u>1,825,852</u>	<u>1,770,500</u>	<u>1,709,000</u>	<u>1,763,000</u>
<i>Other Income</i>				
ELZE School	3,500	42,000	42,000	57,858
Leases, Fees and Other Earned Income	175,310	172,115	170,650	190,000
* 4% of Commingled investments	195,000	215,896	215,896	229,450
* Commingled Investments, add'l to cover gap	32,627	8,961	152,791	119,067
<i>Total Other Income</i>	<u>406,437</u>	<u>438,972</u>	<u>581,337</u>	<u>596,375</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>2,232,289</b>	<b>2,209,472</b>	<b>2,290,337</b>	<b>2,359,375</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<i>Staff Related</i>				
Clergy	445,005	245,471	257,285	336,067
Music	166,756	172,972	177,995	179,976
Education & Outreach	125,318	157,240	189,390	127,988
Administrative Staff	336,663	389,843	363,392	389,419
Building Staff	326,067	334,355	349,300	364,640
Other Employee Expenses	32,041	22,000	22,000	22,000
<i>Total Staff</i>	<u>1,431,850</u>	<u>1,321,881</u>	<u>1,359,362</u>	<u>1,420,090</u>
<i>Other Expense</i>				
Boards and Programs	73,860	79,749	97,875	98,775
Community Fund	152,217	100,000	100,000	100,000
Administration/Operations	169,997	184,887	201,300	207,200
Building	294,716	308,038	315,300	316,810
Major Building Improvements	91,322	200,000	200,000	200,000
Food Service	18,327	14,917	16,500	16,500
<i>Total Other Expense</i>	<u>800,439</u>	<u>887,591</u>	<u>930,975</u>	<u>939,285</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>2,232,289</b>	<b>2,209,472</b>	<b>2,290,337</b>	<b>2,359,375</b>
<b>NET INCOME (LOSS)</b>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>

**Christmas & Easter offerings, 100% is distributed**

	<b>FY 2019 Actual</b>
Christmas Offering	\$48,850
Easter Offering	24,567

\* These do not reflect actual withdrawals from investment fund. Plymouth's policy is to use cash from other sources before withdrawing from investments. These transactions are closely tracked so that we honor donor-restrictions. Actual withdrawal from Investments has been much lower in recent years.

# 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 2019 fund was \$100,000. 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 (\$47,848) was shared with two organizations: Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and Groveland Emergency Food Shelf. This year’s Easter Offering (\$24,316) was split between Third Sunday Meal and Habitat for Humanity.

*–Cathy Crane, chair*

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

**Economic, Environmental & Social Justice**

Groveland Emergency Food Shelf*	\$26,924
Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative*	\$20,924
Division of Indian Work	\$10,000
Simpson Housing Services	\$8,000
Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness	\$10,000
Minnesota Council of Churches	\$2,000
Greater Minneapolis Community Connections	\$5,000
Ascension Place/Haven House	\$5,000
Dignity Center	\$5,000
Minnesota InterFaith Power and Light	\$5,000
Third Sunday Meal**	\$12,158
Habitat for Humanity**	\$12,158
Cristo Rey School	\$12,000
Tree of Life Synagogue (one-time gift)	\$500
2019 anticipated disaster donation	\$1,500
<b>Total Economic, Environmental &amp; Social Justice</b>	<b>\$136,164</b>

**Global Outreach**

International Village Clinic	\$8,000
OneVillage Partners	\$4,000
United Church of Christ—Global Missions	\$6,000
<b>Total Global Outreach</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>

**Progressive Faith**

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities	\$15,000
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Ciego de Ávila, Cuba	\$3,000
<b>Total Progressive Faith</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>

**Total Community Fund disbursements** **\$172,164**

\*This year’s Christmas Offering (\$47,848) was divided between Groveland Emergency Food Shelf and Beacon.  
 \*\*This year’s Easter Offering (\$24,316) was split between Third Sunday Meal and Habitat for Humanity.

**PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

1900 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55403  
612/871-7400 • [www.plymouth.org](http://www.plymouth.org) • [churchinfo@plymouth.org](mailto:churchinfo@plymouth.org)

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