

ARTS

Film Club's Coming Attractions

BY RICHARD JEWELL, PLYMOUTH FILM CLUB, & FRIENDS

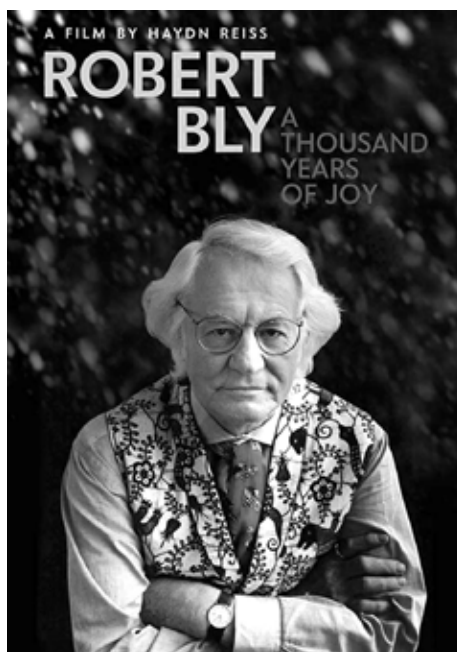
In March, Film Club is showing three documentaries chosen by guest hosts, 12:30 p.m., Sundays, using large-wall projection downstairs in Jackman Hall, with optional discussions following. Coffee and tea will be available. Lunch? Please bring your own, or use an eatery with delivery to "Door No. 1, 1919 LaSalle, [Your Name], Jackman Hall Film Club."

On March 1, ***Doctrine of Discovery: Unmasking the Domination Code*** (2014, 60 min.). Dakota filmmaker Sheldon Wolfchild reveals the 1493 Christian-created doctrine allowing colonizers like Columbus to appropriate Original People's nations by claiming Christianity has a Biblical right to dominate.

This conceptual foundation remains for U.S. politics, law, social policies and the historical trauma of indigenous people. As Christians at Plymouth, are we not called to explore ways to heal between peoples of the earth?

Join members of the Racial Justice Initiative in learning from the film what indigenous people have always known—and in exploring how we can contribute to their healing and ours.

—Sonia Cairns



On March 8, ***Robert Bly: A Thousand Years of Joy*** (2015, 84 min.). This joyful documentary charts great American poet Robert Bly's path from Minnesota prairie farm to pioneering poet, editor, translator and cultural leader.

In addition to 30 volumes of poetry, Bly was among the first to translate Pablo Neruda, Rumi and others. His national and international publications and speaking tours against the Vietnam War and about his 1990 ***Iron John: A Book About Men*** inspired hundreds of thousands.

The film features luminaries such as Louise Erdrich, Donald Hall, Garrison

Keillor, Mark Rylance, Martin Sheen, Gary Snyder and many others. This showing is hosted by Literary Witnesses and Jim Lenfestey.

Please note: Remember to spring ahead, as this is the Sunday that Daylight Saving Time changes

—Jim Lenfestey

On March 15, ***Biggest Little Farm*** (2018, 91 min.). Filmmaker John Chester and wife Molly used life savings and friends' money for 200 depleted acres near Los Angeles—with no idea how hard a self-sustaining farming would be. They battled drought, insects, thieving coyotes, fire and other problems to create, after eight years, the productive farm of their dreams, with 10,000 orchard trees, 200 types of crops and animals.

This delightful, moving film won the American-Canadian Broadcast Film Critics Association's awards for Best Documentary, Cinematography, Science/Nature film, and Best Score for music—along with 11 other awards and 29 nominations. Hosted by Paula Northwood and Climate and Environmental Justice Committee.

—Richard Jewell

A pit crew of people

BY PAULA NORTHWOOD, ACTING SENIOR MINISTER

Photo: Mark Luinenburg



Author Anne Lamott in *Help, Thanks, Wow: Three Essential Prayers*, talks about the “pit crew of people” who have been there for her through all the

experiences of life. It’s in her chapter on Thanks, where she ruminates on her feelings of gratitude for the importance of a pit crew and how life would be less without them.

As I write this, we will soon be saying farewell to Allison Campbell Jensen, Plymouth’s Director of Communications and my Executive Assistant. Allison has been an invaluable part of my pit crew. In my position as Acting Senior Minister I am required to write much more than I imagined. From articles to

meditations to hundreds of letters and emails, Allison has brought a trained editing eye and made me not only “sound” better but helped make me a better writer.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Allison for all that she brought to Plymouth. Her journalistic skills, deep spiritual

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commitment, willingness to learn and engage social media, and the dependable, solid support for her colleagues and parishioners are the things I will cherish and miss. On a personal note, I also enjoyed Allison’s knowledge of birds, foreign languages and good restaurants.

I hope you will join me in wishing Allison “Godspeed” as she starts a new job at the University of Minnesota.

We might want to throw up our hands and say, “One more change! I can’t take it.” But to quote Lamott: “Thank you for lifting this corner of the curtain so I can see the truth, maybe just for a moment, but in a way that might change life forever. And that moment is astonishing, because everything is taking place all at once, the micro and the macro. You can walk through this glittering city and gaze up into the heavens, and down here you can see clearly what you have on your hands, or even what you have lost.”

Life is all about change, easy and hard, and thank God we have a pit crew of people with whom to go through it.

GRACE NOTES

Music for Lent, a premiere and a special pianist

BY PHILIP BRUNELLE, ORGANIST-CHOIRMASTER

The season of Lent is filled with music as the texts have inspired composers both past and present.



The Plymouth Choir will sing a wide variety of music from France (Vierne), Spain (Mompou), Italy (Palestrina and Monteverdi), Germany (Bach), Norway (Grieg), England (Vaughan Williams) and the United States (Kantor and Merritt).

I look forward to the premiere on March 15 of Justin Merritt’s new anthem

(written about in a separate article) and welcoming pianist Sara Langmead (pictured at left) on March 29, playing music of J. S. Bach.

For the rest of March, I will play organ music of Louis Vierne. This year marks the 150th anniversary of Vierne’s birth—a noted French organist who, though blind, was an extraordinary composer as well as organist at Notre Dame in Paris for 37 years!



Sermon series and spiritual practices for Lent

BY BETH HOFFMAN FAETH, MINISTER FOR CONGREGATIONAL CARE & WORSHIP

“...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.”
(Galatians 5: 22-23)



With March comes the season of Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26.

I have developed a practice of observing Lent as the gift of time to “go deeper” in matters of the Spirit.

Our understanding of Jesus varies greatly at Plymouth Church, yet the tradition of Lent is to mark time on Jesus’ journey to his crucifixion, and what it means for us as we consider the impact of Jesus’s choices and God’s actions upon our own lives of faith.

Using the “fruits of the Spirit” from the quoted scripture, worship and the messages within will be centered upon each word (or “fruit”) as a spiritual practice, with an invitation to hone these words in our lives during the season of Lent and beyond.

To deepen our connection to the Divine is to also strengthen our relationship with others and the world. In order to thrive during these complicated days, our spirits need attention and nurture.

Our spirits need
attention and nurture
in order to thrive
in these times.

Developing a spiritual practice—or many—is essential to living out our faith and being proactive in the world.

This Lenten sermon series may help broaden your understanding of the plethora of such practices. Have you considered patience a spiritual practice? Gentleness? Self-Control? ***Fruitful Living: Spiritual Practices for Lent*** is designed to feed your heart, mind and spirit with possibility.

On March 8, we welcome Gary Green as guest preacher. Green is the Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology and Social Transformation at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities. We look forward to adding his voice to our journey together through Lent.

Blessings,
Beth

CHURCH MATTERS

Lead Minister search update

BY CHRIS BOHNHOFF, CHAIR, LEAD MINISTER SEARCH COMMITTEE

Back in November, I reported that the Lead Minister Search Committee’s goal was to have a recommended candidate to bring to a vote at our annual meeting in June. I am excited to report that we are currently on pace to reach our goal.

Since the job posting went live on our own website, on the UCC employment page and on numerous job boards in late December, the search committee has been hard at work spreading the word about the position. As of Feb. 12, the committee has sent out

over 160 communications. We started with high-level contacts within national organizations and large institutions. Those communications led to a list of recommendations for people we should target, which we have done. We have also done significant networking via LinkedIn and continue to follow leads on qualified candidates.

The list of applicants who have submitted materials is impressive for their passion, experience and diversity. It’s a group hailing from across the country, representing a

handful of denominations, coming from a range of contexts, blessed with unique skillsets. Now the fun begins: moving past the resumes and YouTube sermons to begin the person-to-committee conversations. Those conversations begin in early March.

Thank you for providing your thoughts to us at the Guild Hall tables we staffed in January and February. We hold all of you in our work, always remembering our covenant. Contact us anytime at search@plymouth.org.

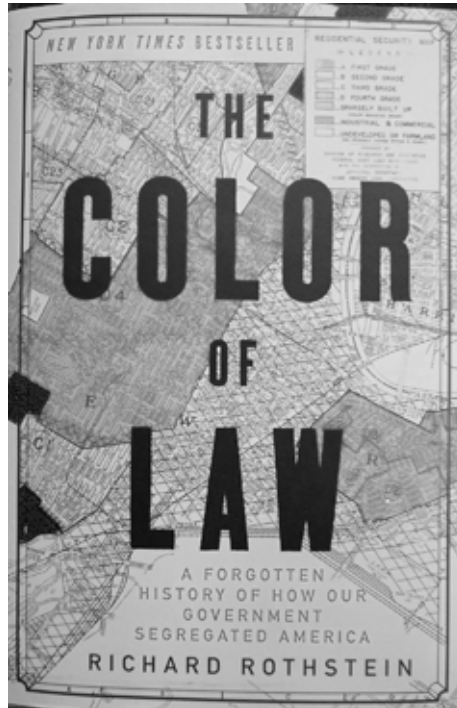
March 23: *The Color of Law* on segregation

BY CATHERINE SHREVES, RACIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Richard Rothstein, a national expert on the impact of government-sponsored racial segregation, will be in the sanctuary of Plymouth Church Monday, March 23, 7–9 p.m., for a discussion of his book *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.

The Color of Law meticulously details how federal, state, and local policies explicitly segregated metropolitan areas nationwide, creating racially homogenous neighborhoods in patterns that violate the Constitution and require remediation.

These policies have hindered economic mobility of African Americans through undisguised racial zoning, public housing that purposefully severed previously mixed



communities, subsidies for builders to create whites-only suburbs, tax exemptions for prejudiced institutions,

and support for violent resistance to African Americans in white neighborhoods.

In exposing this institutional racism, Rothstein answers an important question—how did we arrive here?—and raises another one—how do we move forward?

Plymouth Church, through its Racial Justice Initiative, is hosting Rothstein in collaboration with Hennepin History Museum and Alliance Housing. The Minneapolis Foundation and Pohlad Foundation are sponsors of Rothstein's talk. Please do join us for this important event. Tickets (\$5) are available through Hennepin History Museum: <https://hennepinhistory.org/event/the-color-of-law/>

Please give to Minnesota FoodShare this month

BY DAVE ENGHUSEN, GROVELAND FOOD SHELF DIRECTOR

March is when winter begins loosening its grip. For us at the Groveland Food Shelf, March and December are the most important months to refill our coffers. In March, we also can benefit from a proportional match provided by the Minnesota FoodShare organization. When you see the envelopes in the pews, please give generously.

The need for food is growing. In 2019, Groveland saw a 13 percent increase over 2018 and the highest numbers since the Great Recession.

Jobs are available, so why the increase? There is sizable portion of Groveland's customers who are retired or suffering from disabilities or other issues that make returning to work difficult. The larger portion do work, however. We don't know for sure but anecdotal

evidence points to the sharp rise in housing costs.

For example, one client was a pregnant woman with one child who found herself without housing because her building had been sold. It was being converted to senior housing. She was in her early 30s, had finished school with a vocational degree and was working in that field part-time and doing guard work part-time. Her income did not qualify her for housing in the area she was familiar with. She felt punished for doing the right thing.

For Groveland, too, over the past year much has changed. We receive food seven days a week with generous donations from Kowalski's, Trader Joe's, Lund's and a number of smaller cafes and bakeries. This *food rescue*

provides goods that may have a short shelf life but are often more nutritious than food we've been able to provide in the past. Yet, it also is very labor intensive because we need to sort, verify the food is good and, if it goes bad before being taken, to compost and dispose of it. We also offer clothing provided by Old School by Steeple People across the street.

This year will bring more changes. We hope to add a person and vehicle to help us with these challenges. We'll continue to evolve as we have since 1975 when Plymouth first founded the food shelf. Your generous contributions of time and money help us help others. You touch the lives of thousands of people with few resources and few options. They and we are grateful.

Beacon & housing stability for all: 1999–2020

BY ANNE SELTZ, PLYMOUTH BEACON LEADERSHIP TEAM

From one building to many: Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation started with 40 homes at Lydia and, over 21 years, PCNF morphed into Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative with over 100 congregations, and 650 homes in 18 properties. A fulfillment of the Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation vision—not really a miracle but the result of physical and, yes, spiritual work of many laypersons, clergy and staff.

Beacon’s vision and focus is on families, seniors, young adults and others who make less than \$30,000 a year and those who are experiencing homelessness: folk with mental illness, low to no income, job loss, felony history, chemical use or homelessness. The upcoming doubling of Lydia Apartments is a typical example of that vision.

In January Beacon launched a bold legislative initiative to provide rent subsidies to all who qualify: **Bring it Home, Minnesota!** If Minnesota did this, (and we can with about 4 percent of our state budget), no low-income family would pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing. That housing stability benefits families, schools, businesses and communities. State Rep. Alice Hausman said in Lori Sturdevant’s Feb. 7 article in the *Star Tribune*: “It costs taxpayers more to have homeless people than to actually house them.”

On March 11, join with the Minnesota Homeless Coalition to advocate for housing stability at the Capitol. For details and to register, please visit www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/advocate/doth2020/

At Beacon’s Congregation Convening on Jan. 30, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan emphasized the importance of a decent affordable home for all. She said, “There are three questions about affordable housing: Who’s in? Who’s out? Who decides?” She told us **we** are part of that decision, but **we** need to show up at meetings, with phone calls, postcards and e-mails.

Jim Gertmenian, Minister Emeritas, said at the 10th anniversary of Heading Home Hennepin: “It’s a matter of justice. It’s about the foundational assumption that in a just society every person has a fundamental right to safe, decent and affordable housing.”

From Lydia to the Capitol. From PCNF to Beacon. What an inspiring journey it has been . . . and continues to be!

Drop-in: Thank you!

A generous gift from Andris “Andy” Baltins, husband of the late Nancy Baltins who was a major force in the early days of Drop-in Center, will ensure that Strobel Drop-in participants will be able to enjoy a fall trip in perpetuity.

Our guests who participate in activities offered by the Strobel Drop-in Center at Plymouth Church often cope with disabilities, mental illness or struggles with independent living. The Strobel Drop-in Center offers them companionship, twice-weekly meetings, monthly Bingo games, crafts, occasional singalongs, worship services and special trips offsite. We at Plymouth Church are very glad to offer our guests a place where they belong, and we are grateful for this significant support for our Drop-in Center.

Larry Johnson, who directs the Strobel Drop-in Center, says that “the all-day fall trip, started when Nancy was still living, is something that many Drop-in participants look forward to all year long.

“It gives them hope that there is good in the world.”

OUTREACH, BY THE NUMBERS

Groveland Food Shelf recorded over 20,000 visits in 2019, with an average month of 1,700 visits. This is up from around 18,000 visits in 2018. Please see the appeal for monetary donations on p. 4.

The Climate and Environment Justice group reports that 54 friends and members of Plymouth gave money to the purchase of our solar panels. For more information or to join the group’s email list, please contact Jan Neville, janeville@comcast.net, or Tim Fremouw, tefremouw@gmail.com.

On April 19, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day here at Plymouth. Member Bryce Hamilton as a founder in 1970. There will be exciting activities at 10 a.m. Don’t miss the sermon by Don Shelby, former WCCO-TV news anchor, at 9 or 11!

Do the math, share the love

BY PAULA NORTHWOOD, ACTING SENIOR MINISTER

A member shared that she was thinking about the Stewardship Annual drive and the thermometer that appears in Jones Commons on Sundays to mark our progress. She noted that we usually have 400 pledging units (individuals and families) and our goal is \$1.5 million. If you do the math, that's \$3,750 a pledge. What this member realized was that maybe their family wasn't doing their part. Not because they didn't have the means but because they didn't know what an appropriate pledge might be.

Now, of course, not everyone can pledge at that level and many others can do much, much more. As Jesus said, "To whom much is given, much will be required." (Luke 12:48)

This member went on to share about all the ways that her family benefits from church attendance: spiritual nourishment, biblical knowledge,

moral development, music lessons for her children as they participate in choir, service opportunities, exposure to art exhibits and theater performances, intergenerational connections and deep friendships. Our church offers a great deal of free benefits!

Churches do not charge for services rendered or suggest a membership fee like exercise gyms or country clubs, but the church is like an exercise gym or country club because it is where you build your spiritual muscles and live out your deepest call to serve humanity. It's a place to explore life's deepest questions with others. It's a community that can hold you in your moments of deepest sorrow and celebrate your achievements, anniversaries and times of joy.

Doing the math leads me to ask one more question: "If our church membership is around 1,500, if you

subtract the current pledgers and children, why are 650 or so choosing not to pledge?" Now some folks prefer to give to the offering plate and not make a pledge. That's great, but it doesn't help us plan our budget because we don't know when or how much to expect. And there are a handful of folks unhappy and withholding their pledge, so that leaves several hundred who claim Plymouth as their home church but do not contribute.

We need everyone's financial commitment to continue to be a faithful presence in the neighborhood. Please take some time to do the math.

If you haven't pledged, please do. If you've been stagnant in your giving, considering increasing. Let's work together to support the church we love.

COMMUNITY LIFE

You are invited! Member? Higher Power group?

INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP AT PLYMOUTH CHURCH?

Our next new member class series will be held March 15 & 22 at 10 a.m. Attendance at both sessions is requested. The classes address our shared values as a congregation and the many ways they are expressed in our individual spiritual journeys, and they provide an opportunity to get to know others new to Plymouth and to interact with Plymouth clergy, staff, and lay leaders. Those who choose to join will be received on April 5. **To register for the class, please contact Doug Freeman: membership@plymouth.org or 612/977-1279.**

If you have questions regarding membership at Plymouth, you may contact Beth Hoffman Faeth, Minister for Congregational Care and Worship. Beth can be reached in the church office at 612/871-7400.

HIGHER POWER FELLOWSHIP

Alcohol, drug and other addictions impact not just the person using, but also family and friends. Moving forward in recovery involves more than merely abstaining from the substance or behavior. It can be ultimately a spiritual journey that we embark on in fellowship with others. Faith Partners in Recovery is a fellowship group started years ago by Jan and

Charlie Lloyd, among others, that began as an informal way for Plymouth members to share their experience of their own recovery or that of a family member. Our gatherings offer a time to informally connect with others in the group, often over a potluck. We also host a speaker for Recovery Sunday, and make literature available during the coffee hour.

On Sunday, March 29, Faith Partners in Recovery will host a gathering during the 10 o'clock hour. For more information or to be added to our email list, please contact Beth Faeth at BethF@Plymouth.org.

Growing our circles and reaching out

BY TOM HAIGH, CHAIR, IMMIGRANT WELCOMING AND WORKING GROUP

The work of the Immigrant Welcoming and Working Group (IWWG) is at heart an effort to understand current immigration issues, to connect with people whose lives are directly affected and to work toward fair and just treatment for those caught up in what's become a front-page political football game.

This year, we seek to work more directly with individuals who need help. Through partnership with the Interfaith Coalition on Migration (ICOM), we assisted an individual who needed help getting settled in late December. One of the accomplishments was getting a very large sofa through a very small door. Miracle? Maybe.

The individual belongs to the Brooklyn Park Islamic Center. In thanks, we were invited to be part of a Friday afternoon prayer service at the Center on the last day of January.



The service was enlightening and inspiring. In his sermon, Imam Abdul spoke of our belief whether as Muslims, Jews or Christians in worshiping one God. For all of us, love is the core belief. So at our best, we work from love.

After the service, a dozen members of the congregation warmly welcomed us. They would like to get to know us better and we want to continue to get to know them. We extended an invitation for them to visit a service at Plymouth soon.

In addition, IWWG continues to support and participate in the monthly vigils at Fort Snelling. Four Buddhist communities collaborated to host the January vigil. At the February vigil, we had out-of-town guests, members of Occupied Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) from Chicago. They were in town to support “Beto,” a DACA recipient from Chicago who has been in the Freeborn County jail for eight months. He is up for a bond redetermination hearing. We don’t know the results at press time.

IWWG meets the third Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m. at Plymouth. Transportation to attend deportation hearings is available on Thursdays from Plymouth. For more information about any of our work, contact Tom Haigh, 763/438-2574 or jthaigh45@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY LIFE

Ride or drive the Plymouth bus

That big white bus that says Plymouth Congregational Church and takes up more than two spots in our parking lot? You’ve seen it, but have you ridden in it? Even better, have you driven it? We have it on good authority that it’s easy to drive—much easier than its size would suggest. Can we entice you to try it? Our drivers enjoy the Sunday drives and the riders.

Every Sunday, one of our bus drivers ventures to Covenant Village in Golden Valley, where he or she picks up two to six Plymouth members and friends, and brings them to

worship at Second Service. The driver also could make other stops on this route to pick up others or others can come to Covenant Village and access the bus. The bus can accommodate walkers, but not wheelchairs. If you’d like to be picked up at Covenant Village, Jack Cole (763/540-1995) coordinates the bus pick-up.

Since Rally Day 2018, six intrepid and happy drivers have been driving: Pat Born, Kristin Bottemiller, Beverly Gores, Gary Specker, Jerry Davis and Larry Johnson. They agreed to drive about once every four to six weeks.

We need more drivers because some of these folks are out of town for extended periods of the year .

No special license is required. Training will be provided.

For more information, or to sign up to drive or to ride, please contact a member of Plymouth’s Bus Committee: Parker Trostel, 612/360-8301, ptrostel@comcast.net or Emily Venell, 612/871-7400, emilyv@plymouth.org.

Spell to Bring Lost Creatures Home debuts

BY RAY MARTIN

Elsie and Ray Martin invite you to the 11 a.m. service on March 15 for the world premiere of ***Spell to Bring Lost Creatures Home***, poem by Kathleen Raine, music by Justin Merritt, and choreography by Elsie Martin. It will be sung by the Plymouth Adult

choir with music and choreography integral to both: the desire being to include dance as a form of worship. We are grateful for the help of Tony Stoneburner, church member and retired English professor. Not only has he supported dance in worship, he

We narrowed our text search to four poems, based on their message, length and perceived singability. We chose Justin Merritt, Professor of Composition at St. Olaf College, who composed the anthem during a sabbatical at the Aaron Copeland House in upstate New York.

Elsie and I met with him a couple of times, first to let him decide if any poem resonated with his creative energy, later to discuss concepts, choreographic ideas and poetic intent. This haunting text is rich in imagery about animals, children and lost souls finding their way home. Elsie is choreographing it for dancers who relish the chance to be a bird, rabbit, fox, rat or other character. A lively performance awaits!

The piece is dedicated to the memory of our mothers—who made sure we always came home. Please join us for worship at our Plymouth home on March 15.



Choir and danced by 10 youth and adult dancers. Some are pictured in rehearsal, above.

This is the second time we have commissioned an anthem for our

led us to poems that focused on the intersection of nature and spirituality.

A commission would not be possible without Philip Brunelle to guide and support us through the process.

PRISM: A multi-faceted exhibition

BY LYNNETTE BLACK, CO-CHAIR, GALLERY COMMITTEE

Artists Maggie Thompson and Tamara Aupaumut will be featured in the Conn Art Gallery, March 1–April 8. The opening reception begins at 11 a.m. and continues through 1 p.m., Sunday, March 1.

Maggie Thompson (Fond du Lac Ojibwe) was born and raised in Minneapolis. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Textiles at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2013. As a textile artist and designer, she derives her inspiration from the history of her Ojibwe heritage,

exploring family history as well as themes and subject matter of the broader Native American experience. Thompson's work calls attention to its materiality pushing the viewer's traditional understanding of textiles. She explores materials in her work by incorporating multimedia elements such as photographs, beer caps and 3D-printed objects.

Thompson had her first solo exhibition *Where I Fit* at All My Relations Gallery in 2014. The Minneapolis Institute of Art and the

Minnesota Historical Society have both acquired pieces from Thompson to be a part of their permanent collection.

Tamara Aupaumut is a multidisciplinary artist. She is a painter, ceramist, quillworker, beadworker, photographer, and has also worked in film and theater. Tamara descends from the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, and the Brothertown Indian Nation.

JSOR: *Doing Theology in the Age of Trump*

BY MARK LARSON

Mark your calendar: April 24-25, Jesus Seminar on the Road returns to Plymouth Church.

This year's JSOR focuses on the interrelation of religion and politics during the current administration. The book, *Doing Theology in the Age of Trump*, was published in 2018, and addresses the question why more than 80 percent of white Christian evangelicals voted for Trump in the 2016 election.



We connect this phenomenon to deeper issues about nationalism, religion, race, and American exceptionalism. **John D. Caputo** (at left), one of the leading philosophers of religion in the older generation, and **Clayton Crockett** (at right), one of the leading lights in the younger generation and a co-editor of the book, will address important theological questions about time, truth, and politics today. Both are also members of Westar's Seminar on God and the Human Future



Registration will be available through Plymouth Congregational Church soon. Questions? Please contact Mark Larson at 612/718-8124

Leaning on the hiddenness of God

BY ELIZABETH JARRETT ANDREW

Julie Neraas recently told me that 93 people die from gun violence daily, totaling 600,000 since 1968. She also shared what it's like to be in constant pain from a chronic illness no one can figure out. Because I knew Julie is a life-long practitioner of contemplative prayer, I was interested to hear what role silence plays for her in the face of suffering.

Julie has been on a contemplative path since college. Ordained in the Presbyterian Church and trained as a spiritual director, she fulfills her mission "to be a resource in the area of spiritual life to individuals and organizations" by offering spiritual direction, retreats and faithfully working with Plymouth's Gun Violence Prevention group. Through

it all, she suffers. "Chronic pain can ruin your manners toward God," she said, quoting Jane Kenyon. "I've been moved by the prayer vigils that have been held for gun violence, where one religious leader after another says, 'Prayers are powerful. Don't stop them. But God isn't going to rescue us from our gun problem.'" Julie admits to being a "functional atheist," at least regarding a personal God who willingly lends aid.

What then happens in silent prayer? Prayer isn't about "bunching up your muscles and trying hard" but rather about "releasing yourself to the prayer that's always there. Silence is a seedbed. It asks me to be vulnerable. I need help and I know it. The word *help* is closely related to the word

hope," she said, and quoted William Sloan Coffin: "I don't think God can reach the self-reliant."

The further Julie goes on the spiritual path, the less she knows. "My prayer is giving myself to the Mystery." As I understand Julie, the key to finding hope in the midst of suffering rests in Abraham Heschel's wisdom: Don't mistake the hiddenness of God for the absence of God. In what Christians call the "cloud of unknowing," we come in contact with a hidden source that somehow is more present in its absence. Julie ended our conversation with a striking, hopeful statement: "The richest fruits of the contemplative impulse are hospitality and compassion and kindness—the things that will save Plymouth."

Fire up with March Forums, Sundays @ 10

BY REBECCA MILLER, SUNDAY FORUM COMMITTEE

MARCH 1

AWAKENING LESSONS

Realizing and living one's true life is a sacred gift we all deserve. But, how do we get there? How do we genuinely open our hearts to ourselves and to others? Our destinations are varied, but we control each footstep we take. Catherine will explore three life-changing events and the five life lessons learned to inquire into what it means to live deeply from your heart, listen inwardly and deepen your understanding of self-compassion.

Rev. Catherine Duncan, MA, BCC, Integrative Spiritual Consultant, is an ordained minister with the United Church of Christ and a covenant partner with Plymouth. She received her Master of Arts in Theology and Spiritual Direction Certificate from St. Catherine University and a Master of Divinity equivalency from United Theological Seminary. She works with Partners in Resilience, MN Personalized Medicine, and has a private practice.

MARCH 8

URBAN AMERICAN INDIAN ISSUES

Learn about current Minneapolis Urban American Indian issues, with a focus on education, as well as how Plymouth can support and be more useful to the American Indian community.

Dr. Joe Hobot, President and CEO, American Indian Opportunity Industrial Center (OIC), is a descendant of the Lakota Nation from the Standing Rock Reservation. Born and raised in the Twin Cities, he holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Minnesota, a Master's

Degree from the University of St. Thomas and a Doctorate of Education from Hamline University. He has been at the American Indian OIC since 2006, serves as the Director of several Boards, and has received a variety of honors. Presented with the Plymouth American Indian Initiative of the Board of Outreach.

MARCH 15

MODELING RESILIENCY

A farm near Northfield is advancing regenerative agriculture, reconnecting people to the land and restoring our planet back to health. They welcome our newest Americans, value their farming expertise and provide land access. Main Street Project's focus on resilient agricultural approaches that provide economic opportunity for new farmers, producing affordable nutritious food and mitigating climate change.

Julie Ristau is Executive Director at Main Street Project in Northfield. She is also a Principle of Regeneration Partnership LLC. Julie works with restorative community-based farms throughout the country, and serves on the board of Shared Capital Cooperative. She has held an endowed chair in Agricultural Systems at the University of Minnesota's Institute for Sustainable Agriculture. Presented with the Climate and Environmental Justice Group of the Board of Outreach.

MARCH 22

HOW TO BEGIN RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is both a theological and political term—so how does a church, especially Plymouth, begin thinking about it? A conversation

between civil rights leader **Nekima Levy-Armstrong** and **Rev. Dr. Curtiss DeYoung** will help illuminate this question for our congregation.

Nekima Levy Armstrong is a civil rights attorney, activist and the National Director of Activism for Wayfinder Foundation. She served as a Professor of Law at the University of St. Thomas Law School for 13 years, where she founded and directed the Community Justice Project. She previously served as president of the Minneapolis NAACP and as an advisor to Black Lives Matter Minneapolis. She ran for Mayor of Minneapolis in 2017.

Rev. Dr. Curtiss Paul DeYoung is the CEO of the Minnesota Council of Churches. Previously he was the Executive Director of the historic racial justice organization Community Renewal Society in Chicago and the inaugural Professor of Reconciliation Studies at Bethel University in St. Paul. DeYoung is an ordained minister in the Church of God and a member of the Park Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. He is an author and editor of 12 books on reconciliation, interfaith social justice activism, racism, and culture. Presented with the Racial Justice Initiative.

MARCH 29

THE JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE AND ASTRONOMY IN THE 2020s

The Hubble Space Telescope (HST) is nearing its end since there will be no more servicing missions for repair. The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), due to launch on March 30, 2021, is in some ways (and in some ways not) its successor. The scientific



Let's cheer on our young people!

BY NINA JONSON, PROGRAMS MANAGER

Nearly every weekend, Plymouth members of all ages go on the town to catch a Lynx game, see a show at the Jungle, watch a dance performance at Cowles or catch a touring act at the Armory. How fortunate are we to live in such a vibrant metropolitan area, with so many social and cultural opportunities to engage in every week of the year.

And all of the talented professionals who entertain and inspire us were once young people, toiling away in gyms, auditoriums and practice rooms, looking for audiences to cheer them on.

Did you know that at Plymouth:

- We have young people from Plymouth singing with the Minnesota Boychoir and the Minnesota Opera?
- Kids doing shows with Theater Latte Da, Children's Theater Company and the Guthrie?
- Young people flying through the art at Circus Juventas and Circus Xelias?
- Last year, more than 30 of our

kids and teens performed in plays and musicals at their schools and through community organizations?

- Our youth are playing nearly every instrument, from cello to tuba, in their schools' orchestras and bands?
- Within our Church School, we have young people who perform and compete in ice skating, ultimate frisbee, basketball, robotics, Lego League, Irish dance, and more?
- Every single one of these young people would love to have friendly faces in the audience for their events, concerts and games, yet many of them do not have lots of family here in the Twin Cities to attend these events?

As part of my job building community and strengthening relationships among our children, youth and families, I will attend anything that I am invited to by a young person. I love showing up, and showing my support, and, believe me, you do not have to attend a play at the

Guthrie to be blown away by talent.

Investing a few hours of time and a few dollars from my wallet in the lives of our young people matters. They know that there are caring adults who might not know them well, but support them in their endeavors—adults who are willing to show up for them. We have 120 young people involved in our church school programming, and many of them participate in activities that require audiences.

If you are looking for a way to cross the courtyard and see what the kids are up to these days, please email me (ninaj@plymouth.org). I will connect you with one of our families who has kids who participate in theater, music, sports or intellectual contests. You will meet someone new at Plymouth, our young people will have someone else there cheering them on, and our circle of beloved community will extend far beyond the walls of the Sanctuary on a Sunday morning. Please take a chance on some talented kids and young people from our own community!

rationale for JWST and how it builds on what we have learned from HST will be presented.

Dr. Charles Nelson is Associate Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics, at Drake University, Department of Physics & Astronomy since 2002. He is a graduate of Oberlin College, Vanderbilt University (MS), University of Virginia (PhD) and completed several post-docs at Space Telescope and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Consider a salon on Sunday @ 10

Have you noticed in the Sunday Bulletin Announcements and Friday emails that a Salon is offered at Plymouth Church? If not, take a moment to look over the Sunday Forum listings and do attend if you would like to engage in a small group conversation. Each week, there is a different topic for these informal conversations.

Recently a dozen people participated in a Death Café. We had cake as part

of the salon and reflected on some quotes and imagery about death. In addition, other groups at Plymouth have led a discussion during the 10 to 11 a.m time for the salons.

So, consider participating in one of these small group discussions. You can expect to be engaged by the conversation and may find that you are delighted to get to know people in a new way.

—Mary Baker

March 2020

01 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

- 9:00 First Service
- 9:00 Archives—open for visitors
- 9:45–12:15 Childcare
- 10:00 Sundays @ 10
- 10:00 Artist Reception
- 11:00 Second Service—Lenten Communion
- 12:15 Church Tour
- 12:30 *Doctrine of Discovery*—Film Club
- 4:00 Louise Erdrich reads from her newest book—Literary Witnesses

02 MONDAY

- 1:00 Home Retreat Meeting
- 7:00 Great Books Group
- 7:00 Plymouth Contemplatives Gathering

03 TUESDAY

- 9:00 Contemplative Prayer
- 9:00 Archives Committee
- 6:30 Deacons
- 7:00 Meditation Matters—Spiritual Exploration

04 WEDNESDAY

- 9:00 Knit-A-Bit
- 9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
- 10:00 Conversations from the Heart Practice Group
- 1:00 Strobel Drop-in Center
- 2:00 Archives
- 4:00 Legacy Giving Committee
- 5:00 Katy's Cafe
- 5:00 BeFriends
- 5:00 Wednesdays in the basement: Youth activities
- 6:00 100 Hands
- 6:00 Cherub Choir
- 6:00 Youth Choir
- 6:00 Intro Bells
- 6:30 Fun with Dylan
- 6:30 Chapel Singers
- 6:30 Genesis Dancers
- 6:35 Chorister Choir
- 6:45 Intermediate Ringers
- 6:45 Spiritual Exploration—Yoga
- 7:00 Confirmation
- 7:00 Plymouth Choir
- 7:20 Alleluia Dancers
- 7:30 Senior High

05 THURSDAY

- 9:00 Archives Committee
- 10:30 Meals on Wheels
- 12:00 Plymouth Pew Clergy Discussion Group
- 3:00 Strobel Drop-in Center
- 7:00 Plymouth Keyboard Music Club
- 7:00 Vivir Mi Vida Salsa Dance

06 FRIDAY

07 SATURDAY

- 9:00 Better Angels Workshop

08 SUNDAY

- 9:00 First Service
- 9:00 Archives—open for visitors
- 9:45–12:15 Childcare
- 10:00 Sundays @ 10
- 11:00 Second Service
- 12:30 *Robert Bly: One Thousand Years of Joy*—Film Club

09 MONDAY

- 6:00 Let's Simplify—Spiritual Exploration
- 7:00 Theater 45°—Mara, Queen of the World

10 TUESDAY

- 9:00 Contemplative Prayer
- 9:00 Archives Committee
- 4:00 Building and Grounds
- 4:00 Forced Into Camps—Spiritual Exploration
- 5:30 Lead Minister Search Committee

11 WEDNESDAY

- 9:00 Knit-A-Bit
- 9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
- 10:00 Conversations from the Heart Practice Group
- 10:00 HABIT 18 Support Group
- 1:00 Strobel Drop-in Center
- 2:00 Archives
- 5:00 Katy's Cafe
- 5:00 Wednesdays in the basement: Youth activities
- 5:30 Board of Fine Arts
- 6:00 100 Hands
- 6:00 Cherub Choir
- 6:00 Youth Choir
- 6:00 Intro Bells
- 6:30 Board of Community Life
- 6:30 Board of Outreach
- 6:30 Board of Spiritual Formation

- 6:30 Fun with Dylan
- 6:30 Chapel Singers
- 6:30 Genesis Dancers
- 6:35 Chorister Choir
- 6:45 Intermediate Ringers
- 6:45 Spiritual Exploration—Yoga
- 7:00 Confirmation
- 7:00 Plymouth Choir
- 7:20 Alleluia Dancers
- 7:30 Senior High

12 THURSDAY

- 9:00 Archives Committee
- 10:30 Meals on Wheels
- 11:00 HABIT caregivers meeting
- 3:00 Strobel Drop-in Center
- 7:00 Vivir Mi Vida Salsa Dance

13 FRIDAY

- 7:30 Gilbert & Sullivan Very Light Opera Co. opening night for *Ruddigore* (see gsvloc.org for schedule, tickets and details)

14 SATURDAY

- 8:30 The Welcoming Prayer—Spiritual Exploration

15 SUNDAY

- 9:00 First Service
- 9:00 Archives—open for visitors
- 9:45–12:15 Childcare
- 10:00 New member class
- 10:00 Sundays @ 10
- 11:00 Second Service
- 12:00 Church Tour
- 12:30 *Biggest Little Farm*—Film Club
- 5:00 Third Sunday Meal

16 MONDAY

- 1:00 Strobel Drop-in Center, offsite

17 TUESDAY

- 9:00 Contemplative Prayer
- 9:00 Archives Committee
- 4:00 Forced Into Camps—Spiritual Exploration
- 6:00 Immigrant Welcoming Working Group

18 WEDNESDAY

- 9:00 Knit-A-Bit
- 9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
- 10:00 Conversations from the Heart Practice Group

10:00 Celtic Weavings—Spiritual Exploration
 10:30 Plymouth American Indian Initiative
 1:00 Strobel Drop-in Center
 1:30 OMC Book Club
 3:30 Stewardship Committee
 5:00 Board of Finance & Admin.
 5:00 Katy's Cafe
 5:00 Wednesdays in the basement: Youth activities
 5:30 Sunday Forum Committee
 5:30 Racial Justice Initiative
 6:00 100 Hands
 6:00 Cherub Choir
 6:00 Youth Choir
 6:00 Intro Bells
 6:30 Board of Worship
 6:30 Fun with Dylan
 6:30 Chapel Singers
 6:30 Genesis Dancers
 6:35 Chorister Choir
 6:45 Intermediate Ringers
 6:45 Spiritual Exploration—Yoga
 7:00 Confirmation
 7:00 Plymouth Choir
 7:20 Alleluia Dancers
 7:30 Senior High

19 THURSDAY
 9:00 Archives Committee
 10:30 Meals on Wheels
 6:30 ICOM General Meeting
 7:00 Vivir Mi Vida Salsa Dance

20 FRIDAY

21 SATURDAY

22 SUNDAY
 9:00 First Service
 9:00 Archives—open for visitors
 9:45–12:15 Childcare
 10:00 New member class
 10:00 Sundays @ 10
 11:00 Second Service

23 MONDAY
 6:00 Let's Simplify—Spiritual Exploration
 7:00 Richard Rothstein's presentation on his exposé **The Color of Law.**

24 TUESDAY
 9:00 Contemplative Prayer
 9:00 Archives Committee
 12:30 OLLI: Books You Don't Have Time to Read
 4:00 Forced Into Camps—Spiritual Exploration
 5:00 The Mortality Project
 5:30 Lead Minister Search Committee
 6:30 Gun Violence Prevention Group

25 WEDNESDAY
 9:00 Knit-A-Bit
 9:30 Groveland Food Shelf
 10:00 Conversations from the Heart Practice Group
 1:00 Strobel Drop-in Center
 2:00 Archives
 4:00 Legacy Giving Committee
 5:00 Katy's Cafe
 5:00 Wednesdays in the basement: Youth activities
 6:00 100 Hands
 6:00 Leadership Council
 6:00 Cherub Choir
 6:00 Youth Choir
 6:00 Intro Bells
 6:30 Fun with Dylan
 6:30 Chapel Singers
 6:30 Genesis Dancers
 6:35 Chorister Choir
 6:45 Intermediate Ringers
 6:45 Spiritual Exploration—Yoga
 7:00 Confirmation
 7:00 Plymouth Choir
 7:20 Alleluia Dancers
 7:30 Senior High

26 THURSDAY
 9:00 Archives Committee
 10:30 Meals on Wheels
 2:00 The Heart of Aging with Wisdom—Spiritual Exploration
 3:00 Strobel Drop-in Center
 6:30 Discussions That Encounter
 7:00 Vivir Mi Vida Salsa Dance

27 FRIDAY

28 SATURDAY

29 SUNDAY
 9:00 First Service
 9:00 Archives—open for visitors
 9:45–12:15 Childcare
 10:00 Sundays @ 10
 11:00 Second Service
 5:00 Evensong—reflective service of healing, with music and silence

30 MONDAY

31 TUESDAY
 9:00 Contemplative Prayer
 9:00 Archives Committee
 4:00 Forced Into Camps—Spiritual Exploration



Farewell to Plymouth!

I have been privileged to serve as the Director of Communication at Plymouth Church, Minneapolis, for more than 8 years. By the time you read this, I will have moved on to a position at the University of Minnesota Libraries. Thank you for your support and encouragement during our time together. You are a fine group of people—and my colleagues have been wonderful! Best wishes to all on your journeys!

—Allison Campbell Jensen

PARISH REGISTER

BEREAVED

Robert "Bob" and Sonia Albers, death of Bob's brother, Dwight Albers

Brad Wieman, death of father, Wayne Wieman

DEATH

Charlott Marrow, mother of Frankie Marrow and Mary Marrow

IN THIS ISSUE

Coming Attractions 1
 Minister’s Message 2
 Grace Notes 2
 Words about Worship 3
 Search Update 3
 Outreach 4–5, 7
 Stewardship 6
 Community Life 6–7
 Arts 8
 Spiritual Formation 9–11
 March 2020 Calendar 12–13
 Parish Register 13

Editor: Allison Campbell Jensen
Director of Communications

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We reserve the right to edit or delay the publication of any article.

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SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 a.m. First Service

11 a.m. Second Service

- March 1 Paula Northwood**
- March 8 Gary Green (p. 3)**
- March 15 Seth Patterson**
- March 22 Beth Hoffman Faeth**
- March 29 Paula Northwood**

March 29

5 p.m., Evensong, a reflective service in the Chapel led by Beth Hoffman Faeth

Plymouth Congregational Church

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About those marked trees . . .

An inspector from the Minneapolis Park Board inspected the 12 ash trees around the parking lot recently. They all are infested with Emerald Ash Borer. Minneapolis will remove the three trees that are on City land; Plymouth will remove the other nine.

The trees will be removed now to avoid having dead trees in the city. Dead trees are more dangerous to remove, and there is a real danger of dead trees dropping limbs at unexpected times.

Several new trees were planted a few years ago, in anticipation of spread of the Emerald Ash Borer. These trees will not be affected by the ash borer, and with the competition from the ash trees removed, they will grow even faster.

Thank you for your understanding!

—Tom P. Anderson

