

Dear Plymouth Friends,

After a thorough and careful search, the Lead Minister Search Committee will bring its candidate—the Rev. Dr. DeWayne Davis—to the Congregation for a vote on September 27, 2020. [Include link to Zoom registration.]

We owe the Search Committee a huge debt for bringing forward such a talented and able candidate. DeWayne (as he invites us to call him) brings with him academic, public policy, government experience in addition to a strong, inclusive and loving theology. He is passionate about building connections and strengthening community. He holds up music and art as ways to the divine. As he himself says, “I believe I was called to be a part of a ministry and community that is committed to bearing witness to an alternative ordering of the world in which all God’s children are known, loved, and affirmed.”

DeWayne wants us to know him well enough by September 27 that we will feel able to cast our votes with integrity and “a sense of celebratory worship.” We want to welcome DeWayne in ways that are loving, warm, imaginative, generate connection, and that reflect what we hope for ourselves and for us together.

In service to those ends we are offering these opportunities to get to know DeWayne.

1. Click here[live link to DeWayne’s page] for information on DeWayne: a FAQ generously put together by the members of the Search Committee, a brief biography, links to several sermons that he’s delivered at his current church, All God’s Children Metropolitan Community Church; and links to some of his writings.
2. “Who Are You?” Thursday, September 17, 2020, 6–7 p.m. via Zoom. Please click here to register[live link to Zoom registration]. DeWayne will talk about his personal story, including introducing us to his husband, Kareem Murphy, and his path to Plymouth. If you have questions that you especially want to have answered about these topics, please send them to Annette Atkins[live link her email, aatkins@csbsju.edu] by mid-day September 16 so we can compile them and send them on to DeWayne. You’ll also be able to raise questions in the Zoom chat for DeWayne to answer as time allows.
3. “What Do We Want to Know?” Tuesday, September 22, 7–8 p.m. (Zoom). Please click here to register[live link to Zoom registration]. This session will be devoted to your questions, comments, expressions of your goals for this next phase of Plymouth’s life, your hopes for our life with DeWayne. Again, we’re asking that you send your comments/statements/questions to Annette Atkins[live link her email, aatkins@csbsju.edu] by mid-day September 21. We’ll also monitor your questions/comments during the Zoom.
4. “Getting to Know Each Other,” Saturday, September 26, 2020, 12:00—3:00, in-person in the Plymouth Church parking lot. We’re still working out the details (with the advice of the Plymouth COVID Task Force). Save the date and watch the website for more details.

5. On your own time and in your own way, let us take the opportunity—and remind ourselves—to pray for both DeWayne and Kareem and for our congregation as we move toward this next phase of Plymouth's life.

Presuming that the Congregation votes to call DeWayne, our welcoming activities go quiet from September 28 to December 28—his proposed start date. At Plymouth we will be celebrating Paula and preparing for her departure at the end of the year.

DeWayne will be focusing on saying goodbye to his own congregation. We have no claim on his time for this period and will best support him by leaving him to do that important work.

The Welcoming Party will be planning ways to build our individual and collective relationships with him starting in the new year, when, we hope, we may all be together again in person. (Oh, don't we look forward to those days!).

In the meantime, be well, be safe, wear your mask, participate in worship and Spiritual Formation and Forum programs, serve Sunday meals and support the food shelf, educate our children and ourselves. As Micah says: "act justly, seek mercy, and live humbly." Perhaps most importantly, let us give into the grace of loving ourselves and each other.

In community together,

The Welcoming Party

Lani Bennett, Beth Hoffman Faeth, Jeff Hall, Jasper Jonson, Annette Atkins, chair