

Waymarks

Plymouth Church | Helena Montana

July 2022

With Many Thanks...

Thank you to those who responded so generously to support the beautiful plantings along the front entrance to the church. Ken and Margy Kohl, Marcia Lauer (in memory of Bryan Graham), and Lucinda Sheldon contributed financial gifts; Dewey and Rosana Skelton planted lovely things in three of the pots; and Jennifer Thompson provided flowers for the red pot near the front door. Thanks, too, to Anna Demaree, who has been inspecting and transplanting flowers for the labyrinth and other spots in need of tending.

We are especially grateful to GardenWerks who in the past months donated organic compost, seeds, herbs and other plantings for the Plymouth Community Garden project, recognizing our service to the Afghan refugees. Such a wonderful surprise!

Thanks and much appreciation to Donna Hathy and Plymouth's Women's Fellowship who contributed almost \$500 to Sema's family in Afghanistan. They are in desperate need of medical care, food and housing help. Processed through WalMart, the donation was received within days. Donna read a thank you note, penned by Sema using her newly acquired English skills, during worship on Sunday, July 3.

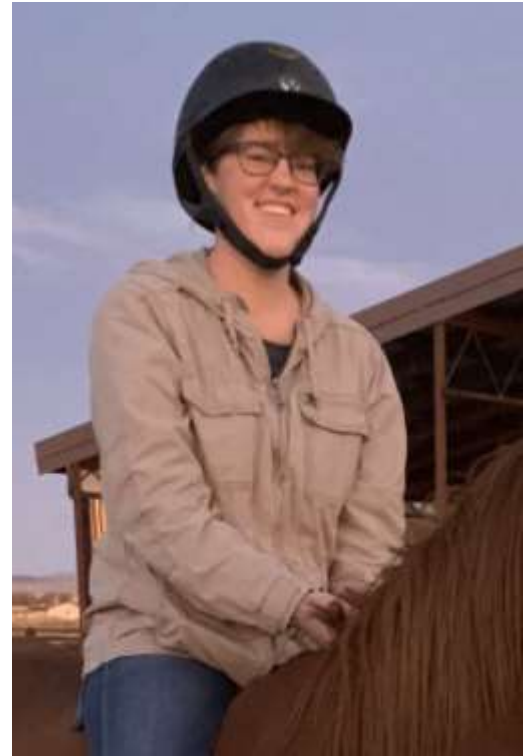
~ Jennifer Jeffries Thompson, Outreach and Social Justice Chair



<https://www.gardenwerks.com/>

Introducing Tommiejo Steele

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Tommiejo, the custodian for Plymouth Congregational Church. Tommiejo is from Townsend, and has worked with Plymouth for the past 8 months, beginning her employment upon seeing an ad at Helena College. Aside from being the custodian for Plymouth, Tommiejo works as a baker at Great Harvest in Helena, and in her free time enjoys writing. One specific area of writing she enjoys is on the knowledge and interesting lives of the elderly. She stated that she enjoys going into nursing homes and conducting interviews with the elderly, in order to have interesting material to write on. When asked what the favorite part of her job as the custodian is, she replied working late and listening to cool music. While working here, Tommiejo stated she has seen Plymouth become more welcoming to a variety of different people. She believes the openness of Plymouth can attract a diverse group of people, and social media is the method of letting people know Plymouth exists.



~ Clayton Ryerson



In Our Prayers Today

At Home: Giles Walker, Margy Kohl, Jay Shelden, Greg Bolin, and Nathan Schreder as they go through cancer treatment. Lorraine Hopgood, for continued recovery.

Touchmark: Evelyn Nelson, and Art and Clara Gilreath;

Hunter's Point: Marlyce Taylor;

Edgewood: Ed Canty

Continued prayers for Greg Bolin, Anna Demaree, Ben Sweeney, Lily Ascheman, and the people of Ukraine.

To add someone to the prayer list, please call the church office at 442-9883 or email pccofficemgr@gmail.com.

Religious Freedom

As I write this, I am preparing for the final meeting for the first round of the Fishing Tips book groups. Chapter 8 is titled “Say Who You Are”. It is about the importance of a congregation figuring out who they are and what they stand for. And perhaps more importantly, how and why a congregation should declare and display that message for the wider community to see.

For decades, the United Church of Christ has fought to defend and uphold the rights of the most vulnerable members of society. This is what Jesus calls us to do, as the representatives of **God’s will on Earth, and this is a legacy that we can be proud of.** Unfortunately, these rights are under attack, by the very people who claim to be acting on behalf of the church. We need to hold fast to our legacy, remind ourselves of who we are, and raise our voices in solidarity with the **people who might be hurt by these changes to our laws.** Jesus’ message was always about **comforting, healing, and reconciliation.** He didn’t advocate to control other people, and we need to let the community know that there are people in the church who advocate for fairness, justice, and the dignity of all people.

I am deeply disturbed by the current trajectory of our country, and I hope that Plymouth Congregational Church can be a voice of reason and love in the days to come. Our founding fathers created a nation in which the church was separated from the state for a reason. This allows not only people, but for the church, to be free in their religious expression, or lack thereof. No one should be forced to believe in a certain way or be forced to worship in a certain way. As Barbara Brown Taylor said:

“Jesus was not killed by atheism and anarchy. He was brought down by law and order allied with religion, which is always a deadly mix. Beware those who claim to know the mind of God and who are prepared to use force, if necessary, to make others conform. Beware those who cannot tell God’s will from their own.”

~ Pastor Charles

Fishing Tips Last Cast

If you missed the June/July “Fishing Tips” class hosted by Liz Gunderson and Rev. Wei, you still have an opportunity to participate. The second session (same book, same agenda) begins July 20 and meets every Wednesday through August 10. This class, facilitated by Jennifer Thompson with lots of help from Charles, will be from 9:00 to 10:30 AM, at her home. Plenty of coffee and nourishment will be provided. Books are available on the table in the Narthex. It is helpful if you can read the first two chapters before class begins. There is no test, but registration is important. Call the church office or sign up on the sheets provided at church.

Bunnies, Hail and Floods

There isn't much we can do about the weather. And apparently there isn't anything we can do about the cute bunnies who find Plymouth's Community Garden a veritable feast. Between the two of them (weather and rabbits) our garden plot #13 suffered a bit. Rabbits are particularly partial to bean greens, and the cabbage leaves are practically porous. But we are hopeful that in the coming months we will have produce to give to our neighbors, the Afghan refugees. The invitation to weed, water or harvest still holds. If you have some time, let Jennifer or someone in the office know of your availability.



Flood Damage to YWCA

You may have read that the flash flood in Helena on July 3 caused significant damage to local businesses. Among the non-profits experiencing significant loss is the Helena YWCA, a recipient of Plymouth's good will and resources over the years. The water collected in the lower level of the building, flooding the basement level classroom and storage areas, irrevocably destroyed stored mattresses, bedding, furniture as well as clothing for babies, children and women. Jenifer Gursky, Director of the Y, asks the public to support their efforts to raise funds so that measures can be taken to address the flood damage. (Their insurance may not cover the costs associated with flood.) From the amount budgeted for use by Plymouth's Outreach and Social Justice Committee, we have delivered a check to help as best we can. You, of course, are invited to help as you can; refer to the "Y" website. Or contact HACF/United Way, who are coordinating financial support for all those agencies affected. At this time do not send or contribute hard goods to replace those lost in the flood. The 27 residents living at the "Y" are inconvenienced by recent events, but their living areas were not affected.

A Note from Dr. Steve and Nancy Michelson

Summer has finally arrived and we are reveling in the beautiful views from our farm. While getting our pool ready for the warm weather ahead, we looked across a 180° span and saw on one side blue sky and white clouds, and on the other side black clouds and falling rain. It's a metaphor for life, isn't it? Good and bad will always co-exist and we have a choice to be optimistic or pessimistic. God gives us the courage to choose a positive outlook because He promises to always be with us. Our ultimate future is firmly in His hands, no matter what happens in our lives, if we trust His Word to be true.

A few hours later, as sunset approached, Steve called me back outside to view an incredible site – a DOUBLE RAINBOW right over our farm! The Creator of this phenomenon offers us a clear reminder of his presence every time this occurs. This is the God we serve and worship with you each Sunday at Plymouth Congregational. Thank you for inviting us and encouraging us in this work.

We remind you of the fundraiser the Music Ministry is sponsoring to purchase and install a monitor in the back of the church. This will allow participants to easily view what is being shown on the front wall without having to awkwardly turn their backs to the congregation. The Michelson fowl are offering their eggs for sale, but we will also gladly accept donations! Make sure any checks you may write are clearly labeled for this project.

Also, Steve and I invite all of you to celebrate our 1st wedding anniversary on July 31st! We will have a potluck picnic out at our farm, starting at 5 PM. We will provide beverages and you can bring the rest. A sign-up sheet will be located in the narthex so we can make sure we have a well-balanced menu.

We're definitely looking forward to eating your yummy offerings!

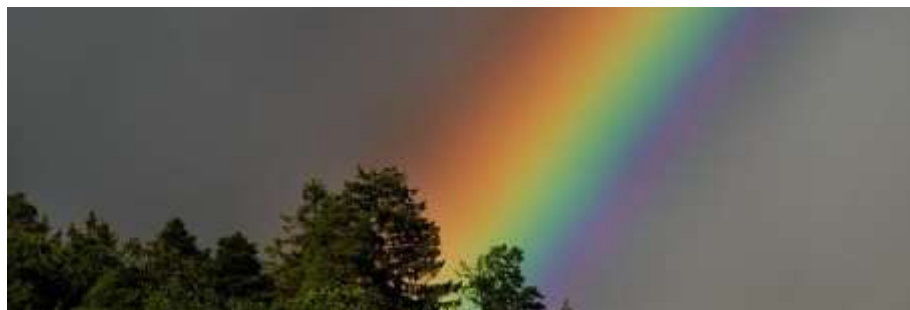


Image by Monsterkoi from Pixabay



PRIDE SERVICE

GOD LOVES AND AFFIRMS US ALL

JULY 23, 2022 AT 9 AM

**ST. PAUL'S METHODIST CHURCH
512 LOGAN ST, HELENA, MT**

**WE MARCH TO THE PARADE
AFTER THE SERVICE!**

LINE UP: 10:00 / PARADE START: 11:00

Tuesdays with Charles

If you find that your summer weekends take you away from the comforts and pleasures of Sunday morning worship at Plymouth, all is not lost. During the summer on most Tuesdays (around 11:30 AM) beginning June 21 Charles invites you to join him for a picnic lunch outdoors on the lower level of the church. There is no program or purpose other than to eat and to catch up on the news. Bring your own sandwich and a lawn chair; Plymouth will provide the best view in town.

Moderator's Message

The Church Council has been busy approving bids for work on the church, endorsing the vital work of outreach and social justice, tweaking bylaws, and discussing communications and worship. **For the past decade, we've all heard concerns about the aging boiler that heats water for the system that keeps the church and daycare warm in the winter. As I write, Montana City Plumbing and Heating is dismantling the old boiler, and rusty, sooty parts are filling a scrap trailer. We're eager to see to new, shiny boilers that should deliver heat at about 98% efficiency. The total cost will be \$106,172. A large portion of this cost will be covered by a bequest to Plymouth from Betty Purvis. Others have made regular contributions to a boiler fund. We are grateful to these benefactors who have made new boilers, pumps and other equipment possible.**

The Council and its various committees have enjoyed working with Pastor Charles (including the food he prepares and shares) over these past eight months. **As we approach the one-year mark under Pastor Charles' guidance, the congregation will have the opportunity to vote on the future of our pastoral leadership.** The Search Committee recommended that the Rev. Wei be presented to the Congregation for a Settled Pastor position, to be voted on at a Congregational meeting following church on September 18, 2022. If the vote is affirmative, an installation ceremony will be scheduled in early October.

Also, the Council will present updated bylaws to the congregation on September 18 for possible approval. The congregation will be encouraged to make suggestions for revisions as soon as the revised bylaws are posted on the website in August.

At the July 6 meeting, the Council voted to proceed with website redesign. Please visit the Plymouth Congregational Church website periodically and provide feedback about its ease of use, attractiveness, content value and timeliness.

I hope you are enjoying our Montana summer and felt grateful for our recent precipitation, despite the fury of our recent storms.

Blessings,
Jan Clinard

Community Paddles Blazing with Love—August 6th

You're invited to Plymouth Congregational Church's Community Ping Pong Festival/Benefit Fundraiser for Afghan Refugee Families and Children of Helena -- Join us Saturday, August 6th any time between 9am-1pm, downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

Everyone is invited to come and bring their friends and family to this fun event, a project of Plymouth's Outreach and Social Justice Committee in collaboration with **Hands On Global's** Afghan Refugee Resettlement Team/HARRT and many other community partners.

In this Festival ping pong players of all ages and all playing levels will come together for free fun playing (and/or) watching ping pong, the second most popular sport in the world, next to soccer, while giving the Helena community a chance to both have some fun together and also donate some funds to meet some of the pressing needs of Afghan refugee families and children in the Helena area.



This Festival is an opportunity for all of us to:

- ◇ meet and warmly welcome Afghan refugee families and their children
- ◇ contribute some funds to help our new Afghan refugee friends meet their needs and get adjusted
- ◇ enjoy some music from local musicians playing/singing some songs and leading us in some fun and uplifting sing-alongs
- ◇ share snacks/meals that will be prepared and sold by local Afghan refugee families
- ◇ watch, cheer and play ping pong with some "celebrity ping pong all-stars" (Helena locals and great ping pong players from across Montana) playing for fun with all of us, and
- ◇ try our hand at playing some creative, tricky ping pong/table tennis gimmick games dreamt up by local ping pong players.

Breakfast Under the Big Sky—August 14th



Mark your calendars and save the date August 14 for Breakfast Under the Big Sky, courtesy of Cathy Campbell who graciously loans us access to her ranch near Gates of the Mountains. Details will follow in coming issues of Waymarks.

CAMP MIMANAGISH



For those needing financial assistance to attend summer church camp, scholarship applications are available in the church office and on the website. Applications must be submitted to the church office at least one month before the chosen camp is scheduled to begin. Camperships may be awarded for up to 50% of the registration fee for each camp.



Applicants must be members or friends of Plymouth Church or affiliated with a member.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Saturday, July 23rd at 9:00 a.m.—PRIDE Service and March to Parade—at St. Paul's UMC

Sunday, July 31st at 5:00 p.m.—First Anniversary Potluck—Michelson's

Saturday, August 6th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.—Community Paddles Blazing with Love

Sunday, August 14th—Breakfast Under the Big Sky—PCC Worship at Gates of the Mountains.

Monday, August 22nd—Pastor Charles' Birthday

Sunday, September 11th after worship—Fishing Tips Final Cast Luncheon and Discussion

Sunday, September 18th after worship—PCC Congregational Meeting

October—Valerie Hellermann Exhibit and Presentation at Plymouth

November—Jeff Buscher at Plymouth

Treasurer's Report

Welcome to summer! At the half-way mark in our fiscal year, I have a few concerns to report regarding our financial situation, although we continue to have close to three months operating expenses in our general funds. Our endowment Fund with the United Church Funds has taken a severe hit in the stock market recently, so we will not take any interest from the account. We had planned to take \$3000 in interest income this year, but that looks unlikely because it has fallen below the \$100,000 benchmark for taking the interest income for the operating budget. Coupled with lower stewardship donations we may feel a crunch in the next two quarters of the year.

Stewardship pledges for 2022 were budgeted at \$113,740, the amount the congregation pledged to give. That comes to \$28,435 per quarter. In the second quarter, April through June, we received \$20,200, or \$8,235 below the pledged amount. On behalf of the council, I ask you to not forget Plymouth as you prepare to go on summer vacation or review your spending for the summer. The office will be sending out stewardship statements shortly, and if you can make sure you are current that would be a big relief.

On a positive note, our ad hoc building use – rentals to groups for one-time events – has increased, and while this is a small portion of our budget it is helpful and also increases usage and awareness of who we are. Please let your friends and neighbors know they can consider Plymouth as a place to host meetings or events.

The last category of expenses that has increased is in the area of technology – streaming services, social media and communications, and our website. We have received some generous donations to help us cover one-time purchases, for which we are extremely grateful, but we realize going forward that maintaining these essential services will add lines – and expenses – to our future budgets.

So please enjoy summer in all its glory, remembering you can attend church virtually in real-time or any time afterwards through the wonders of technology. You can find the streaming service right on our website.

~ Pat Christian, Plymouth Treasurer

Creation Care Tips

Reduce Your Trash Load!

Composting is a great way to reduce your trash load and turn food scraps and other compostable items into organic soil nutrients. Curbside residential and business pickup is available in Helena for a very reasonable monthly fee.



<https://406compost.com/>

The collection includes meat, bones, dairy, and other compostable items such as cups, utensils, and dishware!

The material collected is processed and fed to worms by our partners at YES Compost who sell the worm casting, an excellent organic soil nutrient.

BETTER ROOTS COMPOSTING

<https://betterrootscomposting.com/>

- All food scraps including: fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, processed foods, eggshells, bones, seafood shells, coffee grounds, tea & tea bags
- All yard waste and non-diseased houseplants
- Non-glossy paper, non-glossy cardboard, paper towels, paper bags, paper packaging, newspaper, napkins, tissues, coffee filters, non-dyed cardboard egg cartons (remove all stickers & tape)
- BPI certified products

Plymouth Church, U.C.C.

400 S. Oakes St.

Helena, MT 59601

Plymouth's Mission is to nurture our congregation and the wider community with acts of love and a vision of God's image in all things.



Plymouth Church

400 S. Oakes St.

Helena, MT 59601

Office Hours

- Pastor Charles Wei: 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. (Tues. & Thurs.), and by appointment.
- Office Manager Gloria Soja: 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. (Wed.-Thur.)
- Bookkeeper Gail Tronstad by appointment.

Sundays
10:00 a.m. Worship Service
In Person and Online

Contact Us

Church Office: 406.442.9883

Web: www.plymouthmontanaucc.org

Email: pccofficemgr@gmail.com

Also: www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational