

Waymarks

Plymouth Church | Helena Montana

December 2022

The North 40

With all of the snow covering everything in a blanket of white, it can be hard to remember what things looked like, and harder still to imagine what things might look like in the future. But, that is exactly what the North 40 Committee is attempting to do, right now. Except for some mowing and the addition of the labyrinth and community garden, the lot has sat mostly untouched for over 60 years. Inspired by our summer reading of Rev. Dr. John Pentland's Fishing Tips, and how we need to open ourselves up to the wider community and the Holy Spirit moving in our midst, the congregation came up with several ideas of what we might do with the lot.



From a distance, it might not be attractive, but when you get up close, it has a wild beauty all of its own. It's not just a field of weeds or grass, there are lots of different plant species there, and it serves as a wild habitat for birds, insects, lizards, and even some mammals. In the spring and summer, flowers in purple, pink, yellow, and white burst into bloom, and you might even find a mushroom or two. So, in my opinion, it doesn't need much, just a few touches here and there to make it look intentional and stave off angry calls from neighbors complaining that we're not maintaining our property.

Most of the ideas that the congregation came up with for the North 40 were for different elements of a park, from benches and picnic tables, to a gazebo and play equipment for kids. People suggested a walking path and a new fence for the community garden; the current one is sagging and being propped up by posts. Some people talked about native plants and maybe a butterfly garden. We talked about water fountains and interpretive signs. Several people talked about how the labyrinth might be used more, if it wasn't so exposed to the noise and

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distraction from Winne. The old church sign is barely holding together, so part of our plans for this project should include a replacement for that, as well.

We're hoping to keep the conversation going about the possibilities for the North 40, especially for those who were not at the Fishing Tips luncheon. Dick Mayer dug up his original blueprint from 1972, for what the congregation was considering, at that time. It was supposed to be a parking lot. Using this as a template, Gus Byrom measured the lot, and made a new drawing that included the labyrinth and community garden. Now, we want input from you! In a few weeks, we are going to put up blank templates for the North 40 in the Fireside Room for everyone to draw their ideas on during coffee hour. The sky's the limit; this is the time to let your imaginations fly! If money were no object, what would you like to see there? If we didn't have to adhere to any city ordinances, what would you want next door to the church? If we had all the time in the world, what kind of legacy do you want to leave to this neighborhood and the city of Helena?

I hope you'll each take some time to think about this and add your ideas to the drawings. In the dead of winter, there's only so much that we can do on the ground, but we can certainly start planning. Let's envision something new and beautiful for the North 40.

~ Pastor Charles



Image by Victoria Model from Pixabay

Empty Stockings

“Who Is My Neighbor?” Literally and figuratively it includes one of the group homes associated with Spring Meadow Resources, located directly behind Plymouth on Tamarack Street. About 8 adult men with disabilities, ranging in age from 25 to 90, live there. This year, for the Empty Stocking campaign, OSJ proposes to provide mini-baskets of fruit throughout the year. A small tree in the Fireside Room contains 12 envelopes which you may remove, register your intent to provide fruit on a specific month of the year, and return the enclosed “stocking” to the tree. We will help you keep track of the month for which you signed-up. Feel free to partner with others if you like. It will be like Christmas, all year around for the men at Tamarack House. If you have questions see Jennifer.

Christmas Carols & the Liturgical Year

As most of you know who are familiar with the Congregational Church-United Church of Christ, our church follows the liturgical calendar, which consists of a three-year cycle of Christian seasons. The liturgical calendar determines when important Christian events are observed, which scripture readings are to be read each Sunday, and hopefully, which hymns are sung that follow the seasons or scripture readings.

The Congregational Church calendar consists of six seasons:

1. Advent – a season of spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ;
2. Christmas – begins on Christmas Eve and continues for the next “twelve days of Christmas,” culminating in the Feast of the Epiphany;
3. Epiphany – reflections on the Incarnation (embodiment) of God as a human being. God enters human history and identifies fully with the human condition;
4. Lent – the conversion of a reconciliation of our lives towards God. Christians look inward and reflect on their readiness to follow Jesus in his journey towards the cross;
5. Holy Week – Christians follow the footsteps of Jesus from his entry into Jerusalem through the Last Supper to his death on the cross;
6. Easter – the season from Easter to Pentecost celebrates the resurrection of Christ and recognizes Pentecost when the Holy Spirit overpowered the barriers of culture and race. This is the season when Christ appeared to several of his followers following his resurrection.

During the Advent/Christmas seasons, the dilemma for Christians in the Congregational Church, and specifically for us at Plymouth, is that according to the liturgical calendar, we’re expected to sing songs pertaining to Advent and not Christmas for the four weeks leading up to Christmas Eve. There are 23 Advent songs in our current hymnbook, only six of which are somewhat familiar to many of you; there are 29 Christmas hymns/carols, 17 of which are very familiar to most members. For those of you who enjoy singing in church services, and especially Christmas carols, when do we have an opportunity to sing all those songs? They can’t all be sung on Christmas Eve or Christmas Sunday. For most people the only singing they do is in church, not in community choirs or along with a radio or CD. In my church music work, I’ve received countless requests to sing more Christmas carols. What then do we do?

This year, Nancy and I have decided to look for traditional “Christmas carols” that could be interpreted as referring to Christ’s birth in the near future or as a foretelling of that special

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event. This will hopefully provide people with an opportunity to sing some familiar carols during Advent without deviating too far from the liturgical calendar. Songs with references to “this night,” “the manger,” “silent night,” or “the lord has come,” etc. will be saved for Christmas Eve this year, while songs with more general themes surrounding the birth of Christ will be inserted into worship services during Advent.

While singing the hymns during Advent this year, look at the words in a different way, perhaps as if you’re telling the story of Christ’s birth as it occurred centuries ago, or as it draws nearer. I think you’ll see some of these familiar songs in a new way. We will also be including a congregational sing-along on Christmas Eve, which will include several of the most familiar carols that pertain to the birth event. It should be fun for you to join in the singing of those carols at that time!

~ Steve Michelson

Giving Thanks

Hands on Global organized a glorious Thanksgiving feast for 45 people, including Afghan families, at Plymouth on Thanksgiving Day. Some of you contributed pies and desserts, for which we received a note of thanks (printed below). Plymouth’s Outreach and Social Justice Committee also provided board games, art supplies, a new high chair for Sema’s 3 week-old baby girl (the most beautiful baby), and a set of portable chairs and tables for all the little people attending. It was so good to see some Plymouth folks participating in this event, as well. Thank you all, for this tremendous expression of fellowship and support. Valerie’s letter to the church is below:

Jennifer

Thank you so much for your part in organizing food for thanksgiving dinner. We had about 45 people and it was delicious. The kids really got into the board games and drawing. what a great idea. Thanks so much. All the leftovers went to Gods Love where I found 18 people on the street saying they had missed dinner. Well that seemed odd but I gave them the food and they dove into it.

I left a pan and a pie plate and have one more pie plate here to return. I will wash the towels and return them before I leave

See you before Christmas

Valerie Hellermann, Executive Director, Hands on Global







Thanks Plymouth!

Many thanks to everyone who has submitted a financial Pledge for our 2023 Stewardship Campaign: Simply Put, Stewardship is What You Do with What You Have.

With a feeling of sincere Thankfulness, I am very pleased to report that as of the end of November, 53 Commitment Pledges, including eight new Pledges, have been received. These Pledges total \$122,600!

Of course, if you are still thinking about your financial giving to Plymouth, your Pledge will gladly be accepted during the holiday season.

Thanks to Florence Mayer, Jay Shelden, Nancy Michaelson and Pastor Charles for sharing their personal stories about Giving during our Stewardship Campaign and to Gail Tronstad and Gloria Sonja for their assistance with the Campaign.

Our Plymouth Board will develop a 2023 church budget following on our Stewardship Theme and decide: What We Do with What We Have.

Thankfully,

Chuck Butler, 2023 Stewardship Chair

Moderator's Message

Listening to news commentators on the topic of “dependency” (i.e. energy), I am struck by the realization of how dependent we are on one another. Total “independent” living is something of a fiction. At Plymouth, we depend on one another for funding the church’s operations, inspiration, spiritual guidance, and fellowship; and our community depends on churches as well. We are thankful.

The Council depends on members to rotate into leadership roles. If you haven’t volunteered already, you may be nominated by Lynn Bolin and Carol McKerrow to take on one of three positions (Secretary, Buildings and Grounds Coordinator, or Vice-Moderator) this January.

We can depend on Plymouth to help us enjoy the Blessings of Christmas!

~ Jan Clinard

Toxic Charity

Yes, you read that right. It's one of the descriptors we learned about during Rev. Jeff Buscher's sermon meditation on November 6th. (Jeff is the Community Impact Coordinator for United Way.) Since that engagement Outreach and Social Justice along with Pastor Charles have been working on an amazing opportunity to engage local clergy with The United Way in taking a more decisive role in the discussion regarding housing and homelessness in the tri-county area. Plymouth through OSJ is hosting a lunch in the Fellowship Hall on Thursday, December 15 at 11:30 AM. If you have some free time and can help with set-up, clean-up, or serving let Jennifer know. The meal, provided free to the clergy attending, is catered. "Toxic Charity" it is not; it is a small step to equip people with the skills and initiative to address a very serious problem.



In Our Prayers Today

At Home: Giles Walker, 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; Jim and Doris Powell.

Edgewood: Ed Canty

Prayers for David Donaldson and family in their grief over the death of Sava. Continued prayers for Anna Demaree, Ben Sweeney, and Jeff Alberta.

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

Women's Fellowship Meeting—December 13th

Women's Fellowship will meeting Tuesday, December 13th at 10:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room. Bring a favorite Christmas memory to share. We will not have a luncheon in December. Our January meeting will be Tuesday, January 10th.



Dear Youth, Youth Group, and Youth Group Leader:

The Helena Walk to Emmaus/Chrysalis

community will be hosting a Chrysalis Youth Retreat on January 5-8, 2022, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Helena, MT. This retreat is open to youth, sophomore – senior, who have not previously attended a Chrysalis weekend.

Each participant attending the Chrysalis retreat must have a sponsor, who is someone that has attended a Walk to Emmaus, Cursillo, Chrysalis or any similar event. If a youth would like to attend, but does not know someone who can sponsor them, our team will provide a sponsor for them.

The event starts on Friday morning at 8 a.m. and ends on Sunday evening at about 5 p.m. The youth will spend the entire weekend at the retreat and will not be allowed to come and go from the weekend. They will have to miss school on January 5, 2022. They will need to be in attendance (no work, sports, activities) the entire weekend.

The cost of the weekend is \$50/participant.

We have included a little bit of information about Chrysalis and would be more than willing to answer any additional questions for the group, individuals, or parents. There is a QR code below for the application link.

Please share this information with whomever you feel would be interested and if you have any additional questions, feel free to contact Phaedra Raymond (Board Chair) at 406-459-3226.

Sincerely,

The Helena Walk to Emmaus/Chrysalis Board





YOUTH RETREAT

An inspirational fun filled weekend with other youth.

Great food, amazing music, laughter, tears, group activities, time alone, skits, crafts, devotion, self-reflection, speakers, and so much more!



What is Chrysalis?

At Chrysalis we strive to inspire, challenge, and equip tomorrows leaders for a lifetime of Christian action in their families, churches, communities, and work.

The weekend is filled with opportunities to learn and grow in relationship with God, others, and yourself. You will enjoy three days of learning, laughing, reflecting, singing, eating, worshipping, praying, creating, games, and participating in small groups. You will hear talks by youth and adults, centered around unconditional love and grace. You will take away valuable insight into who you are, and how you can reflect that love and grace to others.



WHO IS CHRYSALIS FOR?

If you are a

Sophomore, Junior, or Senior

and you want to:

- *Make new "forever" friends
- *Learn and grow in your faith
- *Develop lifelong skills for stronger relationships
- *Become a leader in your school, church, or community
- *Have the best weekend ever
- *Spend time away from day-to-day life.....

"I had so much fun!"



"I made forever friends!"

THEN CHRYSALIS IS FOR YOU!

~ ~ WE WELCOME ALL ~ ~

Any denomination, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability

Event Location

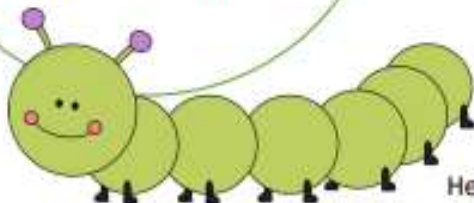
St. Paul's United Methodist Church – Helena, MT
406-442-5643

Event Schedule

~ Arrive Friday at 8am
~ Closing service Sunday at 4:00pm

We can accommodate:

Dietary Needs
Medications
Mobility, physical, hearing, and sight needs



"It was like my camp and Convo experiences... amazing!"

Helena Walk to Emmaus and Chrysalis Community
Learn more and sign up at Helenaemmaus.org
More info at <http://chrysalis.upperroom.org/about>

"So powerful, it changed my life!"

Cost for Retreat Weekend: \$50

JANUARY 5-8, 2023

Coming Up: 60th Anniversary

Sunday, May 28, 2023

We will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the groundbreaking for Plymouth Congregational Church on Sunday, May 28, 2023. To help us do that, you are invited to share recipes for a church cookbook, as well as stories and memories for a booklet we can hand out. Also, if you have any pictures you would like to share, or if you have any other ideas of how we can celebrate, we welcome all of that! Please send your recipes, stories, and pictures to pccofficemgr@gmail.com.



Photo by [NIPYATA!](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Creation Care Tips

Solar?

Thinking about solar panels? Prices for electricity are poised to increase dramatically in the next few years, and solar panels might be what you need to offset some of those costs, while also reducing the amount of fossil fuels we need to burn to light our homes. The church is currently looking at some solar panel options for just that reason, but we are still in the early research stage, so there isn't anything to report yet. Because of several factors, including our electric use and our geographic location, it might turn out that solar panels are not feasible for us. We will keep you updated as we learn more, and let you all know when and if this might be a possibility for Plymouth.

~ Rev Charles Wei



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