

# Waymarks

Plymouth Church | Helena Montana

February 2023

## Mykaila James

As I sit in my office writing this, listening to the screaming babies at the daycare, my mind is drawn to my new niece, who isn't even a day old yet. Mykaila James Bobritsky was born in Los Angeles, CA, on Tuesday, January 31, and the family couldn't be any happier. As I sit here writing this, I think about my sister and how difficult this process was for her. I think about her disappointment and her sadness when she miscarried earlier last year, and her fear that she would never carry a child to term. I think about how worried I was when she told me she was pregnant again, and how relieved I am now that everything went well.



I am so thankful for the community of support that surrounds her during this time, and all of the doctors and nurses and other medical professionals that helped her to make it to this point. I'm thankful for all of the prayers that the congregation sent her way. And, I'm thankful for the joy that this new baby will bring into all of our lives.

It's been difficult watching all of this from afar. I know that I'm where God wants me to be, and I know that my family doesn't begrudge my decision to be here. But, I still wish I could be there to witness all of this firsthand. Is it foolish for me to have been away from my family for so long? Is it foolish for me to be away for God-only-knows how many more years? I think about all of the things that I've missed, all of the things that I wish I could have been there for. All of the things that I wonder if I should have been there for.

With Spring just around the corner, I think about how a new baby is a new beginning, a fresh start, a world of possibilities. With James as her middle name, she will always carry with her the legacy of my late brother. She is a connection to our past, and a symbol of our future, and like all babies, I'm sure she has a multitude of surprises just waiting for us.

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Love transcends time and distance, and I have to remember what I preached on Sunday: that God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom. I may think it's foolishness to be away from my family for this long, but it's God's foolishness that brought me here. And, it is God who brought this little blessing into our lives to shake things up, to give us hope, and to bring us joy. I only hope that we are all up to the task of welcoming her into this world, and that we can prepare her for the challenges she will face in her life. But for now, she is safely bundled up in her mother's arms, blissfully unaware of the wider world around her. And, I hope that when she does take her first steps, and that when her world starts to get wider, we are all ready.

~ Rev. Charles Wei

### **Charity Knitting & Crochet**

Cindy Holcomb and her group made 15 baby items for the Lewis and Clark County Public Health Department Home Visitor Program. To get involved in future projects join in Charity Knitting & Crochet, Thursdays from 2-3pm in the Fireside Room.



## Moderator's Message

On January 29, our Annual Congregational Meeting heard reports from 2022, elected three new council members, adopted a 2023 budget, and formed a Study Group to explore the installation of solar panels. Council members Liz Gunderson, Mary Drysdale, and Boyce Fowler retired from their positions, but will remain active on committees. Mary has offered to chair the Solar Panel Work Group that will research cost, grant funding and incentives, and bring a proposal to the church council. This initiative represents Plymouth's commitment to Creation Care, reminding me of Plymouth's mission to "nurture our congregation and the wider community with acts of love and vision of God's image in all things."

Having dislocated my shoulder last week, I'm dealing with a painful arm, but also numb fingers. I'm not sure which is worse. Resting in front of the TV with an icepack on my shoulder, I watched the unspeakable pain that humans inflict upon others, appearing numb to their target's suffering, ignoring a central tenet of every religion: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Christianity); "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful" (Buddhism); "As you would have people do to you, do to them; and what you dislike to be done to you, don't do to them" (Islam).

It's evident that our congregation practices love for our neighbors through data collected for the UCC Yearbook. But *how many* community members did we impact in 2022 with programs and outreach? Because our ushers have counted and recorded attendance on Sundays, we know that our in-person attendance for worship ranged from 32 to 108, for an average of 45. But *how many* attended other "Christian education" events? If you counted at any special programs, please send me your best estimate. In 2023, I hope we can improve our data-collection methods.

Please contact members of the Council if you have suggestions or questions:

Jan Clinard:	Moderator
Lynn Bolin:	Vice Moderator (Personnel Committee)
Jill VanAlstyne:	Secretary
Terry Tatchell:	Building and Grounds Coordinator
Pat Christian:	Treasurer/Financial Affairs Coordinator
Jennifer Jeffries-Thompson:	Outreach and Social Justice Coordinator
<i>and</i>	
Pastor Charles Wei	Worship Committee Coordinator

The next Council meeting will be February 16 at 4 p.m.

~ Jan Clinard

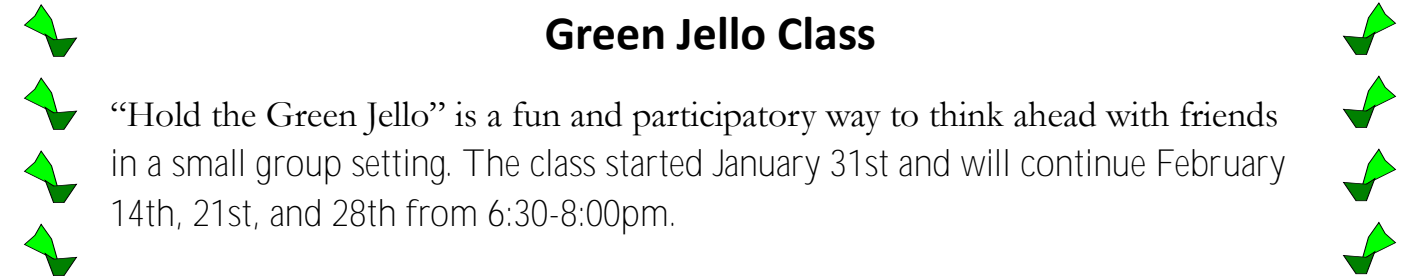
## Still Asking, “Who Is My Neighbor?”

- The Outreach and Social Justice Committee meets on Friday February 24 at 10 in the Fire-side Room. Our guest at this meeting will be Dave Hunter. He will provide some information about student-refugees from Ukraine who are currently attending Carroll College. Even if you are not a member of the Committee you are invited to participate.
- Thank you to Patti Burke and Suzanne Nybo for delivering fruit to Tamarack House in January. Lynn Bolin will provide fruit during the month of February.
- Committee members continue to meet with staff at United Way concerning housing issues facing the tri-county area. If you are curious about the “action team assignments” associated with housing density, housing for vulnerable populations, available funding or city/county policies (zoning regulations, etc.), you are encouraged to get involved. Let Jennifer know of your concern.
- “Hold the Green Jello...” class began on January 31 and continues until February 28. We meet weekly to plan and to prepare our “celebrations of life” in a joyful and loving way, knowing that no matter who or what, an end to life comes to all. The class is full, but if you think you would like to learn more for another time, let Pastor Charles know.
- We’re working on an opportunity to provide financial support for the Afghan women in our community who are struggling to learn English. We are thankful for and recognize the on-going work of Donna Hathy, who serves as an ESL instructor.
- Committee members will purchase and deliver meat to God’s Love during February. The funds for this effort come from your generous donations on behalf of Dave Donaldson and a match from Town Pump.

~ Jennifer Jeffries Thompson, Outreach and Social Justice Chair



### Green Jello Class



“Hold the Green Jello” is a fun and participatory way to think ahead with friends in a small group setting. The class started January 31st and will continue February 14th, 21st, and 28th from 6:30-8:00pm.



## **“Souper” Bowl Fun**

Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles matchup is on February 12th. Starting on Communion Sunday, February 5th, you can “vote” for your favorite team by dropping a non-perishable food item in your team’s box. Stuffing the ballot box is encouraged. After the 12th we will count the food donations to see which team has won. All food items will be donated to Food Share.

After the holidays, donations drop off at the food bank, but the need remains the same. According to the Food Share website, 1 in 5 children and 1 in 5 seniors in Helena are food insecure. Some of the items you might donate could be: canned vegetables, canned fruits, canned meat, cereal, peanut butter, rice, beans, pasta, pasta sauce, cake mix, canned frosting, canned soup, cooking oil, etc.

A Super Bowl tradition in the Mandeville family is to make gorp and watch the game. For fellowship on the 12th, you could bring any dry ingredients and we will share in this tradition by making and sharing our own gorp. Some possibilities are raisins, nuts, M & Ms, etc.

We hope you will join with us in having fun and sharing with our neighbors who need a helping hand.

~ Lucinda Sheldon



## **In Our Prayers Today**

At Home: Giles Walker, Margy Kohl, Gus and Brenda Byrom, Jay Sheldon, 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 Frank Kromkowski’s sister-in-law, Rose Zavisca, and family as they grieve the death of her husband Joe. Continued prayers for Karen Hays, Al and Dianne Senne, for Dave Weaver, Dianne Zimmerman, Jim Beran, and Anna Demaree.

*To add someone to the prayer list, please call the church office at 442-9883 or email [pccofficemgr@gmail.com](mailto:pccofficemgr@gmail.com).*

## 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](mailto:pccofficemgr@gmail.com).



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

# Creation Care Tips

## Buying in Bulk

It's surprising how many of the things that we do to help the environment can also help our bottom line. Have you ever tried buying things in bulk at the grocery store? Many grocery stores have bulk sections where you can buy things like flour, sugar, nuts, beans, and grains, even things like breakfast cereal, coconut oil, and honey, without all of the extra packaging that often comes with these items. Some places will even let you bring your own reusable containers, which reduces waste even more. Buying in bulk reduces single-use plastics and saves you money!

~ Rev Charles Wei

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## **Plymouth Church, U.C.C.**

400 S. Oakes St.

Helena, MT 59601

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**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 Alane Dallas: 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. (Tues.-Thurs.)
- 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](http://www.plymouthmontanaucc.org)

**Email:** [pccofficemgr@gmail.com](mailto:pccofficemgr@gmail.com)

**Also:** [www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational](http://www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational)