

Waymarks

Plymouth Church | Helena Montana

May 2023

Let's Begin at the Beginning



When I first started working on the mural that is currently up in the Fireside Room, I had no idea how much of an impact it would have on my life. What I initially intended to be a one year-long project ended up taking three years, and for a long time, the seminary used it for marketing and promotional materials. They made the life-sized reproduction, which is what we have hanging on the wall, that fit onto a collapsible aluminum scaffolding, so they could bring it to meetings and conventions across the country, and I have used stories about the mural and its creation in many sermons throughout the years.

I always intended to create some kind of document to explain the images that I used in the mosaic, including all of the hidden imagery, but I just never got around to it. Alane suggested that I do a write-up about it for this month's Waymarks, and thought this would be a great opportunity to finally record all of this information that's been rattling around my head, for posterity's sake.

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I am going to make this as comprehensive as I can, so I won't be able to cover the whole thing in this article, but starting at the far left, we have the section dedicated to Genesis. In the upper left corner is the Sun and the Moon. I want to note here that several inches from the left and right sides are not included in this reproduction. To the left of the Sun and Moon, there were pieces of dark stained-glass representing the chaos that existed before Creation. I found these pieces of stained-glass while exploring the school's bell tower; they were part of a proposal to make the stained-glass windows that are currently at the school. Because they are so dark, and there is no light coming through them, they look almost black, but you can see hints of their color when you get up close to them.

To the right of the Sun, the sky is filled with white birds. These form the beginning of an arc of animals, leading to the fish, and then the turtles, ending with the head of a lamb. The curling blue tiles form rivers, representing the separating of the waters and the earth. My sister presented me with a bag of these tiles when I came home to visit one year. She and my brother's son had gone for a walk, and they noticed that bits of blue tile were mixed with the gravel on the side of the road. She knew I was working on this mosaic, so she and my nephew collected these tiles for me. Hidden in the head of the lamb is the astrological symbol for Leo, because Jesus is described as the lion and the lamb. Also, I'm a Leo. 😊

Above the lamb is Adam, and to the right of the lamb is Eve, who is talking to the serpent, who is wrapped around an apple. Above the serpent, a wave is lifting up Noah's ark, with a rainbow overhead. Within the rainbow is a Pac-Man, about to eat a row of beads. The Pac-Man came from a box of ceramics that my internship supervisor gave me. Her children had made these when they were young, and she was hoping I could incorporate them into the mosaic. I was working on the rainbow at the time, and I thought that would be the perfect place for Pac-Man. At the upper right of this scene is a dove, with an olive branch in its beak. Below the dove is the symbol for peace. Below that, a thick grout line forms a cursive "h". This is the last letter of the word "Faith" which is hidden in this section of the mosaic. The capital "F" is below the Sun, and is about a foot and a half tall. The "a" occupies most of the space above Adam's head, and the "i" and the "t" are beneath the curve of the rainbow. If you can't find "Faith", you can ask me, and I'll point it out to you.



Thanks for letting me share my art with you! I'll cover the rest of it in upcoming editions of the Waymarks.

~ Rev. Charles Wei



There's an event coming up this month that some of you may be interested in. As some of you may know, I'm the conductor of a community choir in Helena called the Helena Chamber Singers. I formed HCS in September 1999. We took a pandemic hiatus in 2019 for three years and just resumed rehearsals in January.

We are presenting two concerts this month. The first is on Sunday, May 21 at 4:00 pm. It's being held right here, at Plymouth Congregational Church. The second concert is on Tuesday, May 23rd at 7:30 pm. It's being held at a location not familiar to many people in Helena—the Consistory Shrine Temple. Only two previous choral concerts have ever been presented in the Shrine Temple auditorium—one by the Helena High School choirs and the other by the Helena Chamber Singers (2014), both of which I conducted. The concert on May 23rd will be the third such concert. Attending that concert will give people a chance to see the spectacular auditorium, the amazing backdrops on the stage and the very unique balcony and circular shape of the room, which are usually not open for public viewing.

The Shrine Temple has quite a history dating back to the 1800's. It was a venue for opera stars from New York, Chicago and San Francisco' Mark Twain actually gave humorous lectures there for the people of Helena. The concert is entitled "Songs of America" and features music unique to this country, such as Negro Spirituals, folk songs, Broadway Musical selections by Rodgers & Hammerstein, Stephen Sondheim, Meredith Wilson and Jerry Herman, patriotic songs and a jazz trio.

Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for students and children under 12 are free. They may be purchased at **Piccolo's Music, at the door or from HCS members**. The concert will be about 1 1/2 hours in length. We think **you'll enjoy our concert**. We hope you consider attending one of these concerts.



~ Steve Michelson, Music Director

Moderator's Message: Out of Joint or In Sync??

Since dislocating my right shoulder three months ago, I'm more sensitive to the idiom *out of joint*, which can mean "disoriented" or "inappropriate" or refer to how someone is affected when another person gets something he or she wanted. Recovery from having a shoulder "out of joint" involves achieving a balance between trying not to inflame the tissues and trying to build back strength so that the muscles and tendons will keep the joint in place when another fall inevitably occurs.

Sometimes accommodating Plymouth's building use feels like a balancing act, too. Providing a welcoming and safe space for community use is critical to our mission, with usage fees affordable, yet adequate to cover costs. The Council just adopted new "Building Use Fee Schedule and Guidelines" which, for example, sets the rate for the Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall at \$80 for the first two hours and \$40 for the Fireside Room's first two hours, with \$10 added for each additional hour. Plymouth members will be expected to make an appropriate donation to use facilities for non-church activities. Our usage fees should be *in sync* with our costs; and we hope no one gets *out of joint* when asked to pay more.

Aside from costs, we also must be *in sync*, or "working in harmony" with our building users, considering their scheduled events and meetings. Sometimes, we may feel "this is my church," I have priority. But a paying user who has calendared an event may get *out of joint* when we assume priority. In the Council, we've discussed posting room schedules and donation boxes in our community rooms.



Photo by [Hannah Busing](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Sorting through photos and attempting to condense histories in preparation for the Sixtieth Anniversary of Plymouth's building, I am impressed by the enthusiasm, energy, and commitment of Plymouth Church's founders. Staying in sync with everyone's needs as we share space, maintain the building, and pay the bills will require our own enthusiasm, energy, and commitment. Blessings,

~ Jan Clinard

"Everyone has inside them a piece of good news. The good news is you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is." – Anne Frank

60th Anniversary Live and Silent Auctions—Announcement

For our 60th Anniversary Celebration there will be a live and silent auction. I am collecting items for the auctions which will be held at the spaghetti dinner on May 28th. Please let me know by Sunday, May 21 if you have an item to contribute. Please bring auction items to the church basement on Saturday, May 27 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. If you cannot bring the items at the proposed time, let me know and we can make other arrangements. Proceeds from the auction will go towards purchasing an automated external defibrillator (AED) for the church with any remainder going to the “North 40” project.

We are looking forward to a fun and successful event. I hope you are planning on attending and participating in any way you are able. ~Sunny Ray Mandeville—Auction Chairman

POTATOES?!? POTATOES?!?

Thanks to our very own Kathleen Culver and her generous “potato” contribution; the Baked Potato Bar fellowship luncheon in March was a HUGE success! **Thank you, Kathleen!**



Charity Knitters latest handmade gifts given to the Health Department's Home Visitors Nurses

“Hello! You are warmly invited to bring your knitting and/or learn how to make greeting cards. Card materials provided. Thursday, May 4 at 2:00 p.m. in the Fireside Room. Enjoy some yummy snacks and listen to Enya with us”

From Cindy and the knitters



Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church Seeking Affordable Housing Solutions for their Land with Local Non-Profit Partners

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church (ORLC), along with partners; The City of Helena, Helena Area Habitat for Humanity, YWCA, Rocky Mountain Development Council (RMDC), and Trust Montana applied for and were granted \$40,000 of planning money through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program in late 2020. This, along with partner matching funds, funded a development



planning process for the ORLC land with the goal of seeing the land put into service to address the affordable housing crisis confronting our community. The final Preliminary Architectural Report was completed by a partnership between Mosaic Architecture and SMA Architecture in June of 2022 and is available on the ORLC website under the “Happenings” tab.

Through this partnership of housing providers, the vision was to provide a full continuum of affordable housing options on one site where, conceptually, someone could graduate from transitional housing, to rental housing, to affordable homeownership without ever changing neighborhoods or schools. Helena Area Habitat for Humanity builds affordable owner-occupied homes for sale to qualifying families. RMDC develops, owns, and manages affordable rental units and the YWCA is seeking to provide transitional housing for women and children who have graduated from their WINGS program. The underlying integration of Trust Montana, a non-profit community land trust (CLT), would preserve the long-term affordability of the Habitat homes by holding the land while income qualified households purchase the homes at a price they can afford. Homeowners on CLT-owned land benefit from a subsidized purchase price and agree to “pay it forward” to the next buyer of their home by limiting the equity they will earn from the home if they ever decide to move. Subsequent buyers must also income-qualify for this subsidized purchase.

RMDC has offered to act as the lead developer for the project if enough seed money can be acquired to facilitate the subdivision and rezoning process, acquire the land, and get Horse-shoe Bend installed. To that end, RMDC applied to the City of Helena for federal funding money available to the City through ARPA (The American Rescue Plan Act) in mid-January. The total funding request for this project was \$2.4 million. In March of 2023, the City Commission voted to allot \$1.58 million of their ARPA funding to the Our Redeemer's housing project.

While this is an encouraging start, the allotment does fall short of the \$2.4 million that was being requested to cover property acquisition and the installation of Horseshoe Bend – both necessary steps in preparing the property for development. This means that Our Redeemer’s and the housing partners are seeking and assessing solutions for getting close to this \$2.4 million mark to kick-start the project. The housing partners have begun discussions with county commissioners to see if there might be the opportunity to gain financial commitment from the county to pair with the city’s commitment. The county is currently assessing whether they will be soliciting external funding requests from community organizations for remaining county ARPA funds.

ORLC is patient and intent on seeing this come to fruition and excited about the opportunity to support this new neighborhood with community-use spaces, community gardens, pre-school services, and future visions of offering daycare services and supporting our housing partners through community service ministries. This opportunity for the congregation to be more fully engaged in community service could be life-changing in many ways and we ask for your prayers as the congregation further discerns ways of seeing this project to fruition.

~ Gretchen Krumm, AIA LEED AP BD&C—Mosaic Architecture

Building and Grounds: It’s Springtime!

Greetings to Plymouth,

The Building and Grounds Committee is currently addressing delays associated with the new fire alarm system. The fire marshal is requiring Plymouth to include a voice annunciation system with the alarm. Revised plans are being drawn and submitted to the city of Helena for approval. Once approved, the electrical contractor can complete the project.

Several water leaks have shown up as the heavy snow accumulation melts on the north side of the sanctuary. We will have window and roofing contractors look at the affected areas and get an idea of what needs to be done to fix the problem.

Don't forget to wear your gardening clothes on Sunday May 21st beginning after the service. “Many hands make light work.” This will be our spring cleanup day. The fellowship committee will provide lunch and refreshments.

Lastly, the boiler inspector looked at our new boilers and pumps last week and was impressed with the installation and quality of the components.



~ Terry Tatchell

Treasurer's Report for 1st Quarter 2023 (January 1 to March 30)

On the face of it we are in good shape. At the end of the first quarter our income is nearly 25% of what we projected to receive by now – pledges are at 21%, other donated income and building use bring us up to 24.1%. We received our annual Montana Community Foundation interest distribution of \$5,670 which puts our total income at 27.4%, but we won't get any more from MCF until next year.

Our expenses are at 25.6% of the annual budget - but there are some significant expenses that we have not yet paid. We haven't spent our snow removal or lawn care budgeted allocations, total \$4686 and \$1900 respectively; we have not been billed yet for printing services - \$2000; there is still \$1300 unspent for guest musicians, \$2234 pastor's life and disability, \$10,000 for the city & county property assessment, and \$4844 water and sewer. See the analysis at the end of the report for more detail.

Our checking account balance is \$34,662. With our monthly expenses running at about \$18,000 that is less than two months of operating expenses.

Upcoming expenses not reflected in the first quarter		
Description	Total amount	25% to apply to first Q report
6015 Printing	2000	500
6184 Guest musicians	1350	337.50 (-50) = 288
6258 Pastor life & disability	2381	558
6305 & 06 snow and lawn	6,686	1672 (-100) = 1572
6325 Prop. Assess	10,000	2500
6333 water and sewer	5000	1250 (-156) = 1094
Total	25,036	6512
Total expenses 1 st Q 54,961 + 6512 = 61,473/214,020 = 28.7%		
Total income 1 st Q 55,194 – MCF income 5,670 = 48,523/198,070 = 24.5%		

	Jan – Mar 2023	Budget	% of budget
Income			
Pledges	25,985	124,200	20.9
Total donated income	36,243	147,200	24.6
Facility use	12,280	50,870	24.1
Other income (MCF)	5,670		
Total Income	54,193	198,070	27.4
Expenses			
6000 Admin		6100	22.8
6050 Conference		12,400	24.5
6130 Supplies		3,650	23.4
6150 Advertising		1000	20.0
6165 Programs & Min		1,500	40.2
6180 Worship		4,600	27.9
6200 Pers. Salaries		36,412	28.7
6250 Pastor Comp		81,730	20.6
6280 Payroll tax exp.		4767	5.7
6290 Contracted Svc		9,100	26.5
6300 Facility Maint.		8,686	20.1
6320 Insurance		16,500	53.3
6325 Prop. Assess.		10,000	0.0
6330 Utilities		16,975	39.7
Total Expenses	54,961	214,020	25.6

I recommend that we do what we can to reduce spending through the rest of the year, even if it is just turning out the lights and turning down the heat. We should also seriously consider raising rents on our monthly building users and try to increase paying building users and getting some of our unpaid users to make some kind of contribution. To the extent that the 60th anniversary event can raise funds we should support those efforts and consider how the money should be used.

~ Pat Christian





**FUN Bulletin Board!!!
Thank you Margy Kohl**

UPCOMING EVENTS AT PLYMOUTH!

Charity Knitting and Cardmaking—Thursday, May 4th at 2:00 p.m.—Fireside Room
Dances of Universal Peace—Sunday, May 7 at 4:00 p.m.—Fireside Room
Women's Fellowship meeting—Tuesday, May 9 at 10:00 a.m.—Fireside Room
Outreach & Social Justice meeting—Friday, May 12 at 10:00 a.m.—Fireside Room
Spring Cleanup Day at the Church—Sunday, May 21—Following the service and fellowship
Helena Chamber Singers Concert—Sunday, May 21 at 4:00 p.m.—Tickets sold at the door
Women's Fellowship Luncheon at Jorgenson's—Tuesday, May 23 at 11:30 a.m.
60th Anniversary Celebration—Sunday, May 28th. Special service at 10:00 am. Celebration event
begins at 4:00 pm.

YOU ARE INVITED!

60th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, May 28, 2023

Schedule of Events

10:00 am: 60th Anniversary worship service; followed by fellowship.

4:00 pm: The 60th Anniversary Celebration Program begins with music from local musicians and a Plymouth history presentation. Don't want to miss this!

5:00 pm: Dinner with church-made spaghetti using Plymouth's legendary recipe, side dishes and desserts featured in the 60th Anniversary Cookbook, wine and other beverages. Cost is \$5; collected at the event.

RSVP Alane Dallas by calling (406) 442-9883 or email: pccofficemgr@gmail.com before May 15 to attend the dinner.

Live and Silent Auctions. Bid on some great items such as a visit to Virginia City or a Week in Seattle! How about some local art and homemade treats? Too many to list here.

The celebration will include opening the refurbished **"Founder's Room"** honoring charter members, donors, and previous pastors of the church.

Guests will receive a commemorative gift bag.

The 60th Anniversary Church Cookbook—we have collected recipes from the past and present day. They are available for purchase for \$10.

THIS IS A MUST HAVE! Included are recipes from the original cookbook published in 1986 collected by the Sunday School Students for the 25th Anniversary. They are very fun to read.



Join us for an unforgettable occasion!

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CAROL MCKERROW—Liturgical Arts

Carol McKerrow grew up in Texas. Her father was the resident engineer for Whitney Dam. In the beginning, folks did NOT want the dam built fearing it would destroy the cotton fields. Due to his persistence in reassuring and educating the townspeople, they **agreed to its construction and it is now the “single biggest factor in the progress of Waco, Texas.”**

She received her teaching degree from Texas Christian University then taught school in Houston, Texas. There she met her husband Loren who was attending Baylor Medical School. He was from Great Falls, Montana. Dr. McKerrow wanted to open his own ophthalmology clinic so they moved to Helena, Montana in 1970.

They met Bill Burkhardt at the St. Peter’s Hospital Follies fundraising event in 1975 and he invited them to come to Plymouth. They were both instantly surrounded by the most loving people who welcomed them with open arms. They found their church home!

After Loren’s passing, she married Don Harriot in 2011, whom she met in this church.

The Plymouth Church event that she is the most proud of was the “Let’s Talk About It” fundraiser. It included dinner and open dialogue and discussion of 12 topics. About 100 people from all over Helena attended. It became a big event every April; however, it was also A LOT of WORK and had to be retired as church members were also retiring.



Carol has always loved flower arranging. She doesn’t remember exactly when she started providing the flower arrangements for Plymouth. She believes it was sometime in the 1970s. It certainly came naturally for her and she has been doing it ever since.

She has a daughter (Kim) who is a filmmaker living in New York. Todd (her son) is an architect and lives in San Diego. Her son Marc passed away in 2003. She is also blessed with 3 grandchildren—Colton, Kelsie, and Connor.

Thank you Carol for generously offering your gifts and talents and joyful presence to Plymouth.

In Our Prayers Today

At Home: Giles Walker, Margy Kohl, Gus and Brenda Byrom, Greg Bolin, and Nathan Schreder as they go through cancer treatment. Loraine Hopgood, for continued recovery.

Touchmark: Evelyn Nelson and Art Gilreath.

Edgewood: Ed Canty / **Hunter’s Point:** Marlyce Taylor; Jim and Doris Powell.

Special Request: For the Piedalue family.

Prayers for us and the families of Clara Gilreath, and the victims of gun violence, as we mourn the loss of our loved ones.

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

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 Alane Dallas: 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. (Tues.-Thurs.)

Contact Us

Church Office: 406.442.9883

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Also: www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational

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