

Waymarks

Plymouth Church | Helena Montana

June 2023

Exodus (Part 2)



Last month, I started a series describing, in as much detail as I could remember, the mosaic that I created while I was in seminary. The original is in Alexander Hall at San Francisco Theological Seminary, and there is a life-size replica currently up in the Fireside Room at Plymouth. If you want to learn about the first section of the mosaic, which represents the book of Genesis from the Bible, please see the May 2023 issue of the Waymarks.

The second section of the mosaic is a scene from the book of Exodus: Moses parting the Red Sea. It's framed by a pillar of cloud on the left, and a pillar of fire on the right, the two pillars that God used to lead the Israelites through the desert after they escaped their slavery in Egypt. In the swirl at the top of the pillar of cloud, there is a metal figure of Kokopelli, a fertility deity venerated in some Native American traditions in the Southwest.

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This metal Kokopelli was a keychain that I had gotten as a child during one of my family's many summer vacation road trips. I had been carrying it around, attached to my keys, for probably twenty years, and it broke off right as I was working on the pillar of cloud, so I thought, "Why not?" And, I stuck him in the grout line. I figured it was a better fate than the garbage for something that I had been carrying with me for so much of my life.

The figure of Moses stands holding his staff at the center of this scene, with walls of water rising up on either side. One day, I found a bag of seashells and large stones that someone had left at my front door. I never found out who it was, but I knew they wanted me to use them in the mosaic. And, I thought, what better place to use seashells and stones than the bottom of the Red Sea?

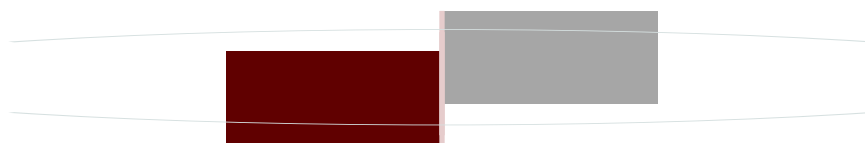
The word "HOPE" is hidden in this scene. The letters are arranged in a square, with "HO" at the top, and "PE" underneath. In the hole of the "O", there is the symbol for ying yang, the Chinese philosophical concept for opposite, yet interconnected, forces.

One of my favorite stories about the mosaic is how I got the beautiful striped orange glass for the pillar of fire. My sister works at the California State University of Channel Islands, and while I was working on the mosaic, they were doing some redecorating. They had these two large glass art bowls that they were moving from one place to another, and during the move, they fell and broke. There was an orange bowl and a purple bowl, and my sister asked if she could have the orange pieces so that I could use them for the mosaic. She wanted to get the purple pieces as well, but someone else claimed those, and she didn't want to seem greedy. All of my siblings and I were baptized and raised Presbyterian, and I paid homage to this by hiding the top of the Presbyterian cross, a fish with dove wings, at the top of the pillar of fire.



Check in next month for details about the Nativity scene!

~ Rev. Charles Wei



Moderator's Message

We just celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the ground-breaking for Plymouth. To prepare, Lynn Bolin and I worked to identify “Charter Members” who signed the membership book from Palm Sunday 1961 through 1962, and engrave their names on a plaque for the Founders’ Room. They dedicated themselves to a Covenant, carefully crafted to reflect the role of a new United Church of Christ in their lives:



- ◆ *We are united in our desire to seek spiritual development and personal fulfillment, based on the principles of freedom of individual thought and the responsibility of individual conscience.*
- ◆ *We extend to each fellow member, as to all persons of good faith, the opportunity to seek understanding of God’s Truth in the ways that are most meaningful to each individual, and to learn Christian principles as represented in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.*
- ◆ *We further seek to encourage the spiritual growth and self-realization of each individual member through Christian fellowship, mutual respect, counsel, and inspiration.*

Also on May 28, thirteen new members were welcomed into the life of Plymouth and signed the book under that same Covenant. Plymouth’s ground-breaking was in May 1963, followed by the “building.” Perhaps our new members signal continued “building” of our church family.

New members promised to “participate in the life and mission of this family of God’s people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves



Photo by: Chuck Butler

this community and the world.” The congregation promised “our friendship and prayers, as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ.” The welcoming liturgy also included these words:

- ◆ *By the power of the Holy Spirit, may we continue to grow together in God’s knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.*

Let it be so for all of Plymouth’s members, new and old.

Enjoy this beautiful, green season.

~ Jan Clinard

Creation Care Tips

Let's talk about Recycling—Did you know?

Corrugated Cardboard

- The large blue containers around the community, and at the Transfer Station is where you can dispose of Corrugated Cardboard. Remove all packing materials and break boxes down. Lightweight cardboard or paperboard is not accepted.
- Cardboard is the second largest commodity recycled by the City of Helena, with over 900 tons being diverted from the landfill every year.
- Cardboard is also one of the most expensive commodities to recycle, the City pays Pacific Steel and Recycling \$25 a ton to bail and process cardboard. Recycling is paid for through City of Helena and Scratch Gravel Residents residential solid waste fee, so keeping contamination rates low, help to keep solid waste fees low.

Aluminum, Steel Cans, and Paper

All drop-off locations throughout the community, and the Transfer Station accept these recyclables:

- Aluminum- Beverage cans, TV dinner trays, foil, and food containers.
- Steel Cans-Tin and steel food cans. Labels are okay.
- Newspaper- Inserts and ads accepted.
- Office Paper- White and pastel colors only
- Magazines- Nothing thicker than ½ “. No books or large catalogs.

Drop Off Locations

- Safeway – 611 N Montana Ave
- Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds – 98 W Custer Ave
- Boeing – 3200 Skyway Dr, just past the Airport.
- Across from Dale Harris Park (Dale Harris Park Address is 279 S Cruse Ave)
- Grub Stake, 1450 Lincoln Rd West
- Canyon Ferry Mini-Basket, 3012 Canyon Ferry Rd
- Former Valley Sand and Gravel Excavation Site- McHugh Drive

For more information and recycling guides, check out:
<https://www.helenamt.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Solid-Waste/Recycling>

How do we love thee, **TERRY TATCHELL**

Let us count the ways: As our Building and Grounds Chair, Terry works tirelessly and always with a smile and “Let’s get this done” attitude. I can’t count how many times I have sent out an SOS call or email asking for his help around here. Leaks, breaks, birds (Oh my!). You name it, he’ll do what he can to get it fixed as quickly as possible.

The next time you see Terry, let him know how thankful we all are that he is always looking after this beautiful church and the surrounding grounds. ~Alane Dallas



“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” ~ Jane Goodall

UPCOMING EVENTS AT PLYMOUTH!

Sunday, June 11 after the service—Fireside Chat with Dave Hunter. Discussion about refugee students from Ukraine and Ethiopia currently attending Carroll College.

Tuesday, June 13—Women’s Fellowship Brunch—at Florence Mayer’s home—10:00 am. Contact Sunny Ray Mandeville for more information.

Tai Chi meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 5:30 in the Fireside Room. All are invited and welcome to join.

Table Tennis “PingPong” - Come and play with us. Sundays at 3pm and Thursdays at 6pm (Fellowship Hall). Contact Norm Mullen (406.459.5243) for more information.

Moving the Dial on Creating Attainable Homes in Helena

Due to a perfect storm of subpar wages, a shortage of housing and post covid rental increases, our nation, state, and region are grappling with solutions for housing our low to middle income residents. This situation is years in the making and as a community we are working together to find practical,



sustainable solutions that will enable us to provide workforce lodging and attainable housing for our most vulnerable populations.

Based on research done in 2018 (*Tri-County Housing Needs Assessment*) we have convened five different teams to address some of the specific challenges of our region, and we continue to assemble, city and county officials, builders, nonprofit leaders and local community members to be a part of these efforts to “Move the Dial” addressing action items that will pave the way for more attainable homes in our area over the coming years.

Move the Dial Action Teams

The Lead Team is the Housing Task Force, coordinated by the Community Development office at the City of Helena offices. Focused education regarding public and private partnerships including synergy between the nonprofits in the community, government agencies, builders, law enforcement and health care.

Team 1: Vulnerable Populations

This team focuses on the needs of vulnerable populations across our area, including Youth, Seniors, Unsheltered & Unstably sheltered, Disabled, Veterans, Domestic Violence victims, Families and Justice engaged persons.

Team 2: Density Issues

This team will address the challenges to building needed apartments and multi-unit living options in Helena. Seek resources to bring down costs, making higher density living convenient and affordable in our community.

Team 3: Funding Streams

This team will address the complex maze of resources available from private and public funders including federal and state programs designed to encourage the development of affordable housing.

Team 4: Policy & Planning

This team will focus on the codes and policies that may need to be altered to address the significant need for affordable housing in the area. Balancing needed policies against the policies that may be outdated, preventing the ability to offer affordable housing in locations that make sense for the greater good.

Clergy Advocates Group

A network of Faith Leaders engaged in issues of social justice, government, and community concerns. The primary focus is currently addressing the concerns around housing and the unsheltered population. Members are encouraged to be a part of the Move the Dial Action Teams and are interested in being a part of educating the community about these issues.

Faith Community members are encouraged to be a part of any one of the groups listed above. These teams began meeting in January of 2023, and they are just beginning their work, meaning new members are welcome. We may take a month off during the summer, but we will continue to focus our efforts on goals and action plans identified in past studies.

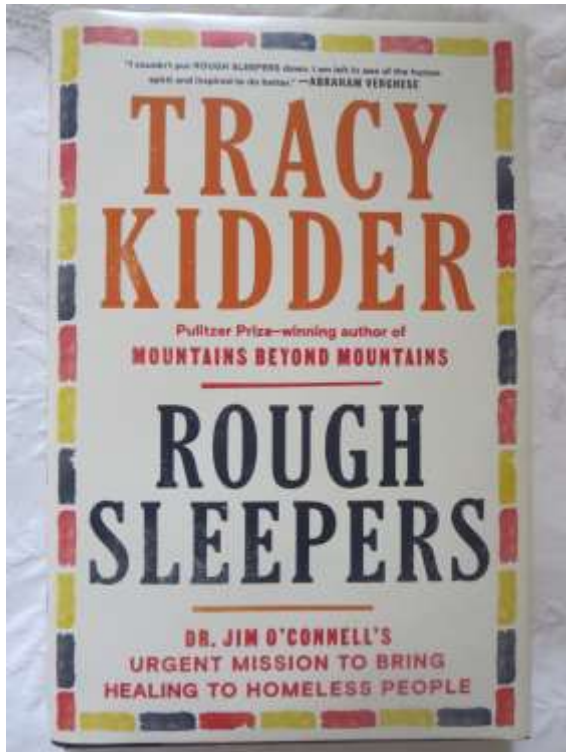
Lewis & Clark County Health Improvement Plan: A key factor that drove us to form these groups and begin this work, came from the 2022 “CHIP” plan, that identified housing as a critical need for residents to achieve optimal health. Recognizing that a person’s health is directly tied to their access to adequate housing and acknowledging that “Housing is HealthCare” has brought intentional focus to these efforts over the coming three-year period.

To learn more about “Move the Dial” contact: Dr. Jeff Buscher
Community Impact Coordinator
jeff@unitedwaylca.org
406-442-4360



From the Outreach and Social Justice Committee

A Great Summer Read



Don't let your summer slip away without investigating Tracy Kidder's newest book, Rough Sleepers: Dr. Jim O'Connell's Urgent Mission to Bring Healing to Homeless People. The 280-page hard-bound volume describes the work that physician Jim O'Connell experienced among those living on the streets in Boston. ("Rough Sleepers" is a British expression used to describe the unsheltered.) Tracy Kidder, the author, may sound familiar to you. Before Covid we read together another of his books: Strength in What Remains, the story of a refugee from Burundi who came to America and found hope and fulfillment.

Kidder writes, "Even the average extrovert is not super excited about meeting somebody who smells bad, who's wearing tattered clothes, is lying on the ground and asking for money. But it's possible to do, and Jim was the most powerful example I'd ever seen

in my life of somebody who was doing that naturally." You will not only be amazed by the work of Dr. O'Connell but you will learn much about the causes of homelessness, the personal stories of street people, the programs that work, and much about those that don't.

The cost of the book is \$30, and is available from the Montana Book Company or Amazon. Plymouth ordered 5 copies that will be available for you to borrow soon. And the Lewis and Clark Library ordered an additional 10 copies for those of you who are willing to participate in their August Walk and Talk program. More on that later. In September, Plymouth will host a series of discussions based on issues raised in "Rough Sleepers". Don't miss out; be informed and join the conversation. If you are interested in reserving a copy of the book from Plymouth, there will be a signup sheet on the table in the narthex; or contact a member of the Outreach and Social Justice Committee.

~ Jennifer Jeffries Thompson



What a GRAND
Celebration it was!
Congratulations
Plymouth
Congregational
Church on your
60th Anniversary
(May 28, 2023)!

It was a special day
of fellowship





Thank You!

Photos submitted by: Chuck Butler and Jennifer Jeffries Thompson

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

- ◆ David Broussard & Pam George-Broussard
- ◆ Patti Burke
- ◆ Kathleen Culver
- ◆ Cindy Holcomb
- ◆ Suzanne Nybo
- ◆ Steve and Nancy Michelson
- ◆ Pam Rolfes
- ◆ Brenda Senne
- ◆ Mark and Jill Van Alstyne
- ◆ Charles Wei



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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 Jim Tompkins, 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

Web: www.plymouthmontanaucc.org

Email: pccofficemgr@gmail.com

Also: www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational

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