

*Plymouth*  
Congregational Church  
*United Church of Christ*

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**March 17, 2024**  
**Fifth Sunday of Lent**

# ***Plymouth Congregational Church***

## ***United Church of Christ***

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!*

**March 17, 2024 • Fifth Sunday of Lent • 10 a.m.**

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*\*An asterisk invites you to stand as you are able, in body or spirit.*

### ***Prelude***

### **Welcome and Announcements**

Kathe Simons

Quote for Women's History Month: "Know what sparks the light in you so that you, in your own way, can illuminate the world." - Oprah Winfrey.

- Holy Week
  - Palm Sunday Brunch
  - Maundy Thursday, March 28, 6pm: Dinner service with First Christian, reader sign-up sheet in narthex.
  - Friday, March 29, 11am–1pm: Good Friday – the sanctuary will be prepared for anyone who would like a quiet moment of contemplation, meditation, or prayer.
  - Saturday, March 30, 5pm: Carol McKerrow will be accepting flowers from anyone would like to donate flowers for the Easter Sunday service. (You may bring your flowers earlier if you will be attending Evelyn Nelson's memorial service.)
  - Easter Sunday, March 31
- Summer camp registration is open!—You & Me: July 5-9, Youth Adventures: July 8-15, Great Escapes: August 25-30. Scholarships are available from both Plymouth and the Conference.
- Seeking God—Spiritual Practices Retreat led by Rev. Charles Wei: April 19-20, First Congregational Church of Christ, Great Falls—\$25/person.

## Invitation to Worship

adapted from *Psalms 51*

Michael Blanchard

One: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

**All: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.**

One: For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

**All: You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

One: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean,

**All: Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

**\*Gathering Hymn**

*"Take My Life and Let it Be"*

*(Insert)*

**Unison Prayer** *(please be seated)*

Rusty

**God of Miracles and Impossible Things, we sing your praise and rejoice in your presence. Be with us as we contemplate the meaning of our lives, and confront our own mortality. Hold us through our fears and uncertainties. Help us to understand Jesus' teachings and resurrection, and the gift of eternity that he offers us. Help us to trust in you and your infinite love. [We invite you to rest in this brief moment of silence to listen for God's loving message for you this day.] (30 seconds) Amen.**

## Assurance of Grace

Michael Blanchard

People of God, hear the good news! Our God truly is Infinite and Eternal. God's love is boundless and offered freely to everyone. With God, we need not fear death, for God holds dominion over life and death, and through God we will know life everlasting. In this season of Lent, God waits with us, until we can celebrate the resurrection of Christ, reminding us of the impossible power of love. Amen.

***Congregational Response “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”***

*(Insert)*

**Prayer of Illumination**

Pat Christian

Eternal God, you are our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Be with us now as we listen for your word. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**Reading from the Prophets**    Jeremiah 31:31-34

The days are surely coming, says God, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband. But, this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says God: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know your God,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says God; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

**Gospel Reading**

Mark 9:33-37

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

**Reflection**

Dumb Questions

Rusty Harper

***Musical Reflection***

*Steve Michelson*

**Prayers of the People**

Kathe Simons

Infinite and Eternal One, we thank you for always being with us. We thank you for creation and everything that you have blessed us with, and for the beautiful diversity of the people of the world. We have been truly blessed by the multitude of voices you have sent to teach us about your truth and light, to help us learn and grow, to challenge us, to pull us outside of our comfort zones, so that we might be more understanding, more empathetic, and more open to those who are different from us. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for always pulling us closer together, to be one family of God. Help us to take care of each other, and to love each other the way that you love us.

Mother and Father of us all, we ask that you be with all of those for whom no one ever prays, and move in us to care for and nurture this world that is our home, this beautiful gift that you have given to us out of your goodness and love. For those in recovery, give them strength. For those who are experiencing war, give them courage. For those who are experiencing hunger and cold, the unsheltered, everyone who has been displaced from their homes, let them feel your presence and be comforted. For those suffering from domestic abuse, and those who are lonely or scared, send your angels of mercy to care for them. For everyone who is experiencing hardship, ease their burdens. For all of our loved ones in medical treatment, we ask for healing. For all of us who mourn, grant us peace.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
On Earth, as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But, deliver us from evil,  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.  
Amen.

## **Tithes and Offerings**

If you would like to participate in the offering electronically, you may do with this QR code.



## **\*Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessing flow,  
Praise God, all creatures here below,  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

## **\*Prayer of Dedication**

Kathe Simons

## **\*Departing Hymn**

*"Jesus Loves Me"*

327 (NCH)

## **\*Charge & Benediction**

Go forth and face the world bravely! Know that God is with you, strengthening you and giving you courage for the work that needs to be done. You are the embodiment of God's love in the world, so be generous and compassionate and merciful with the people you encounter.

Know that you are loved, and do not fear death, for eternal life is yours through our risen Christ.

And now, may our Creator God instill within you a spirit of creativity. May Jesus the Christ live inside of you, and help you to remember to love and forgive others, as well as yourself. And may the Holy Spirit always be with you, as you make your way on this journey that we call life, so that you will never be alone. Go in Peace. Amen.

**\*Congregational Blessing** *“Go Out Now in Peace”*

*212 (Sing!)*

***Postlude***

**— TODAY’S MINISTERS —**

*The People of Plymouth Congregational Church, assisted by  
Rusty Harper—Guest Speaker  
Kathe Simons, Michael Blanchard, Pat Christian—Liturgist  
Dr. Steve and Nancy Michelson—Music  
Carol McKerrow—Liturgical Art*

*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.*

## —ANNOUNCEMENTS—

**Saturday, March 30, 5pm:** Carol McKerrow will be accepting donations of **flowers for the Easter Sunday service.** (*You may bring your flowers earlier if you will be attending Evelyn Nelson's memorial service.*)

**Evelyn Nelson's Memorial Service:** Saturday, March 30th at 2:00 p.m.—Sanctuary  
**Sign-up sheets for liturgists**—in the narthex.

**Welcome Visitors and Prayer Card** in your pew rack. We are delighted to have you worshipping with us today. Please use to let us know your prayer requests and anything else you'd like to share with us. Place your card in the offering plate.

**Just Coffee!** Contact Gus Byrom or Dick Mayer to buy your coffee and help support the Just Coffee ministry (\$12 per bag/lb).

### YOU'RE INVITED!

**TODAY, March 17, St. Paul's Methodist Church at 4:00pm:** Closing Ceremony for "Walk to Emmaus. Come and support Charles as he completes his walk this weekend.

**Council meeting: March 21st at 4:00 p.m.** This meeting is open to our members if you are interested in attending.

**Palm Sunday Brunch,** March 24th after the worship service. Sign up sheet is in narthex.

**Women's Fellowship Luncheon:** Tuesday, March 26, 11:30 a.m. at Overland Express Restaurant.

**Maundy Thursday,** March 28th—Dinner in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 6:00 pm.

**Jews of the Wild West,** Sunday April 7th at the Montana Jewish Project Temple Emanu-El, 515 N Ewing St. Helena. Presentation on Montana's famous Jewish pioneers—3:00pm.

**Seeking God – Spiritual Practices Retreat led by Rev. Charles Wei:** April 19-20, First Congregational Church of Christ, Great Falls -\$25/person.

**Summer Camps:** You & Me: July 5-8; Youth Adventures: July 8-15; Great Escapes: August 25-30.

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**Office Hours—Tuesday through Thursday—9am to 1pm**

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**Pastor Office Hours—Tuesdays and Thursdays—9am to 4pm**