

*Plymouth*  
Congregational Church  
*United Church of Christ*

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**April 28, 2024**  
**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

# ***Plymouth Congregational Church***

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

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

**April 28, 2024 • Fifth Sunday of Easter • 10 a.m.**

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

### ***Prelude***

*Shaun Deola, Trumpet*

### **Welcome and Announcements**

Pastor Charles

- Bible Study: Tuesday, May 7, 9:00 am, Fireside Room.
- Summer camp dates: You & Me: July 5-8, Youth Adventures: July 9-15, Great Escapes: August 25-30. Registration is now open!

### **Invitation to Worship** *adapted from Psalm 22:25-31*

Brenda Senne

One: All the ends of the earth, remember and turn to God!

**All: All the families of the nations, bow down and worship!**

One: For dominion belongs to God, who rules over the nations.

**All: Everyone on earth shall bow down.**

One: Let us live for our God!

**All: Let all generations be told about our God!**

One: For it is God who saves us.

**All: We are saved! It is done!**

### ***Gathering Hymn***

*"God Reigns o'er All the Earth"*

*21 (NCH)*

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

Pastor Charles

**Holy One, help us to remember that each and every person has been created in your image, to be loved, honored, and cherished. Let us see our differences as something to celebrate, for we are each a reflection of**

**you, each of us a revelation of a small part of your infinite and everlasting glory.** *[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**

Brenda Senne

People of God, hear the good news! God is alive inside of each and every one of you, each and every person in the world. If we could all look past our differences to the things that we all have in common, then just imagine how wonderful the world would be! With God's help, we can help make that world a reality. So, trust in God and trust in the good works that we do in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Congregational Response** *"Come All Christians, Be Committed"* (insert)

### **Prayer of Illumination**

Michael Blanchard

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.

### **Gospel Reading**

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower, who removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit, God prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever

you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.”

***Musical Interlude***

*Shaun Deola, trumpet*

**New Testament Reading**

Acts 8:26-40

Pastor Charles

Then an angel of God said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) So, he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home. Seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

Then, the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” So, Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah.

He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And, he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.

Now, the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

Then, Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But, Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

## **Reflection**

### ***Musical Reflection***

*Steve Michelson*

### **Prayers of the People**

Pastor Charles

God of Compassion and Generosity, you have blessed us mightily with all of the wonders of creation. Our lives are filled with color and light, music and story, thought and imagination. Your providence is evident in every mountain and stream, every nation and language. Help us to see and appreciate the abundance that is all around us. Let us learn from it and be inspired by it. Help us to explore and experience new things with curiosity and courage, so that we might grow in our understanding, our empathy, and our love. And, move in us to always strive to be more sympathetic, more generous, and more justice-minded. Thank you, for walking this journey with us and for drawing us ever closer together, to be one family. 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. We lift up those who are in recovery, those who are experiencing war, those who are experiencing hunger and cold. We lift up those who have been displaced from their homes, those who are lonely or scared. We lift up our unsheltered neighbors, and all those who are experiencing hardship or difficulty of any kind. We lift up those who are undergoing medical treatment, those who are sick or suffering. We lift up the bereaved, and those who feel an emptiness in their lives. Be with us, God, in our joys and our sorrows.

### **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**

Nancy Michelson

If you would like to participate in the ritual of 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**

**\*Departing Hymn**      *“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”*      *(insert)*

**\*Invitation to Fellowship**      Pastor Charles

What have you done to promote justice and equality in your life?

**\*Charge & Benediction**      Pastor Charles

Now go, and remember that God is in every person that you meet.

Celebrate and admire all of our differences, knowing that each person was created in God’s image. With God’s help, we can share the love, joy, and curiosity that will make the realm of God a reality, here on Earth.

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***

*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.*

— TODAY'S MINISTERS —

*The People of Plymouth Congregational Church, assisted by*

*Rev. Charles Wei—Pastor*

*Michael Blanchard, Brenda Senne —Liturgist*

*Dr. Steve and Nancy Michelson, Shaun Deola (trumpet)—Music*

*Carol McKerrow—Liturgical Art*

—ANNOUNCEMENTS —

**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 let us know your prayer requests and anything else you'd like to share. Place your card in the offering plate.

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

**YOU'RE INVITED!**

**Bible Study:** Tuesday, April 30, 9:00 a.m.—Fireside Room. Led by Pastor Charles

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

**August 25-30. Registration is now open!**

**Mogi Agha, Iranian-American, Muslim non-violent peace advocate** will be speaking at the Lewis & Clark public library the evening of May 1. <https://juustwa.org/speakers-and-presenters/brother-mogi-gha/> for more information.

**Sandwich Ministry with BSUU:** Second and fourth Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.—meet in the kitchen. Your help is thankfully welcome.

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

**Pastor Charles' e-mail—pastorplymouthmt@gmail.com**

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