

Plymouth
Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



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December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Plymouth Congregational Church

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

December 22, 2024 • Fourth Sunday of Advent • 10 a.m.

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

Special Music *"He is Born" - arr. Hilliard* *Shaun Deola, Trumpet*

Chiming the Trinity

Prelude *"Do you Hear What I Hear?"* *Mary Drysdale, Tongue Drum*

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor Charles

- Liturgist sign-up sheet in the narthex.
- Bible Study: Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room. We will be having Bible study on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.
- Christmas Eve Service, Tuesday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.
- Chime Choir: Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Special Music *"Laudamus Te" (We Praise Thee) - from GLORIA—Vivaldi*
Amy Casne-Fetz & Amy Allen, vocalists

Invitation to Worship

adapted from Psalm 89

Patsy Tompkins

One: I will sing of your steadfast love, O God, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

All: We declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

One: You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" *Selah!*

All: Selah!

One: Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people.

All: I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him;

One: My hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.

All: The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him.

One: My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him;

All: I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.

One: He shall cry to me,

All: 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'

***Gathering Hymn** *"Angels from the Realms of Glory"*

NCH 126

Unison Prayer (*please be seated*)

Pastor Charles

Eternal God, Creator of All Things, help us to be more joyful in our lives. When we are weighed down by stress, and worry, and burdens, it can be hard to find the joy in the world around us. Open our eyes to the beauty of the world, and the beauty of life. Fill us with the Joy that you brought to us by coming into the world as a child, filled with innocence and wonder. [We invite you to rest in this brief moment of silence to listen for God's loving message for you this day.] Amen.

Assurance of Grace

Patsy Tompkins

People of God, hear the good news! Joy is all around you. Joy isn't the temporary happiness of getting something that you want, or from achieving something, or even because you're having a really great day. All of these things can change; all of these things are fleeting. True Joy

comes from God. Joy is deep-seated and never-ending. It comes from knowing God, from being with God, and being a part of God's family. True Joy can never be taken away from you. Amen.

Congregational Response *"O Little Town of Bethlehem"* NCH 133

Lighting the Candle of Joy (*responsively*) Mandeville Family

One: There is a light pushing back against the despair in the world.

All: It is the light of Joy.

One: Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent, the time of excitement and elation, as we await the birth of the Christ, who brings Joy into the world.

All: We light the candle of Joy, as a reminder of the Joy that Christ brings us.

One: We proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light, there is Joy, for Jesus the Christ is The Image of the Invisible God. The Bright and Morning Star.

All: Holy One, as Christmas draws near, there is a sense of excitement in the air. Though for some of us, this is a sad time, still, there is Joy in our lives, and Joy all around us. Help us to have Joy that does not depend on earthly happiness, but on you. Help us to be filled with Joy, so that we may share that Joy with the world. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination Patsy Tompkins

Creator of all things, we come to you seeking understanding. Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, our rock and our redeemer. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Gospel Reading

Luke 1:57-66

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that God had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But, his mother said, “No; he is to be called John.” They said to her, “None of your relatives has this name.” Then, they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And, all of them were amazed. Immediately, his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them, and said, “What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the hand of God was with him.

Musical Interlude “*Silent Night, Holy Night*”— *arr. Ingram*

Plymouth Chimers—Kathe Simons, Director

Second Gospel Reading

Luke 1:67-79

Pastor Charles

Then [John’s] father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

“Blessed be the God of Israel, who has looked favorably on the people and redeemed them.

God has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of the servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of the holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who

hate us. Thus God has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered her holy covenant, the oath that was sworn to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before her all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most-High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to her people by the forgiveness of their sins.

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

Pastoral Reflection

Musical Reflection *"A Christmas Lullaby" - arr. Brown*

Amy Casne-Fetz, soloist

Prayers of the People

Pastor Charles

In this holiday season, we are so thankful for all of the blessings that you have given to us. We thank you for the joy in our lives, for our families and friends, for our loving community. We ask that you be with us and strengthen these relationships so that we may bring joy to everyone around us. Move in us to take care of our neighbors, and to love each other the way that you love us. Help us to be considerate and kind to one another, and to offer each other as much grace as we can.

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. We ask you to be with those who are in recovery. We pray for all who are experiencing war. We pray for those who are experiencing hunger and cold, the unsheltered, everyone who has been displaced from their homes, those suffering from domestic abuse, those who are lonely or scared. We pray for everyone who is experiencing hardship of any kind, and we offer special prayers for all of our loved ones in medical treatment. We ask you to be with all of us who are in mourning for the loss of our loved ones.

Special Prayers: Ann Chivlicek, Maxine Ferguson, Art Gilreath, Loraine Hopgood, Doris Powell, Marlyce Taylor, and Giles Walker. The people of Israel, Palestine, Russia, Ukraine, Venezuela and all who are experiencing the horrors of war. The victims of Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

Medical Treatment/Healing: Greg Bolin, Lynn Bolin, Linda Burns, Gus Byrom, Nancy Michelson, Karen Mills, Kelly Murphy, Brenda Senne.

Bereavement: The family of Jim Powell, and the families of the victims of gun violence and natural disasters.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 are joining us online and would like to participate in the offering, you may do so by donating at our website, which you can reach with this QR code.



Offertory

“Christmastime” - arr. Larson

Plymouth Choir

*Doxology

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

*Prayer of Dedication

Pastor Charles

**Departing Hymn*

“There’s A Song in the Air”

(Screen)

*Charge & Benediction

Pastor Charles

Today is the last Sunday of Advent. I hope that among the blessings that you have found here, that you were able to find some peace, and I hope that you have felt the love of this community. As we head into Christmas, I hope that you find Joy, true Joy that enlivens you, and bolsters you up, because you are a child of God, and you deserve nothing less. So go and find that Joy, and prepare your hearts for Christmas.

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”*

Sing! 212

Postlude

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”

~ Corrie Ten Boom

*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

Patsy Tompkins—Liturgists

Dr. Steve & Nancy Michelson, Plymouth Chimers, Plymouth Choir, Shaun Deola (trumpet),

Mary Drysdale (tongue drum), Amy Casne-Fetz & Amy Allen (vocalists) —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).

**WHAT'S HAPPENING AT PLYMOUTH
YOU'RE INVITED!**

Empty Stocking Tree in the Fireside Room is offering opportunities for you to provide a crock pot snack for the folks at Our Place in 2025. Please sign up! Gus or Jennifer can help with any questions you may have.

Bible Study: Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.—Fireside Room. We will have Bible Study Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Christmas Sunday: December 22 at 10:00 a.m.—there will be loads of wonderful music and fellowship to enjoy!

Christmas Eve Service: Tuesday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.

PCC Office Phone—406-442-9883

Office Manager Alane's e-mail—pccofficemgr@gmail.com

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

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

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