



## FALL 2025 – Back to School CHIMES!

### Office Hours

Pastor Charles Wei: 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m. (Tues. & Thurs.), and by appointment.

Office Manager Bryan Knaff: 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. (Tues.-Thurs.)

### Contact Us

Church Office: 406.442.9883

Web: [www.plymouthmontanaucc.org](http://www.plymouthmontanaucc.org)

Email: [pccofficemgr@gmail.com](mailto:pccofficemgr@gmail.com)

Also: [www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational](https://www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational)

### Sundays

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

In Person and Online

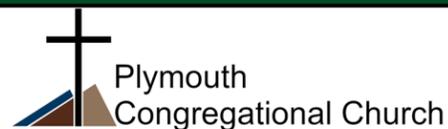
The Plymouth Chimers will gather in the sanctuary on Tuesday, September 16 at 1:30-2:30 p.m. for a new season of music-making! We are **always looking for new members** or for those who want to come learn more about this wonderful way to enhance our worship musically.

NO need to read music; we play familiar music and we can help you to easily highlight your music. We are a friendly and fun group – please come join us!

If you have any questions, please email me at [kathe@simonshome.org](mailto:kathe@simonshome.org) or phone me at 603-860-4539 after 9/15.



**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.**



United Church of Christ  
400 S. Oakes St. Helena, MT 59601

PLEASE PLACE STAMP HERE



# Waymarks

September 2025

## We Gather and Prepare

Every time the Worship Committee meets, I try to start with a “Moment for Learning,” a brief explanation or discussion about some aspect of worship, to remind us of why we are meeting, and to help us to do our jobs better. At our last meeting, I decided to talk about the order of worship, or the sequence that we use to get from one element of the worship service to another. When I realized we had never discussed this before, I was surprised at myself, because it probably should have been one of the first “Moments for Learning” we ever had!

As we talked, someone mentioned that this might be a good thing to share with the congregation, because there was a good chance that a lot of you were unaware of this as well. When I first thought about writing this article, I didn’t think that would be very long. But, as I began to work on it, I realized I would not be able to do this topic justice with a single short article in our *Waymarks*, so it will have to be a series, instead.

You may have noticed that our worship services tend to roughly follow the same outline. There are occasionally items, like special announcements or music, or entire services, like Christmas Eve or Maundy Thursday, that don’t quite follow the pattern, but for the most part, you will see the same elements repeated, in roughly the same order, most of the time. There is a reason for this. As a church that is part of the Reformed tradition, we used a Reformed order of worship. A Reformed worship service, at a minimum, must include three things: scripture, teaching, and prayer. Most elements of worship will fall into one or more of these categories, but the specific elements will vary from congregation to congregation, and from worship service to worship service.

The order that we do things is also significant. We have recently reintroduced section headings into the worship guide to help the congregation understand what is happening during a specific part of the worship service. We start by gathering together as a congregation, through music. Most congregations will have a prelude, to allow people time to settle into the space. Before our prelude, I ring a singing bowl three times, to invite God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to be in the worship space with us, and as a reminder



Rev. Charles Wei

### In This Issue

We Gather and Prepare	1-2
Making an Impact	3
Collective Efficacy	4
Breakfast at Lake	5
Building & Grounds	6
Cleaning Crew	6
Let’s Talk About It	7
Back to School Chimes	8

## We Gather and Prepare (continued)

to us for why we are there. To round out the gathering portion of our service, we have the Invitation to Worship and the Gathering Hymn.

Next, we prepare ourselves for worship with the Unison Prayer, Assurance of Grace, and Congregational Response. In some churches, the Unison Prayer is called the Confession of Sin or simply Confession. I prefer to call this the Unison Prayer, because while it often contains confessional elements, it is usually more than that, and often sets the theme and tone for the rest of the worship service. Similarly, in other churches, you may see the Assurance of Grace called the Assurance of Pardon or simply Pardon. I prefer calling it the Assurance of Grace, because while God does forgive us for the things we've done wrong, I think it's more important to emphasize God's presence with us. The Congregational Response is, as the name implies, our response to the Assurance of Grace.

We will continue this journey through the Reformed order of service in the next issue of the Waymarks.



A "special" service at the lake

### "Assurance of Grace"

*I prefer calling it the Assurance of Grace, because while God does forgive us for the things we've done wrong, I think it's more important to emphasize God's presence with us.*

## Climate Change: Let's Talk About It

—Jennifer Thompson

Plymouth's Outreach and Social Justice Committee in collaboration with the Helena Interfaith Climate Advocates is pleased to present a series of public presentations about climate change. To frame these important discussions we recommend you become acquainted with Katharine Hayhoe's book "Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World". Thanks to a grant from the Helena Area Community Foundation and the City of Helena, Plymouth purchased multiple copies. If you have not had a chance to acquire this book, check the table in the Narthex for returned copies. The Lewis & Clark Library also purchased extra copies of the book which are available through the typical loan process.

We hope you will be engaged by the September presentations and discussions regarding weather, faith perspectives, bird ecology and Indigenous views about earth care offered each Wednesday at 12 noon (\*note one exception) at a variety of locations throughout Helena. The following is a list of dates, times, speakers and venues. Invite friends, talk it up, be present, "talk about it".

September 3, noon, Lewis & Clark Library: **A Little More Weather Wise** with Curtis Grevenitz, Chief Meteorologist, KTVH.

September 10, noon, Helena Indian Alliance: **Earth Care and the Indigenous Voice** with M.L. Smoker, Montana Co-Poet Laureate (2019-2021), and Mike Jetty, Indian Education Specialist for the Montana Office of Public Instruction.

September 17, 12:30 PM, Montana Wild: **Adapting Bird Migrations** with Mark Mariano, Ecologist and Co-founder of Montana Wetlands and Waterfowl Project.

September 24, noon, Plymouth Congregational Church: **Faith Perspectives on Nature** with Sue Kronenberger of Flowing Mountains Sangha, and Carroll College professors Jeanette Fregulia, Ph.D. (History), and Eric Meyer, Ph.D. (Theology).



*"It's nearly impossible to make someone care about climate change for the same reasons I do. But I don't think I have to. and you don't, either. Through thousands of conversations, I've become truly convinced that nearly everyone already has the values they need to care about the future of our world, even if they're not the same as mine or yours. And if they don't think they care, it's because they just haven't connected the dots."*

-Katherine Hayhoe

## Building & Grounds —Terry Tatchell

Normally summer is a slower time at the church, but I'll bring everyone up to speed. As most of you know our parking lot striping got a fresh coat of paint. Tom Julian of 406 Striping did the job for us and we're thankful for his efforts.

I met with Dave Gruber last week and we should be getting the new Columbarium niches installed within the next couple of weeks,

Now that my vacation is over, I hope to get busy on getting permanent altar steps built and carpeted.



### CLEANING CREW UPDATE – Kathe Simons

**Cleaners:** Please be sure to read the details about your specific cleaning assignments when you're working; there have been some important additions.

**We are always looking for new volunteers. Contact Kathe** at 603-860-4539 or via email [kathe@simonshome.org](mailto:kathe@simonshome.org)

**The August and Sept schedules** are posted in the Fireside Room.

**I will be away** from mid-Aug to mid-September; if you need to change your cleaning days, please reach out to someone else on the list. **THANK YOU!**

**Thanks to everyone** who continues to help to keep our church spic and span! The efficiency of our cleaning teams is **AMAZING!** We're often done in **less than two hours.**



# Thank you

- Kathe and the cleaning crew for keeping our church building clean and tidy.
- Ed Field for keeping our grounds looking neat and trimmed this summer.
- ♦ Thomas Julian of 406 Striping for our beautifully striped parking lot. Plymouth provided paint (\$303.05) but Thomas donated all of his time to paint. What a wonderful gift!!

## Making an impact

### OUTREACH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Our Outreach and Social Justice Committee continues to reach out and stay in coordination with our community's organizations seeking to address our current housing crisis, especially focusing on efforts to assist those without any form of shelter, families living in their cars, etc..

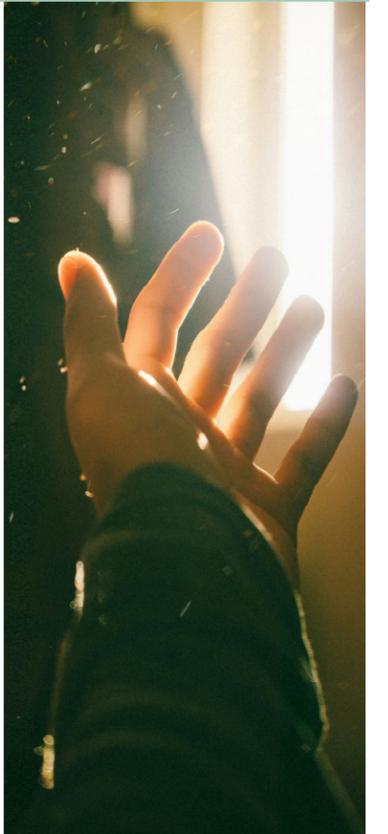
United Way is continuing to seek sites for permanent housing shelter for persons without homes after United Way's plans to purchase the former motel on Cedar Street next to the former Kmart site fell through. Family Promise's shelter project located behind Arby's is proceeding, with construction under way.

The Crockpot Ministry is going well, providing a crockpot of soup once a month at Our Place, now housed at the former Habitat for Humanity Restore building off of National Avenue north of Lyndale.

Thanks you for your support of outreach and justice.

Gus Byrom

Chair Plymouth Outreach and Social Justice Committee



**Any concerns or suggestions for ongoing needs, please call Gus at (406) 202-8768**

## Moderator's Message

— Jan Clinard

In *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*, Katherine Hayhoe points out the importance of efficacy. She writes "What builds our sense of efficacy when it comes to climate action? When you hear or see or learn about what the real solutions look like, and how many are already being implemented, or will be in the near future, that can increase your efficacy. *Collective efficacy* is even more important—the idea that together, as a community, we can make a difference" (pp 201-202).

I must admit, that while reading *Saving Us* this summer, juxtaposed with news about ending incentives for electric cars, solar panels and wind turbines, and stripping the EPA of its core scientific findings about the danger of unchecked carbon dioxide emissions, I felt depressed!

However, checking the *SolarEdge* website, which monitors the electric production of Plymouth's solar panels, I was reminded of our *Collective Efficacy*—that as a church community we are making a difference. Since July 26, 2024, we have saved nearly 19,000 pounds of Co2 emissions and the equivalent of driving 21,000 miles. During the months of March through October, our panels produce an average of 1,199 Kilowatt hours of electricity each month. (We use an average of 2,142 per month.) On a sunny, summer day, we produce about 60 Kilowatt hours. So far, we've saved \$1,624 in electric supply costs with panels.

By examining our Northwestern Energy bills, I found that our average delivery cost for electricity, January through July 2024, was \$170.34 per month and average supply cost was \$157.67. Now, with solar panels, the average cost per month for delivery was \$159.32 and the average cost for supply per month was \$10.02. Every month with solar panels, we save a considerable amount in supply costs, even beyond the summer months as we use energy we donated to the grid.

In *Saving Us*, Hayhoe describes climate tribes as alarmed, concerned, cautious, disengaged, doubtful, and dismissive. Those in the doubtful and dismissive camps tend to use "zombie" arguments. Her description of the warming climate is simple: Earth is wrapped in a heat-trapping blanket of gases. CO2 artificially thickens that blanket. Perhaps we can use this description with doubters. The optimism in *Saving Us* stems from the knowledge that we have the technology to



slow climate change and we can connect with the disengaged and the doubtful by finding connections with them: What do we jointly care about? We can have conversations, find hope and seek healing.

This summer, we are collecting solar energy, and with our very visible roof panels, showing that we care about our climate. And, we all reading a book to help us develop ways to increase our Collective Efficacy.

## Breakfast at the Lake



What started out as a very wet day, turned into a perfect morning for this year's "Breakfast at the Lake". About sixty people enjoyed a breakfast of pancakes, eggs and sausages. Thank you to Susan and Mike Maki and Rosanna Skelton, our fantastic cooks and to all who helped the breakfast be a success. During the service the music was led by the Michelsons, thank you for Luke's guitar accompaniment.

The service reflection included several members telling us what Plymouth means to them. Chuck Butler said "Plymouth means faith, fellowship and friendship and as we say 'No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.'" Boyce Fowler and Lucinda Sheldon talked about their families and the history they have with Plymouth. Lucinda said that people at Plymouth support each other; 'we are family and a community.' Clair Hatch (daughter of Rev. Meg Hatch, pastor of Community Congregational church in Absarokee) said although she is new to Plymouth, church to her is about the gift of the connections with those around us. The reflection concluded with Charles recalling how he arrived at Plymouth both spiritually and physically broken. He said members of Plymouth "ministered to him that first year and made him whole again".

**As ever special thank you to Cathy Campbell for hosting the breakfast again this year!**

Lynn Bolin, Vice Moderator

**You're Invited!**

**Bible Study:**

Every Tuesday at 9:00 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

**Sandwich Ministry:**

Second & Fourth Wednesday of the month.

9:30 a.m. Kitchen

**Climate Change:**

Discussions every Wednesday of September.

(see page 7)

**Chime Choir:**

September 16,

1:30 p.m. Sanctuary