

MODERATOR'S REPORT— *Lynn Bolin*

Welcome to 2026! The annual meeting on January 25th was a great success. We passed a balanced budget. Thanks to a generous congregation, you made the Finance Committee's job easier. We said goodbye to two of our Council members, Jan Clinard, who had been the Council Moderator for five years and Terry Tatchell, who had been Chair of the Building and Grounds Committee for three years. They were both honored for their exceptional dedication to Plymouth during their tenure. Don Harriott was also honored for his dedication to maintaining our Church. Marcia Lauer, Ed Field and Dick Weaver will replace Terry and head up the Building and Grounds Committee. Since the Nominating Committee couldn't fill the Vice Moderator position, two of our new members were selected for a new Council Intern position. They will attend Council meetings and learn how the Plymouth council and committees function. We welcome Tommy Williams and Caryn Adolph to this position. for his dedication to maintaining our Church. Marcia Lauer, Ed Field and Dick Weaver will replace Terry and head up the Building and Grounds Committee. Since the Nominating Committee couldn't fill the Vice Moderator position, two of our new members were selected for a new Council Intern position. They will attend Council meetings and learn how the Plymouth council and committees' function. We welcome Tommy Williams and Caryn Adolph to this position.

As per his Terms of Call, Charles is allowed to take a three-month sabbatical after five years of regular employment. Charles has asked that he be allowed to take his sabbatical in the spring of 2027. A sabbatical committee has been formed to plan for this time. We are looking at applying for a grant from the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program, which will give the Church and Charles more financial freedom with the sabbatical plan. Charles' plan has been presented to the Congregation and will be discussed at the brunch on February 15th. We are asking the Congregation to give input about Charles' sabbatical plan, as well as ideas for Plymouth to use Charles' time away for our own renewal and meaningful fellowship. This could possibly be a special project for the Congregation.

We will be hosting the Conference Annual Meeting (CAM) in the fall. A committee has begun the initial planning for this event.

It will be a busy year and I look forward to serving as your Moderator.



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TREASURER'S REPORT— *Gail Tronstad*

At the annual membership meeting of Plymouth on January 25 a balanced budget of \$234,855 was approved for the current year. While rent of space and a disbursement from the Montana Community Foundation provides financial support, 73% of our income is received from members and friends of Plymouth. That is an awesome blessing.

On behalf of the Council and Financial Affairs Committee, we thank each person who has given financially and those who have given time to do work that does not have to be hired out.

We were able to hold or reduce expenses for 2026 in several areas. Examples below;

- ☐ Water – reduced \$1,000
- ☐ Gas / Electricity – reduced \$3,500
- ☐ Printing Service Contract – reduced \$750
- ☐ Cleaning – savings continue with our own cleaning crew.

(In 2023 we budgeted \$9,100 for cleaning. In 2026 we have budgeted \$700 for carpet cleaning.)

We were able to give more in other areas. Examples below:

- ☐ Social Justice – increased \$500 to support the mission of Plymouth
- ☐ Compensation for staff – various increases in appreciation for all each staff person gives within our church family and the larger community / world.
- ☐ Office supplies – increased by \$1,800 anticipating the replacement of two computers, monitors and equipment for the office. All of this has already been purchased at a cost of slightly over \$1,000.

It is a gift to serve as your treasurer and see the many ways you express “An attitude of gratitude.”



OUTREACH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE — Gus Byrom

Plymouth Outreach and Social Justice Committee

Helena Area Housing Action

At the Helena Area Housing Action Team meeting held in Plymouth's Fellowship Hall, discussion focused on the need for our community to complete a Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) focusing on a long-term plan to construct a new homeless shelter to supplement God's Love's current efforts. Completion of a PAR is a vital first step in seeking federal and state grant assistance to ultimately construct a multimillion dollar facility, providing comprehensive services, as well as overnight shelter.

Jeff Buscher of United Way reported on current efforts to house Helena's homeless overnight during cold weather events at Saint Paul's Methodist, St. John's, Lutheran, and Helena Alliance Church to supplement God's Love's current shelter efforts.

Helena Homeless Census Count – Point In Time Meal

On Thursday evening, January 29, Plymouth members contributed to, and served, the evening meal at God's Love in partnership with members of the First Presbyterian Church as part of the annual Census count of homeless persons in Helena. Approximately 40 persons were served meals. Members of First Presbyterian invited Plymouth to serve another meal with them at God's Love in the near future.

Please contact me if you have further ideas for activities for our committee.



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

In Our Prayers

Special Prayers: Maxine Ferguson, Art Gilreath, Loraine Hopgood, Doris Powell, Marlyce Taylor, and Giles Walker. All those who are experiencing the horrors of war and natural disasters, and those with food insecurities.

Medical Treatment: Michael Blanchard, Greg Bolin, Gus Byrom, Brian Coplin, Kathy Field, Karen Senne Hayes, Kelly Murphy, Donna Randolph, Rebecca Stanfell, Phyllis Weaver.

To add someone to the prayer list, please fill out the prayer card in the pew backs, call



PHOTO OF PASTOR CHARLES' MOSAIC

In the fireside room there is a life sized photo of a mosaic that Pastor Charles made during his three years at seminary. Here are two of the scenes he recreated from the Bible:



Notice the last supper scene, with Jesus at the head of the table. Pastor Charles has many interesting stories about where all of his mosaic materials came from. This art piece is an installation on a wall at his seminary. Notice also in this photo the three crosses on the hill, and the stone rolled away from the cave.



He is risen –He is risen, indeed!

You're Invited!

Bible Study:

Every Tuesday

9:00 a.m.

Fireside Room

Sandwich Ministry:

Second & Fourth
Wednesday of the
month. 9:30 a.m.

Kitchen

Chime Choir:

Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m.

Sanctuary

Women's Fellowship

Tuesday, December 9

Overland Express

Lunch at 11:30

All Women Welcome!

Cleaning Crew

Saturday mornings

Contact Kathe to
volunteer:

603-860-4539 or
kathe@simonshome.
org

PREPARING FOR A SABBATICAL—Pastor Charles Wei

Rooted in biblical commands for sabbath, a sabbatical provides time for a pastor to nourish their relationship with God, renew personal vision and focus for ministry, and reconnect to their sense of vocation through rest, reflection, new experiences, and prayer. Plymouth's Letter of Call offers a paid, three-month sabbatical every five years, with goals jointly determined by the pastor and the congregation. Pastor Charles plans to take a sabbatical in the spring of 2027. The Lilly Endowment offers competitive grants to churches as part of a Clergy Renewal Program. This grant application requires:

- Congregational awareness, support, and approval.
- A proposed congregational program or activity that serves to renew the congregation during the pastor's absence.
- A detailed sabbatical plan for the pastor. Pastor Charles' current plan:
- A trip to Germany based upon an itinerary to be prepared by Pastor Charles in consultation with Conference Minister Tony Clark and our Plymouth Council. Pastor Charles has never traveled overseas.
- A visit with Good Shepherd Church in Sahuarita, AZ to learn about the work they do at the southern border with refugees. Randy Mayer, son of Florence and Dick Mayer, is the pastor at Good Shepherd Church.
- Time with family at Saguaro National Park near Tuscon, Arizona.
- A ceramics class at the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in Helena after his return from Germany and Arizona.

To be awarded a Lilly grant, the pastor's and the congregation's plans for sabbatical must meet the criteria of feasibility, coherence, creativity, and potential to benefit the congregation and the pastor. Grant applications are due March 18. Plymouth has set aside funds to fill the pulpit while Pastor Charles is away. When he returns and reconnects with the congregation, we will share our sabbatical learnings with each other, and move forward together in our shared ministry.



NEW COMPUTERS IN THE OFFICE

A big, big thank you to our resident computer wiz, Al Simons! You may or may not know that we have been limping along with old, very slow computers in the church office for the last several years. Al pointed out that the cords we used for the old computers aren't even being manufactured any more.

Al researched and selected new computers and monitors that would help us to do our work more quickly and efficiently. He also patiently fulfilled our requests for this thing or that thing to be included. He spent hours getting us set up to finally bring us into the new century.

Thanks, Al!

Upcoming events:

Sunday February 15, after worship, Valentine's Potluck and Sabbatical Discussion— Join us downstairs for another soup potluck with clam chowder, borscht, tomato soup and chili provided. The sign up sheet is on the Narthex table for bread/crackers, salads and desserts. Think pink and red! Pastor Charles will be sharing information about his sabbatical next year, so come, ask questions, and be informed.

February 18, Ash Wednesday, 11-1 pm—The Sanctuary will be prepared as a contemplative space, and ashes will be available for those who want them.

Sunday Fun Day—We will gather after coffee time on Sunday afternoon for fellowship and fun for men and women downstairs. Bring a sack lunch and prepare for an entertaining activity. This will take a few hours. A sign up sheet will be in the Narthex. Sign ups help the presenters know how many supplies are needed. Contact Marcia Warner if you have a project you'd like to share.

February 22, Sunday Fun Day - Peggy Coggeshall will teach how anyone can paint! She will provide most of the supplies. The canvas is available for a small fee. Bring a paint shirt or aprons are provided.

Wish these nice people a Happy Birthday!

January:

- 1 Pam Rolfes
- 6 Mary Drysdale
- 8 Doris Powell
- 29 Kathe Simons

February:

- 2 Kathleen Culver
- 6 Richard Drysdale
- 7 Kathleen Field
- 8 Patsy Tompkins
- 9 Pam George
Broussard
- 16 Liz Gunderson

Dear Folks:

My father died February 2, merely 9 days before his 82nd birthday, which would have been yesterday. He was a jazz musician (bass), a librarian, designer and builder of both a house and the hull of a sailing boat, and he mentored many people into music and librarianship. He outlived his second wife, his younger sister and brother, and my mother (they were divorced by the time of her death). He loved to hike and camp, and as a younger man he canoed long-distance with a friend.

He spent the last 8 years living in northeastern North Carolina in a location often called the Inner Banks, a reference to the Outer Banks barrier islands. His house was along a canal that was fed by the Albemarle Sound, and he watched turtles lay eggs and hatch and enjoyed regular visits by herons. In October, my spouse and I took him to his favorite Outer Banks Island and had a great time with him before his decline began to define his last few months. A month later, he moved into my sister's home to be cared for in his last 2 months, and I was able to visit him twice in that time. Two weeks after that last visit, knowing he was close to death, he asked that we come back, and we were able to spend a few days with him saying good-bye.

My father was not religious. He was kind, loved children and dogs, saw beauty in nature and art, and instilled in me a sense that all people were equal. To me, he was one of the most Christ-like people I knew.

There will be no funeral or memorial service. We donated his body to a mortuary school so that part of his legacy will be to continue his love of teaching.

My sister and I have struggled to find the midpoint between him not wanting any memorial and us needing something. What seems appropriate is a not overtly religious prayer I use when I lead funerals. "We hold in grateful memory this one who is now separated from us by death. Though we cannot recall him to life, we can remember him and fix his memory within our hearts for as long as we shall live. We can celebrate the fullness of his life, with all its strengths, foibles, goodness, and weaknesses; and rejoice in the ties that bind us one to another."

I don't know if death is an end point or a pivot point. I know the living are left to grieve. I know that while we mourn and remember, the world goes on with its machinations, meanness, and mindless killing. It also continues to be profoundly beautiful.

As the fog of grief begins to clear, I step back into ministry with all of you as we love kindness, do justice, and walk humbly with God.

In peace and prayer,
Pastor Tony

God of Redemption and Revelation, help us to live into your truth.

We ask that you give us the patience and the attentiveness to hear you amidst the noise in our lives.

Help us to have faith in your goodness, and to trust in your wisdom.

And, let us be receptive to the ways that you move in our hearts, so that we might share your love with the world.

-Unison Prayer, 2/15/26



Plymouth
Congregational Church

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

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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.



Office Hours

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

Office Manager Kendall Larson:
9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. (Mon –Fri)

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

