

Plymouth Congregational Church
May 3, 2026 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

~ We Gather ~

Prelude

Chiming the Trinity

Pastor Charles

Moment of Reflection

Tongue Drum, Mary Drysdale, soloist

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor Charles

Good morning! This is the day that God has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. If you are a guest with us today, thank you so much for being here! If you are joining us online, we see you and we welcome you. Thank you for being with us. As we always say in the United Church of Christ, no matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

- Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10 – You are invited to bring pictures of your mothers and the mothers in your lives to put on the table in the narthex.
- Sunday Funday, May 17, 11:00 after the service Pot Luck & Table Top Game Day.
- Bible Study: Tuesdays, 9:00 am, Fireside Room.
- Chime Choir: Tuesdays, 1:30 pm, Sanctuary, resumes May 5
- Sandwich Ministry, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month
- Liturgist sign-up sheets in the narthex.
- If you would like a nametag, please add your name to the list in the narthex.

Invitation to Worship

adapted from Psalm 146

Lynn Bolin

One: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

All: And, also with you!

One: Praise God! Praise God! We will praise God as long as we live!

All: We will sing praises to our God our whole lives long!

One: Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

All: We place our trust in the God of Jacob, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever!

One: We place our trust in the God who brings justice to the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry, who sets the prisoners free!

All: We place our trust in the God who opens the eyes of the blind, The God who lifts up those who are bowed down; the God loves the righteous.

One: We place our trust in the God who watches over the strangers; who upholds the orphan and the widow.

All: God will reign forever, for all generations! Praise God!

Gathering Hymn

It is Well with My Soul (verses 1-3)

NCH 438

~ *We Prepare* ~

Unison Prayer

Pastor Charles

God of Creation, Dream Weaver, Great Storyteller, fill us with love and light. As we move through the uncertainties of our days, help us to remember that we are not alone. Help us to see the truth and wisdom in our lives, to delve deep into our creativity and our imaginations, and to live our lives in such a way that we are a comfort and inspiration for everyone around us.

[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

Lynn Bolin

People of God, hear the Good News! The majesty and mystery of God fills every space and every time. God is infinite and wonderful; the more we find out about God, the more there is to uncover. It's like peeling back the layers of an onion, except each layer is bigger and grander than the layer before. We can never exhaust God's ability to love, forgive, or provide, so place your trust in God, and know that God is always with you. Amen.

Congregational Response *God Will Take Care of You* NCH 460

~ *We Engage* ~

Prayer of Illumination

Lynn Bolin

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

New Testament Reading

Acts 17:16-21

Lynn Bolin

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So, he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

Also, some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this pretentious babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.)

So, they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means."

Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

Musical Interlude

Lily Olsen, trombone

Second New Testament Reading

Acts 17:22-31

Pastor Charles

Then, Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely spiritual you are in every way. For as I went through

the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, the Maker of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is served by human hands, as though in need of anything, is the one who gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor God made all peoples to inhabit the whole earth, and allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps fumble about for and find God—though indeed God is not far from each one of us. For 'In the Creator we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we, too, are his offspring.'

“Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now the Creator commands all people everywhere to repent, because she has fixed a day on which the world will be judged in righteousness by the one who was appointed, and of this God has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

Reflection

Pastor Charles

Musical Reflection

Invitation to the Table

Pastor Charles

No matter who you are, or what you believe, God invites you to this table. Jesus has prepared the meal, and all are welcome.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

One: We give you thanks, O God, for the beauty of creation, for the blessings and miracles of everyday life, and for the gift of life. You set us in this world to be truth-tellers and peacemakers, living in harmony with all of creation. We give thanks that when we turn from the ways of peace, you call us back with love.

All: We see the light, we know of love, through you.

One: Jesus shows us the way to a new world community, one in which the last is first, justice prevails, and resources are shared, so that all people may lead lives of dignity and feel valued. The world rebelled against his message, and he was crucified out of fear. But death cannot defeat life. Jesus breathed the Spirit upon his followers and gave birth to the church, Christ's body in the world.

All: Living Christ ever present; we welcome you in our lives.

The Communion Prayer

Pastor Charles

Gracious God, pour out your Spirit upon us and upon these your gifts of bread and grapes from the earth. By your Spirit make us one with all who share this feast. Unite us in love, and energize us to work for a world of peace and justice for all.

God of Wonder and Creation, Wisdom and the Knowledge, we thank you for your gift of the law, for your gift of boundaries, for your gift of freedom. We thank you for your presence with us, as you help us to navigate the space between inactivity and recklessness. Move in us to always seek you and to seek relationship with others. Let compassion grow within us, and guide our actions in the world. Help us to remember that we do not do your work alone, but that you are always with us, all around us and throughout every part of our being, in every breath that we take, in every beat of our hearts. Give us the courage to be bold in the world, to be the salt of the world and the light of the world. And, give us the courage to speak of your great love for all of creation.

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 cherish and care for this world that you have created for us out of your infinite love. We lift up special prayers for all who are experiencing war or natural disaster. We pray for our unsheltered neighbors, for those who are hungry, for those in recovery or who are receiving medical treatment.

We pray for those who have lost loved ones; let them be surrounded by your healing presence.

Let us always remember that we can take shelter in your loving embrace. Let us remember that we do not work for justice and equality on our own, for you are with us, working alongside us, bringing your light

and your love into the world. Help us be your instruments of peace, so that the in-breaking of your kingdom will come into its fullness, and everything around us will be a reflection of your goodness and your love. We pray for your mercy and peace and justice to fall upon us all and to lift us up. And, we pray for hope, and for joy, and for community and belonging for all of the people of the world.

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.

Medical Treatment: Michael Blanchard, Greg Bolin, Gus Byrom, Carl Carlson, Brian Coplin, Aaron Farnahm, Karen Senne Hayes, Kahryn Kern, Frank Kromkowski, Kelly Murphy, Donna Randolph, Phyllis Weaver, Tommy Williams.

Bereavement: Frank Kromkowski.

The Lord's Prayer

Pastor Charles

Our Creator, 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.

God's People Receive the Gifts of God

Bread

On the night that Jesus was arrested, he was celebrating the Passover with his friends, to remember the time that God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. The Israelites had to leave so quickly that their bread didn't have time to rise, and so the bread became a symbol of freedom. But, this Passover was different, because Jesus said that he was the bread, because he would free them from sin and from death. And, after he blessed it, he broke it saying, "This is my body, broken for you. Whenever you eat of it, remember me."

Cup

In the same manner after supper, he took the cup. And, after he poured into it, he blessed it saying, "This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood. I am the vine, and you are the branches, cut off from me, you can do nothing. Whenever you drink of it, remember me."

For as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the saving life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ until he comes again.

Prayer after Communion

May we carry in our hearts the peace embodied in this bread and cup. Strengthen our love for one another and for all creation and let us be peace in the world. Amen.

~ We Respond ~

Tithes and Offerings

Pastor Charles

We recognize that there are many ways to give. If you give in ways other than monetarily during the worship service, we invite you to press your thumb into the bowl of the offering plate, so that you may participate in the ritual of offering with the rest of the congregation.

Donations can be made at our website, which you can reach with this QR code:



Offertory

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

Pastor Charles

Creator God, we humbly offer these gifts to you. We pray that you take them and multiply them, turning them into blessings for those who need them most. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

~ *We Go out in Peace* ~

Departing Hymn *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms* screen

Charge & Benediction Pastor Charles

Now go, and live into the mystery of God. And, remember that you are created in God's image, so that mystery is a part of you, too. God has given you the potential to do infinite things, to be infinite things, so be infinite. Do not limit yourself because of what the world says, what anyone says, or even what you might say about yourself.

Congregational Blessing *Let There Be Peace on Earth* screen

Postlude

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

~ *Corrie ten Boom*