

Plymouth Congregational Church
June 28, 2026 – 5th Sunday after Pentecost

~ We Gather ~

Prelude

Chiming the Trinity

Pastor Charles

Moment of Reflection

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.

- One Great Hour of Sharing – envelopes in worship guide, special mission offering of the UCC – helps to fund health, education, agricultural development, emergency & disaster relief, and refugees all over the world.
- Do you know a guitar player who could help lead music during the summer? Please let Steve or Pastor Charles know, if you do!
- Bible Study: Tuesdays, 9:00 am, Fireside Room.
- Chime Choir is on summer break.
- 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.

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

All: And, also with you!

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 *If You But Trust in God to Guide You (Verses 1 & 3)*
NCH 410

~ We Prepare ~

Unison Prayer

Pastor Charles

Eternal God, we ask you to lead us as we step into the unknown. Help us to be curious, as we explore new places. Help us to be kind, when we encounter new people. Help us to be brave, when we try new things. Help us to trust, as we step into our future. All of our faith and trust, we place in you. Be our protector, and be our guide.

[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

Brenda Senne

People of God, hear the good news! God has created a world of wonder and joy for us. We can spend each day of our lives experiencing something new, and still not exhaust the infinite creativity of our Creator. We cannot know what God has in store for us, only that it will be incredible. There may be hardships, but God will see us through them. There may be setbacks, but God will get us back up on our feet. You need not fear what is to come, for God will always be with you. Amen.

Congregational Response *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* Screen

~ *We Engage* ~

Prayer of Illumination

Brenda Senne

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

The Story of Queen Esther

Esther 1-3

Gail Tronstad

Kendall Larson

Tommy Williams

Today, we are moving on from the Book of Ruth to the Book of Esther. The Narrative Lectionary drops us in the middle of the story, starting with chapter 4. So, in order to give us some context for the readings, we have adapted a dramatic reading for what happens in chapters 1 through 3. We begin in the days of Ahasuerus...

Narrator 1: ...the same Ahasuerus who ruled over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia, there was a young girl named Esther. King Ahasuerus put out a call for beautiful young women to be brought before him, so that he might choose a new queen, because he was displeased with Vashti, the current queen.

Narrator 2: Esther's cousin, Mordecai, worked for King Ahasuerus. When Esther's parents died, she went to live with Mordecai in the palace. Esther learned new things, wore dazzling clothes, and grew into a beautiful young woman.

Narrator 3: So, when the king asked for the young women to be brought before him, he was pleased with Esther, and took her into his home. But, Esther did not tell the king that she was a Jew, nor did she tell him about her relationship to Mordecai, because he told her not to.

Narrator 1: After twelve months of cosmetic treatments with oil of myrrh and perfumes, Esther was presented once again to the king, and he loved her more than all of the other women, so he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her the queen.

Narrator 2: One day, Mordecai discovered that two of the king's servants had decided to kill the king! He told Esther, and Esther told the king, and so the king knew that he could trust Mordecai.

Narrator 3: The king had another servant, named Haman. Haman was a high-ranking man, and so all of the other servants bowed to him, as the king had commanded. But, Mordecai would not bow down to Haman, because Mordecai was a Jew, and he would only bow down to God.

Narrator 1: This made Hamon very angry, but he thought it was beneath him to lay his own hands on Mordecai. So, he decided to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, which would destroy Mordecai in the process. Hamon went to the King.

Narrator 2: “There is a certain people scattered and separated among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom. Their laws are different from those of every other people, and they do not keep the king’s laws, so it is not appropriate to tolerate them. If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued for their destruction.”

Narrator 3: The king agreed, giving his signet ring to Haman as a symbol of his authority. Haman sent letters out to all of the provinces and to the officials of all the people, giving orders to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods!

Hebrew Bible Reading

Esther 4:1-8

Brenda Senne

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king’s gate, for no one might enter the king’s gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king’s command and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther’s maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king’s eunuchs who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what

was happening and why. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and to entreat him for her people.

Musical Interlude *Like a Healing Stream (verses 1-3)* *Sing! 73*

2nd Hebrew Bible Reading Esther 4:9-17 Pastor Charles

Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai: "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that, if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law: to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden scepter to someone may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days." When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this." Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After

that I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish.” Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

May God bless us with understanding for these readings of our sacred text.

Reflection

Pastor Charles

Musical Reflection

Prayers of the People

Pastor Charles

Creator God, you call us to love and serve you with body, mind, and spirit. You have been so generous with the abundance and diversity of the world; help us to appreciate it, to welcome it, and to grow from it. Reconcile us with the helpless and the needy, with those we would ignore or oppress, and with those we have called enemies, that we may serve all people as your hands and feet in the world. Thank you for being with us, and for drawing us ever closer together, to be one family, united in love. Help us to take care of each other, and to love each other the way that you love us. Great Mystery, we ask that you be with all of us, moving within us and between us, that we may be inspired and encouraged as we seek ways to live in these divisive times and hold space for those whose ideas are different from our own.

Mother and Father of us all, we lift up those for whom no one ever prays, and we ask you to move in our hearts, to have compassion for all of the living things that share this planet with us. Help us to protect the land, to protect the waters, and protect the sky. Let us remember that our

actions affect everyone and everything around us, that we do not live in isolation, and that we cannot survive in isolation. We ask for courage for those who struggle with addiction. We ask for faith for those who are hungry, or don't have a place to call home. We ask for healing for those who are sick. We ask for peace for those who are having a difficult time with their family, and those living in dangerous places. Let us be brave enough to help those who need help. Let us be compassionate enough to befriend those who need a friend. Let us be patient enough to listen to those who need someone to listen. Help us, oh God, to grow into the people that you created us to be.

Special Prayers: Sophia Brown, Chelsey Curtis, Jude Curtis, 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, Brian Coplin, Mia Goto-Thompson, Karen Senne Hayes, Lynda Hayes, Frank Kromkowski's daughter Anna, Kelly Murphy, Suzanne Nybo, Donna Randolph, Phyllis Weaver.

The Lord's Prayer

Pastor Charles

On the last Sunday of the month, we use different versions of the Lord's Prayer, to remind us of our siblings in Christ all over the world who worship in different ways and in different languages. This helps us to remember that there is no one right way to worship God, and reminds us to listen for God in all parts of our lives.

Creator of all things and all people, great is your name,
You are everywhere and within everyone,
May your hope for the world be done.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And free us from bondage,
As we free those we have bound,
Lead us away from that which would harm us,
And rescue us from the evils of the world,
May your peace and justice and glory shine forever and ever.
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 *How Firm A Foundation*(verses 1-3) NCH 407

Invitation to Fellowship

Pastor Charles

~ *When was a time that you had to be brave?*

Charge & Benediction

Pastor Charles

Congregational Blessing *Let There Be Peace on Earth* screen

Now go out into the world, knowing that with everything that you see, in every encounter and situation, in every place and every person, the good and the bad will both be there. It is our job to nurture the good. God has tasked us with nurturing the good. So, be brave. Nurture the good. And, be the face of God for everyone that you meet.

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, including 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.

Postlude

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

~ *Corrie ten Boom*