

Plymouth Congregational Church
August 23, 2026 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

Chiming the Trinity

Moment of Reflection

Welcome

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.

- Next Sunday, Aug 30, Hymn Sing
- Choir Practice starts Sun, Sept 13
- Bible Study: Tuesdays, 9:00 am, Fireside Room.
- Sandwich Ministry, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of the month, 9:30 am, Kitchen
- 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 138*

Caryn Adolph

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

All: And, also with you!

One: We give you thanks, O God, with all of our hearts; before all, we sing your praise!

All: We bow before your holy temple and give thanks to your name, for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above all.

One: On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul.

All: All the leaders of the earth shall praise you, O God, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

One: They shall sing of your ways, for great is your glory!

All: Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers.

Gathering Hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness* screen

~ We Prepare ~

Unison Prayer

Pastor Charles

Merciful God, we know that you love us and that you call us to fullness of life, but around us and within us we see brokenness of the world and our ways. Our success leaves us empty; our progress does not satisfy. Forgive our willful neglect of your word, and our insensitivity to the needs of others. Be a redeeming light within us, so that we can live into your hopes and dreams for 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

Caryn Adolph

People of God, hear the Good News! There will be many times in life when we lose our way, but we do not wander these paths alone. God is the Great Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep. God is the Diligent Widow, searching for her lost coin. God is the Patient Father, waiting for his child to return home. We will always have a place in God's family, no matter how far we stray. And, God will always welcome us back with open arms.

Congregational Response *We Praise You, O God*

NCH 120

~ We Engage ~**Congregational Response** *You have Come Down to the Lakeshore***Prayer of Illumination**

Caryn Adolph

Eternal God, you are our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. Be with us now as we listen for your word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Reading from the Prophets

Isaiah 51:1-6

Caryn Adolph

Our reading from the Prophet Isaiah was written during the time of the Babylonian exile, looking forward to a time when the exile will come to an end. Isaiah 51, 1 through 6 is an excerpt from a long section of poetry or songs that starts with chapter 40 and ends in chapter 52. This section of Isaiah reflects on Jerusalem's role in the salvation of the world. Listen for God's word.

Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the Lord.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn
and to the quarry from which you were dug.
Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah, who bore you,
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.
For the Lord will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places
and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.
Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation,
for a teaching will go out from me
and my justice for a light to the peoples.
I will bring near my deliverance swiftly;
my salvation has gone out,
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.
Lift up your eyes to the heavens
and look at the earth beneath,
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and those who live on it will die like gnats,
but my salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never be ended.

Musical Interlude

Gospel Reading

Matthew 16:13-20

Pastor Charles

Our gospel reading comes from the Book of Matthew, chapter 16, verses 13 through 20. This reading comes at the end of several scenes of Jesus teaching, which includes the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes, right before he foretells of his death. Listen for God's word.

Now, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

And, they said, "Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

And, Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And, I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Then, he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Reflection**Musical Reflection**

Prayers of the People

Pastor Charles

Grand Creator, Great Storyteller, Everlasting Mother, Prince of Peace, we are so grateful for all of the blessings you have given to us. If we were to thank you to the end of our days, it would not be enough. We thank you for all of the love in our lives, for your comfort in our sorrow, for your light in our despair. We thank you for our families and our friends, and for this loving community. We ask for your holy presence to always be with us, strengthening these relationships so that we may be examples of your love for everyone to see. Move in us to take care of our neighbors, and to understand who our neighbors are. Teach us how 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 infinite love. We pray for all those who are experiencing war or natural disasters. We pray for those who are hungry, 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 recovery or medical treatment. We ask you to be with all of us who are in mourning for the loss of our loved ones.

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: John Breisnes, Karen Senne Hayes, Lynda Hayes,
Marcia Lauer, Betty Louise, Kelly Murphy, Maureen Nordahl,
Suzanne Nybo, Phyllis Weaver.*

The Lord's Prayer

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.

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

There's A Wideness in God's Mercy

NCH 73

Charge & Benediction

Pastor Charles

People of God, remember that there is nothing that you or anyone can do to separate you from God's light. We are God's children, and God's love is unconditional. In the divisive times that we live in now, we need all of the love we can get! Be ambassadors of that love, and let it motivate you to do wonderful and courageous things! Help those who need help, comfort those who need comforting, and love those who need love.

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

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Postlude

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

~ Corrie ten Boom