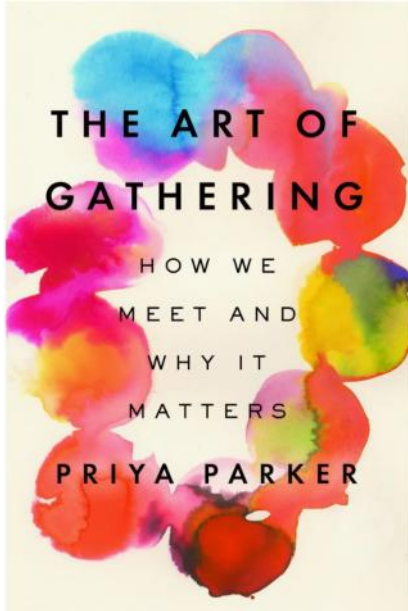


MESSAGE FROM PASTOR CHARLES



Awe & Honor

The Conference Annual Meeting is just around the corner, and Plymouth Congregational Church has not hosted this event in 15 years. So, as so many of our friends from around the conference are making their preparations to join us, we must make ourselves ready to host.

In her book, The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why It Matters, Priya Parker explains the concept of “Awe and Honor”, when it comes to welcoming people into a gathering. She says, “Your opening needs to be a kind of pleasant shock therapy. It should grab people. And in grabbing them,

it should both awe the guests and honor them. It must plant in them the paradoxical feeling of being totally welcomed and deeply grateful to be there.”

The “awe” part is doing something impressive that will “wow” your guests. One of the examples that she uses is a hotel that puts six-foot tall bouquets of flowers in their lobby. Such a large bouquet is impressive and unusual; it’s a surprise. It draws the eye and makes the guests wonder about the effort to make them and how they got there.

Another example she uses is a time when her sister came over for dinner. Deciding that she wanted the gathering to be special, she set out the good China, the dishes that typically make an appearance only once or twice a year. When her sister arrived, she was surprised to see it, and felt honored that her sister considered her simple visit for dinner to be something worthy of putting out the good China for.

When we go to the effort to awe our guests, the implication is that we are also honoring them. They are worthy of the effort we are putting in for them, and they are important enough for us to think about them ahead of time, in order to come up with something that will delight them.

We will be doing our best to awe and honor our guests at the Conference Annual Meeting. In a time when group cohesiveness is crumbling; church, club, and service group attendance has been in decline for decades now, we must do our best to remind people that they are part of the family, that they are welcome in our space, and that we will take the time to make the experience enjoyable and meaningful for them.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Gail Tronstad

September 2026

Last month a few measurements for a financially healthy small church were mentioned. These were interesting to me because I was able to consider how the practices at Plymouth measured up. Since then I've scrolled through other articles that seem relevant for a "Plymouth size" church. Below are a few suggested practices to keep a church on solid ground.

Set aside 10% of budget for the future or an emergency – I am very grateful for so many who give so generously at Plymouth. Resources for an emergency are available and the past two years we have set aside about 2% of our budget for the Building Reserve and 2% for the Sabbatical Search Fund. Are there ways we could set aside more for our aging building?

Cash reserves for 3 - 6 months of operating expense should be on hand – Yes, we are blessed with these reserves.

Facilities and Operations can be 20% - 30% of operations – This was considered to be maintenance and utilities and in those categories we are at 13%. When I add in our Property and Liability Insurance (\$21,283) and our City and County Assessments (\$10,334) we remain slightly under 30%.

My heart swells with gratitude when I consider how wisely financial resources have been managed over the years at Plymouth. Thank you, thank you, thank you – for your giving and your management.

All meetings of the Finance Committee are open to friends and members of Plymouth and the budget is reviewed with an overview presented to the Council quarterly. We will soon begin building the proposed budget for 2027.

Kindest regards.



New Zoom events
from the UCC:

September 28, 3:30-
5 pm

Vote with Love: Mo-
bilizing Our Commu-
nities This Midterm
Election

October 19, 3:30-
4:30 pm

Future of Faith: Com-
munities of Deep
Conversation

And many more!



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The Plymouth Outreach and Social Justice Committee is helping to organize a tour of the new center in Bozeman recently opened to provide overnight housing for unsheltered persons as well as supporting services. The tour would focus on initial construction costs as well as on-going operating costs in the hopes that a similar model might be applicable to Helena. Costs of similar facilities in other communities are being investigated as well.

Planting trees!



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

Conference Annual Meeting:

Thursday 9/24: 6-7 pm Mixer

Friday 9/25:

8 am Breakfast

9 am Opening Worship,

9:45 am Service Project

12 pm Lunch

1:30 Workshop Session 1

3 pm Plenary—Business Meeting

6 pm Evening Banquet

Continued on page 6 sidebar

Kathe Simons

WE NEED YOU! Please consider giving 1-2 hours monthly to help with tasks such as vacuuming, cleaning, sanitizing, steam-mopping, and refilling paper dispensers, etc. We work in teams of 2 or 3 on either Friday or Saturday morning.



- We are approaching the third anniversary of our church's volunteer Cleaning Crew!
- More than twenty volunteers have helped to keep our church clean.
- We have saved the church thousands of dollars.
- Several volunteers have moved, and some are on short-term or extended medical leave.
- We desperately need some new volunteers!
- Please call Kathe at 603-860-4539 to make this important commitment. We will accommodate your schedule and your travel plans.



Skeeter gave the floors downstairs a good shine treatment



**Happy late
September
Birthday to:**

21 Susan Butler

**And Happy
Early October
Birthdays to:**

3 Dick Weaver

7 Jean Goetz

9 Marcia Lauer





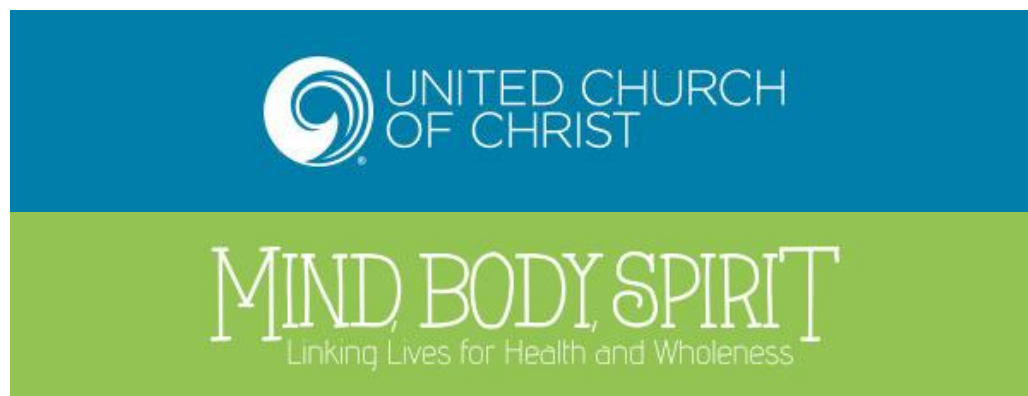
In Our Prayers

Special Prayers: Chelsey & 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: John Breisnes, Jean Goetz, Karen Senne Hayes, Lynda Hayes, Marcia Lauer, Betty Louise, Kelly Murphy, Maureen Nordahl, Suzanne Nybo, Phyllis Weaver.

Bereavement: The friends and family of Carl Carlson

To add someone to the prayer list, please fill out the prayer card in the pew backs, call the church office at 442-9883 or email pccofficemgr@gmail.com.



UCC WELLNESS MINISTRIES NEWSLETTER

Spiritual, Mental, and Physical Wellness are
Justice Issues

Go to UCC.org, then search WellnessMinistries

The United Church of Christ Daily Devotional:

The Daily Devotional grounds our daily faith. To subscribe: <https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/>

From 9/9/26:

So here are some words that have all my mountain-moving faith behind them:

You are fruitful—and you are worthy whether you bear fruit or not.

You are juicy and delightful—and even if you weren't, you'd still be precious.

You have the life-force of the universe inside you—even if it's all stored underground in the roots, for now.

Moving mountains is fine, I guess. But maybe a better use of all this power is to do what we can to make the sap rise and the branches unfurl in somebody's withered heart.

Prayer

Let me never again wither someone with a word. Amen.

SUMMER READ AND DISCUSSION—Jennifer Jeffries Thompson

Connecting Montana History with Contemporary Topics

We are nearing the end of this important, four-part summer read and discussion. On Wednesday, September 16th at 1:00 at the Lewis & Clark Library, we will have a chance to hear from Jonathan Hockett, Nutrition Coordinator at Helena Food Share, who will speak about hunger in Montana, yesterday and today. Based upon an essay written by Ruth McLaughlin for Montana the Magazine of Western History, the discussion of hunger is tragic, current and surprisingly common. We are grateful to the Montana Historical Society for permission to copy this and other articles and to distribute them widely this summer.

The previous sessions, discussing the historic Chinese in Montana, Epidemics of 1917 and COVID, Cuban Refugees of the 1960's and refugees living in Helena today, were well-attended. The speakers have been tremendous, giving us lots to think about.

Plymouth is collecting staples such as flour, sugar, corn-meal, etc. for Helena Food Share in recognition of the struggle to meet food insecurities.

Thanks for your help

Thank you Susan, Kathe, Stacey and Iris for your help in loaning quilts for the upcoming church conference meeting and for your assistance in exhibiting them. We will also replace the current exhibit of kids' art in the Fireside Room with Rev. Wei's textile mural, which will remain in place through the holidays.

If you have two-dimensional art you would be willing to display next year, let Jennifer Thompson or Pat Buell know. We would welcome your ideas and contributions.



An exhibit of Helena's unsheltered people displayed in the Fireside Room



Conference Annual Meeting continued:

Saturday, 9/26:

8:30 am Breakfast

9:30 am Gathering Worship / Keynote

11 am Workshop Session 2

12 pm Lunch

1:30 pm Workshop Session 3

3 pm Plenary—Business Meeting

5 pm Choir Rehearsal

6 pm Dinner and evening on your own

Sunday, 9/27:

8:30 am Breakfast

10 am Sunday worship

11 am Fellowship hour

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 at 1:30

Women's Fellowship

Tuesday 9/22, 11:30
am at the Overland
Restaurant

Cleaning Crew

Saturday mornings
Contact Kathe to
volunteer:

603-860-4539 or
kathe@simonshome..
org



Refugee children performing at St. Paul's Methodist Church



Pastor Charles, continued from page 1

So, thank you everyone who has volunteered to make delicious food to feed everyone. Thank you to everyone who has helped to keep our space clean and inviting. Thank you to everyone who helped plan the events, and thank you to everyone who is helping to decorate our space. Let's all make sure that our guests feel awe and honor, and let's all have a great time at the 141st Conference Annual Meeting of the Montana-Northern Wyoming Conference of the United Church of Christ!



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 am—1:00 pm Tues—Thurs
and by appointment

Administrative Assistant
Kendall Larson:
9:00 am—1:00 pm Mon –Fri

Contact Us

Church Office: 406.442.9883

Web:
www.plymouthmontanaucc.org

Email: pccofficemgr@gmail.com

Also: www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational

September 24-27, 2026
CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING 2026

in Helena, Montana!



Sundays 10:00 am Worship Service in person and on
You Tube through our website