



Plymouth Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

**Service of the Word
January 9, 2022
Baptism of Our Lord
10:00 am**

RINGING OF THE BELL

BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

Alice Dunne

PRELUDE

“O Morning Star, how clear and bright”

Robert Hobby (b. 1962)

*OPENING HYMN

“O Morning Star, How Clear and Bright”

No. 158

O Morning Star, how clear and bright, your beam shines forth in truth and light!

My Sovereign meek and lowly!

O Root of Jesse, Promised One, my God and Ruler, you have won

My heart to serve you solely!

You are holy, great and glorious, all-victorious,

Rich in blessing, rule and might o'er all possessing.

Come heavenly Brightness, Light divine, and deep within my heart now shine,

There make yourself an altar!

Fill me with joy and strength to be your member, joined eternally

In love that cannot falter;

Longing for you does possess me; turn and bless me;

Here in sadness eye and heart long for your gladness.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Richard Cowles

One: Sisters and brothers, today we recall:
Jesus came to the waters of baptism.

**All: In baptism, our Creator claims us
and frees us from the power of hatred and death.**

One: In baptism we are joined to Christ
and we are joined together in unity, recalling

**All: “There is no longer Jew or Greek
there is no longer slave or free
there is no longer male or female
for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”**

One: In baptism, the Spirit of God anoints us for ministry
and makes us signs of divine love.

It is the mark of acceptance into the church
and the beginning of our growth
into full Christian faith and discipleship.

**All: Therefore on this day,
the whole church, the Body of Christ,
remembers and celebrates.**

One: Let us worship God!

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (*unison*)

Gracious and all loving God, you call to us across deep waters and dark places. Yours is the light which guides us and the voice which we follow.

We pray that you would reveal yourself to us as we worship you. May those without hope be encouraged; those who are sad, cheered; those who are seeking, find you; and may all things be according to your will. In the name of your beloved Son we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Eric Jackson

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

All: And, also with you.

Please share a physically distanced sign of peace with those around you.

*SONG OF PRAISE

No. 760

Amen, we praise your name, O God. Amen, we praise your name, O God.

Amen, amen, amen, amen, amen, we praise your name, O God.

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

STORY FOR ALL AGES

Kim Looney

(Children return to their seats following the story)

SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

One: As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

"With this water –"

Fred Gramann (b. 1950)

*With this water begins the journey, with this water forever claimed,
With this water the Lord now leads you, with this water forever changed.*

*With these vows your loved ones name you, with these vows your family grows,
With these vows the congregation now surrounds you, God's love to share.*

*With this water we celebrate now, with this water let us recall
The baptism of our dear Savior, who laid down his life for all.*

SERMON

Eric Jackson

REMEMBRANCE OF OUR BAPTISMS

We will remember our baptisms in worship today. Phone and Facebook participants are invited to have a small bowl or cup filled with water with you. If you have not been baptized, you are invited to participate in this moment by allowing the refreshment of these waters to wash over you and consider its meaning for your life from our God who is with you.

REMEMBERING OUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Pastor: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be a disciple, to follow in the way of Jesus Christ, to resist oppression, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ, as best you are able?

(Let people answer silently to themselves; pause)

Pastor: And do you promise, according to the grace given to you, to grow in your faith and to be a faithful member of the church, celebrating Christ's presence and furthering God's mission in all the world?

REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM

Pastor: If you choose, you are invited to lift your communion cup with water found in your pew or the bowl of water with you at home if you are worshipping online and touch your forehead with the water.

Close your eyes and reflect on the memories of your baptism or the memories told you and now reflect on what the promise of baptism means in your life today.

All: "I am God's beloved!"

One: Let us pray...

PRAYER OF RECOMMITMENT

*HYMN

"How Firm a Foundation"

No. 407

**How firm a foundation for you has been laid,
By God in the Word, in the sacrifice paid!
What more can God say than to you has been said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?**

**"Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,
For I am your God, I will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand
Upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand."**

**"When through the deep waters I call you to go,
The rivers of woe shall not over you flow;
For I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
Delivering you from your deepest distress."**

**"When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be your supply;
The flame shall not hurt you; for I have designed
Your soul to make pure just as gold is refined."**

**"The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"**

THE MINISTRY OF PRAYER

CALL TO PRAYER

One: God be with you.
Many: **And also with you.**
One: Lift up your hearts.
Many: **We lift our hearts to God.**
One: Let us pray...

THE PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

There are several beloved versions of this prayer. In an effort to pray in unison while respecting the different versions that many of us have prayed since childhood, we will cycle through the different versions over the course of a year. We will pray using "trespasses" through the first part of 2022.

Our Father, 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

Words: attributed to Richard of Chichester (1197-1253)

Tune: SUMNER by Arthur H Briggs (1906-1954)

Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray: to
see thee more clear - ly, love thee more dear - ly,
fol - low thee more near - ly, day by— day.

OFFERING OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS

CALL TO THE OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Gracious Spirit, dwell with me”

Adoro te devote,
arr. K. Lee Scott (b. 1950)

*Gracious Spirit, dwell with me: I would gracious be;
Help me now thy grace to see, I would be like thee;
And with words that help and heal, Thy life would mine reveal;
And with actions bold and meek, for Christ my Savior speak.*

*Truthful Spirit, dwell with me: I would truthful be;
Help me now thy truth to see, I would be like thee;
And with wisdom kind and clear Thy life in mine appear;
And with actions lovingly, speak Christ's sincerity.*

*Holy Spirit, dwell with me: I would holy be;
Show thy mercy tenderly, make me more like thee;
Separate from sin I would, and cherish all things good,*

And whatever I can be give him who gave me thee.

*Mighty Spirit, dwell with me, I would mighty be;
Help me now thy pow'r to see, I would be like thee;
'Gainst all weapons hell can wield, be thou my strength and shield;
Let thy word my weapon be, Lord, thine the victory.
Gracious Spirit, dwell with me, I would be like thee!*

*DOXOLOGY

OLD HUNDREDTH

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below!
Praise God for all that love has done!
Creator, Christ, and Spirit one. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*CLOSING HYMN

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

No. 154

Refrain (sung after each verse):

**Go tell it on the mountain, over the hill and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth.**

**Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.**

*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

Fantasy-Toccata on “How Firm a Foundation” Alice Jordan (1916-2012)



*We are grateful for the music leadership of member **Alice Dickerson Hatt**
while **Joe Downing** is away.*

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🌀 Plymouth Runs On YOU 🌀

USHERS: George Bain and Kailyn Wright **ACOLYTE:** Alice Dunne
LITURGIST: Richard Cowles **DEACON ON DUTY:** Geoff Oldfield
FLOWERS given by George Bain in loving memory of Caroline D. Bain,
September 3, 1922 – January 5, 2015
COUNTERS: Patty Brannan and Susan Hawks
WORSHIP ZOOM COORDINATOR: Tom Zorn

Rev. Eric Jackson, Pastor, ejackson@plymouthsyrr.org
Dr. Joseph Downing, Director of Music
Kim Looney, Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries
Kathy Ferro, Church Administrator
Mark Johnson, Sexton
plymouthsyrr.org ☞ office@plymouthsyrr.org

☞ Some Things You Ought to Know ☞

We continue to worship both in person and streamed live on Facebook: We ask that you wear a mask when inside Plymouth and to practice physical distancing with those who do not live in your household due to the rise in COVID infections and since people of all ages are not able to be vaccinated. The worship service can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/plymouthUCCsyracuse/>.

Stewardship Effort Reaches \$263,463: We have received 85 stewardship pledges for \$263,463 toward Plymouth Church's 2022 budget. Your pledge commitments will make the difference in how much Plymouth can accomplish next year. Pledge cards may be placed in the offering plate Sunday, mailed to the church office or submitted via email to George Bain at georgesbain@gmail.com.

2021 donations: In order to facilitate the closing of the 2021 financial books, members are encouraged to submit checks they want credited to 2021 no later than THIS MONDAY, January 10, 2022.

Weekly Book Discussion begins Thursday, January 20, 11am – 12noon at Plymouth: You are invited to explore and challenge racial bias, privilege, and white supremacy as we gather weekly to discuss the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad. This eye-opening book challenges all of us to do the essential work of unpacking our biases, and it helps white people take action to dismantle the privilege within themselves so they can stop inflicting damage on people of color, and in turn, help other white people also do better. Please register for this discussion by January 17 so we know how many people to expect. Simply call Gary Smith at 607-423-6456 (leave message) or send an email to revgarysmith@icloud.com.

SAVE THESE DATES:

- 2022 Budget Review – Sunday, January 23, details TBA
- 2022 Annual Meeting – Sunday, January 30, 2pm via Zoom

Reparations 101 – introducing community discussions of reparations for slavery and for systemic racism: This course, offered again for those who missed it the first time, will take place via Zoom on four Mondays from 6:30pm – 8:00pm – January 24, January 31, February 7 and February 14. This experience is limited to 20 participants so reserve your spot at <https://bit.ly/3efzsHq>. We ask a donation of \$10 or more to the [Grassroots Reparations Coalition](#). More details in the January *Plymouth Story*.

Open Enrollment for Covenant Community Groups! In January each year new members are welcomed into the Covenant Community Groups. These groups of eight to twelve committed listeners meet monthly in members' homes or via Zoom to discuss "life's big questions" and share whatever is on their hearts and minds. Groups are open to anyone affiliated with Plymouth – you don't need to be a member to be included.

If you are considering this wonderful opportunity to get to know other Plymouth people in a small and confidential environment, contact Susan Hawks (315-481-9148 or shawks@twcny.rr.com) or Rich Jaeger (rgjaeger440@gmail.com). We can provide you with additional information and answer your

questions. Please let us know if you want to participate during 2022 **by Sunday, January 23**, so groups can be formed and be ready to meet in February.

Food Pantry Update: VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to staff the weekly Food Pantry. The hours are 1:30pm to 4pm on Mondays. You can commit to one week a month or as many weeks as you wish. Please contact Christine Herb (315-877-4512) for more information or to volunteer so that we can keep this vital ministry open and running.

And thanks to all who donated warm items over the past month. Men's gloves and men's socks are still needed. They can be placed in the basket at the back of the sanctuary.

THIS WEEK AT PLYMOUTH

- Mon. January 10 Food Pantry, 2pm – 4pm
- Tues. January 11 Bell Choir, 10am, Kirtland Hall
Board of Trustees*, 6pm, Adult Education Room
Board of Deacons*, 7pm via Zoom
- Wed. January 12 Safe Church Working Group, 7pm via Zoom
- Thurs. January 13 Bell Choir Rehearsal, 6pm, Kirtland Hall
- Sun. January 16 Learning Community, 9am via Zoom
Worship, 10am, in-person in the sanctuary and
livestreamed on Facebook

** Board meetings are open to all; please contact the Church Office to be put in contact with the Chair who can receive your request for voice during the meeting and share online meeting information with you.*

✠ Liturgy Notes ✠

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 9TH 2022

*First Reading: Isaiah 43:1-7 | Psalm: Psalm 29
Second Reading: Acts 8:14-17 | Luke 3:15-17, 21-22*

Sunday, January 2nd was the inauguration of the Season of the Epiphany. Traditionally, Epiphany begins January 6. Churches will usually celebrate Epiphany either the Sunday before or after January 6. The Season of Epiphany lasts until Tuesday, March 1 and we begin Lent on Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022. The word “epiphany” in Greek is *epiphania*. This means “manifestation” or “appearance.” Epiphany. Epiphany is associated with the visitation of the Magi which we explored Sunday, January 2. Two other significant moments are associated with Epiphany. The second is the Baptism of Christ where there is divine affirmation of Christ's identity. The third is when Jesus turns water into wine.

This week we explore the second event associated with Epiphany - the Baptism of Jesus Christ where God affirms the identity of Jesus as being the one who is sent by God in the Gospel reading found in Luke.

Baptism is a sacrament in the Church that not only affirms the light of God in our lives and the lives of our children. Baptism is also a sacrament that affirms what we are being baptized into. The people who make the decision to get baptized by John in Luke's text are doing so not only to symbolize the community they are part of that is existing, but also the new social vision that John proclaims is on the way and that Jesus represents the fulfillment of.

This Sunday in worship we will remember our own baptisms. In these uncertain times that can cause us to face an identity crisis, we remember our baptisms to orient ourselves in our own identity as a reminder of not only who we are, but that we are being called to walk into the light that is to come.

☞ Welcome to Plymouth ☞

232 E. Onondaga Street | Syracuse, NY 13202 | 315-474-4836

We are an Open and Affirming, Just Peace, Immigrant Welcoming, Progressive Christian, and Sanctuary Congregation.

Plymouth was founded in 1853 by a group of Syracusans who wanted to create a Christian abolitionist bulwark fighting slavery. Since then, we continue to live our faith by standing against racism, white supremacy culture, poverty, and war; standing up for the rights of immigrants, indigenous people, workers, women, and LGBTQ folk; and seeking to be agents of mercy in a hurting world. We believe in beauty, laughter, the struggle for peace with justice, taking risks for building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive Beloved Community in God, and the Way of Jesus Christ which is love and compassion for ourselves and our neighbors.

Our faith is over 2,000 years old; our thinking is not!

- **Resources for Children:** Worship Activity Kits are available for children ages 3 - 5th grade on the shelves in the back of the sanctuary. We ask that your children put their names on the blank label on the box the first time they use a kit, take that kit each week, and return it at the end of worship.
- **Visiting for the First Time?** We are so glad to meet another member of our extended global family. To add your name to our mailing list so we can know how to best serve you, please fill out the card found in the pew and place it in the offering plate or email office@plymouthsyr.org.
- **Giving:** Part of worshipping God is through giving. We can only live into our mission to impact the world TOGETHER with the generosity of all! You can share your gifts during the morning offering, or by mailing a check to Plymouth Church at the address above or via PayPal to giving@plymouthsyr.org.
- **Prayer Requests:** We are excited to be worshipping together both with members of Plymouth Church and the wider world. To add a name to our Prayer List, fill out the card found in the pew and place it in the offering plate or contact office@plymouthsyr.org.