



Plymouth Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Service of the Word
Baptism of the Lord
January 12, 2025
First Sunday after Epiphany
10:00 am – Worship

❧ Welcome to Plymouth ❧

Wisdom of the Week:

Yearly reminder:

*There is no resolution that, if kept,
will make you more worthy of love.*

*You, as your actual self and not as some made up ideal,
are already worthy.*

Nadia Bolz Weber

Standing on Holy Ground ...

*We acknowledge with respect the Onondaga Nation,
Firekeepers of the Haudenosaunee, the Indigenous People,
on whose ancestral land Plymouth Church now stands.*

*Holy is this place. Holy is this time. Holy are we,
the people of God, the Body of Christ.*

Order of Worship

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

*Be still ... and aware of God's presence
within you and all around you.*

PRELUDE

“the water ... like glass”

Joseph Gentry Stephens

GREETING

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine

CALL TO WORSHIP

Craig French

One: In the beginning God created.

All: **And it was good.**

One: In the present God creates.

All: **And it is good.**

One: In the future God will continue creating.

All: **And it will be good.**

One: Let us gather to worship our God,

All: **Who creates goodness in, through, and all around us.**

**Please stand as you are able.*

*HYMN 25

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

insert, pg. 7

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Craig French

**All: Gracious God, too often our lives reflect chaos
 instead of creation. Living in disorder and turmoil,
 we exist as though you do not.
 Rather than the tender hovering of your Spirit,
 we feel the buffeting currents of change and doubt.
 Have mercy on us.
 Blow through our lives like a mighty wind this day,
 clearing away the clouds of despair.
 Shine brightly among us, renewing our reason for hope.
 Rain your love upon us, creating in us a new day.**

SILENT PRAYER

(please pray for yourself and for those seated around you)

WORD OF GRACE

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine

One: This is the good news:
 The One who goes before us is more powerful than we are.
 Christ baptizes us with both water and the Holy Spirit
 and we become a new creation. We are forgiven.
 The peace of God is yours.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

STORY FOR ALL AGES

Emily Evans

Following the story, children preschool through grade 5 will depart for Learning Community.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Craig French

ANTHEM

“The Baptism of Christ”

Rachel Aaron

Soloist Clark Johnson, soprano

MESSAGE

“God-Drenched Life”

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine

*HYMN

“Wade in the Water”

insert, pg. 8

REMEMBERING OUR BAPTISM

INVITATION

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine

PRAYER

**All: Bless by your Holy Spirit, gracious God, this water
 that by it we may be reminded of our baptism
 into Jesus Christ and that by your grace
 we may be kept faithful to the promises we have made.
 Renew in us all the gifts of baptism—
 strength for life’s journey, courage in time of suffering,
 the joy of faith, the freedom of love,
 and the hope of new life through Jesus Christ. Amen**

RECLAIMING AND RENEWING YOUR BAPTISM

CALLS TO ACTION

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

“Baptism”

Crawford Gates

*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God for gifts of hope and peace.
Praise God for gifts of joy and love.
Praise God for sending Christ to dwell
on Earth for us—Emmanuel. Amen.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN

“Gather Us In”

insert, pp. 9 & 10

*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

“Water Music: Menuet”

George Frideric Handel

*The worship materials used in today’s service
are adapted from the UCC “Worship and Education Ministry Team.*

Rev. Craig French, Bridge Pastor
Dr. Joseph Downing, Director of Music
Emily Evans, Youth and Children’s Ministries Coordinator
Lori A Forrester, Church Administrator
Office ✉ office@plymouthsyr.org



Plymouth Runs on YOU ✉

USHER: George Bain **LITURGIST:** Craig French

DEACONS ON DUTY: Esther Zorn and Frank Leonard

COMMUNITY TIME: Dave Pasinski

COUNTERS: Kathleen Deters-Hayes and Susan Hawks

FLOWERS: Bernie Peterson in memory of Geraldine Sophia Pasternacki
and Franklin Delano Peterson

ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR: Tom Zorn

THIS WEEK AT PLYMOUTH

- Mon. January 13 Board of Trustees, Parlor, 6pm*
- Tues. January 14 Board of Deacons, Adult Education and Zoom, 7pm*
- Wed, January 15 Food Pantry, 2-4pm
- Thur. January 16 Bell Choir rehearsal, Sanctuary 5:30pm
NO Choir rehearsal
- Sun. January 19 Worship, Sanctuary and online, 10am
Learning Community (during worship)
Community Time and Forum after Service to go over 2025
Budget, Memorial Hall

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

Looking Ahead in January ...

Saturday, Jan. 25 Mara Delaney will put on a benefit concert for Plymouth's Food Pantry, here in the Sanctuary, 7pm. No cover charge but food and monetary donations will be collected.

Sunday, Jan. 26, will bring two big events.

First will be our **Annual Congregational Meeting**, immediately following morning worship. Highlights will include, but not limited to: election of church leaders, approving the 2025 budget, and an update on the interim pastor search process.

Later that same day will be the 40th observance of **SU's Martin Luther King Jr. celebration** at the Dome. The buffet dinner begins at 5 pm, with the program to follow. Tickets are \$40/person. Plymouth has already reserved 1 table (8 persons). If you'd like to attend, please contact Pastor Craig or the church office ASAP. Scholarship help is also available.

January will also bring an opportunity to **suggest sermon topics for February**, based on the theme of "Troubling Texts." You are invited to nominate a Bible story, character or passage that you find particularly puzzling, confusing, problematic or contrary to the Good News of Jesus. Give your suggestion (+ your name and contact info) to Pastor Craig or the church office. Then, stay tuned ...

An update regarding 2025 Stewardship Pledges: from Susan Hawks as of January 6, 2025 we have received 61 pledges totaling \$191,256. At the end of the pledge drive last year we had 82 pledges totaling \$239,060.

A reminder from the Church Office and the Stewardship Committee: you can always drop off your 2025 pledge cards to the office via offering plate, email, or regular mail. But please no voice mail.

A reminder from Emily Evans: starting today, parents will have to come upstairs to retrieve their kids from Learning Community at the end of the service. This will be the first week they will have to come upstairs. We don't want any kids to get forgotten.

Music Notes for Sunday, January 12th, 2025

Today we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus. Our two anthems deal directly with this theme, while the prelude and postlude are based more loosely on the idea of water.

Joseph Gentry Stephens (b. 1972) is a Texas-born composer who writes mainly for choral and percussion ensembles. "the water like glass" was originally written for choir but works well on the organ because of the long notes (which the organ can hold infinitely!) The piece doesn't have a "melody" in the traditional sense, nor does it use harmony in the traditional way. Rather, it explores the combinations of different pitches – some combinations are relaxed while others carry some degree of tension.

Rachel Aarons (b. 1984) studied music in college as a secondary concentration while she was earning her degree in French. She earns her living as a real estate agent (her internet picture has her with her arms crossed in front of her, like countless other real estate agents!) Our **solo** is a setting of Luke 3:21-22. We express our appreciation to Klark Johnson, our soprano soloist. Klark is currently doing her master's degree at SU, studying with Janet Brown (who also taught Giovanna, Tara and Kat!)

Crawford Gates (1921-2018) was an American composer and conductor with over nine hundred works written. He earned his doctorate at Eastman, studying with Howard Hanson after the Second World War. Baptism was originally written as a children's hymn.

*Jesus came to John the Baptist in Judea long ago,
And was baptized by immersion in the river Jordan's flow.*

*"To fulfill the law," said Jesus, when the Baptist questioned why,
"And to enter with my Father in his kingdom up on high."*

*Now we know that we must also witness faith in Jesus' word.
Be baptized to show obedience, as was Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

Georg Frideric Handel (1685-1756) had a good gig as Kapellmeister (in charge of all the church music) at the Hanover court, but he longed to write opera. He had visited Italy once and fallen in love with the art, so it was no surprise when his boss, the Elector of Hanover, gave him a leave to study in Rome again. Handel blew him off, and never returned, setting his sights on making opera popular in England. He was doing well until the king died, and the new English king was George I – previously his old boss, the Elector of Hanover (he never learned to speak English!) Handel wrote the 21 movements of the Water Music to be played on a barge adjacent to the new King's barge on the Thames River as a peace offering to repair the relationship.

SYRACUSE VOCAL ENSEMBLE WITH THE SYRACUSE ORCHESTRA
AND SYRACUSE FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC PRESENTS

MOZART VESPERS

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
SYRACUSE FRIENDS OF CHAMBER MUSIC, FEATURING MOZART'S
VESPERÆ SOLENNES DE CONFESSORE AS WELL AS MUSIC FOR
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA BY C.P.E. BACH AND FELIX MENDELSSOHN.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

7:30 P.M. | GRANT MIDDLE SCHOOL | 2400 GRANT BOULEVARD SYRACUSE, NY, 13208

PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE
HERE OR AT THE DOOR →

FOR TICKETS AND MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SYRFCM.ORG

☞ 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 in to 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.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

to answer

25

Isaac Watts, 1719; alt.

Ps. 90:1-2, 4-5

1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,
2 Un - der the shad-ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,
4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,

Our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:
Suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.
From ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.
Short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ev-er-roll-ing stream,
soon bears us all away;
We fly for-got-ten, as a dream
fades at the o-pening day.

6 O God, our help in a-ges past,
our hope for years to come,
Still be our God while trou-bles last,
and our e-ter-nal home!

Watts, minister of a Congregational church in London, wrote theological and philosophical works and hundreds of "hymns of human composure" (everyday language). He augmented the congregational singing of psalms with a new style of hymnody.

Tune: ST. ANNE C.M.
William Croft, 1708

2107 *Refrain* Wade in the Water

Wade in the wa - ter, wade in the wa - ter, chil-dren,

wadc in the wa - ter, God's a-gon-na trou-ble the wa - ter. *Fine*

Leader

1. See that host all dressed in white,
2. See that band all dressed in red,
3. Look o - ver yon - der, what do I see?
4. If you don't be - lieve I've been re - deemed,

All *Leader*

God's a-gon-na trou-ble the wa - ter. The lead - er looks like the
Looks like the band that
The Ho - ly Ghost a -
Just fol-low me down to

Leader *All* *D.C.*

Is - rael - ite,
Mo - ses led, God's a-gon-na trou-ble the wa - ter.
com-ing on me,
Jor - dan's stream,

WORDS: African American spiritual (John 5:2-9)
MUSIC: African American spiritual; arr. by Carl Haywood
Arr. © 1992 Carl Haywood

WADE IN THE WATER
Irregular with Refrain

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Gather Us In

Unison D A C G Gm/Bb Dm

1. Here in this place, the new light is stream-ing, sha-dows of doubt are
 2. We are the young—our lives are a mys-tery; we are the old, who
 3. Here we re-ceive new life in the wa-ters; here we re-ceive the
 4. Not just in build-ings, small and con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,

C G D A C G

van-ished a-way. See in this space our fears and our dream-ings,
 yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,
 bread of new birth; here you shall call your sons and yourdaugh-ters,
 light years a-way, here in this place the new light is shin-ing;

Gm/Bb Dm C Am7 D

brought here to you in the light of this day.
 called to be light to the whole hu-man race.
 call us a-new to be salt for the earth.
 now is God pres-ent, and now is the day.

WORDS and MUSIC: Marty Haugen, 1981

GATHER US IN
Irr.

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♩ = 54-60

GATHERING

A C/G D/F# G A C/G

Gath-er us in, the lost and for - sak - en; gath-er us in; our
 Gath-er us in— the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in— the
 Give us to drink the wine of com-pass-ion, give us to eat the
 Gath-er us in and hold us for - ev - er; gath-er us in and

D/F# G A D A C G

spir - its in-flame. Call to us now, and we shall a-wak-en;
 proud and the strong; give us a heart so meek and so low - ly;
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to-geth-er,

Gm/Bb Dm C Am7 D C/D Gm/D D

we shall a-rise at the sound of our name.
 give us the cour-age to en - ter the song.
 lives that are ho-ly and hearts that are true.
 fire of love in our flesh and our bone.