

Plymouth Congregational Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Service of the Word
February 23, 2025
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
10:00 am – Worship

❧ Welcome to Plymouth ❧

Wisdom of the Week (Psalm 37:1-8, 10-11)

*Don't get upset over evildoers;
don't be jealous of those who do wrong,
because they will fade fast, like grass;
they will wither like green vegetables.
Trust the LORD and do good;
live in the land, and farm faithfulness.
Enjoy the LORD,
and God will give what your heart asks.
Commit your way to the LORD!
Trust God! God will act
and will make your righteousness shine like the dawn,
your justice like high noon.
Be still before the LORD; wait for God.
Don't get upset when someone gets ahead—
someone who invents evil schemes.
Let go of anger and leave rage behind!
Don't get upset—it will only lead to evil.
In just a little while the wicked won't exist!
If you go looking around their place,
they won't be there.
But the meek will inherit the land;
they will enjoy a surplus of peace.*



Order of Worship

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

Be still ... and aware of God's presence ... in you and around you.

PRELUDE	"I Don't Want No Trouble at the River"	Spiritual
GREETING		Craig French
CALL TO WORSHIP		Rick Cowles

- One: Come, let us be known as children of the Most High.
All: **We will love our enemies, and do good to those who hate us.**
One: May we be known as disciples of Christ.
All: **We will bless those who curse us, and pray for those who wrong us.**
One: Let us be known as inheritors of God's Spirit.
All: **We will be merciful, even as our God is merciful.**
One: Come, let us worship in the name and presence of Jesus.
All: **May our worship lead us to be more of what we claim and long to be.**

*SPIRITUAL "I Shall Not Be Moved"

36 Glo - ry hal - le - lu - jah, I shall not be moved. Glo - ry hal - le - lu - jah, I shall not be moved; just like a tree that's plant-ed by the wa - ters. I shall not be moved.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2. When my burden's heavy... | 4. The church of God is marching... |
| 3. Don't let the world deceive you... | 5. Jesus is our captain... |

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

PRAYER OF YEARNING (*B.J. Beu*)

Rick Cowles

Teacher of hard truths,
it is difficult to let go of our anger
toward those who prosper through deceit and unscrupulous ways;
it's not easy to make ourselves believe
that the meek will inherit the earth,
when they are being crushed by the unjust systems
stacked against them.
We long to see the vindication of the righteous
and the prosperity of those who work selflessly
to bring your realm here on earth.
We yearn for the day
when all people will treat one another as they wish to be treated.
Help us live into that day, Holy One, even when it is difficult,
that your love might shine like the sun
through our lives and our ministries.

**Please stand as you are able.*

SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF GRACE AND TRUTH

THE GIFT OF THE WORD

STORY FOR ALL AGES

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

ANTHEM

“I’m Goin’ Up a Yonder”

arr. Paul Read

SCRIPTURE

Luke 6:27-38

Rick Cowles

MESSAGE

“Troubling Texts: *Must I Really Love My Enemies? Why? How?*”
Rick Cowles & Craig French

*HYMN

“Christ, Your Words of Love Confound Us”

Christ, Your Words of Love Confound Us

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2019

Beach Spring, attr. B. F. White;
harm. Christopher Gage

1. Christ, your words of love con - found us, ev - en as we give you praise,
 2. Make us mind - ful: love is ac - tion, not a feel - ing that up - lifts.
 3. Faced with those who seek to hurt us, make us con - fi - dent and free:
 4. If we love just those who love us, where's the giv - ing? Where's the grace?

for the les - sons that you teach us seem so far from this world's ways.
 In each dai - ly si - tu - a - tion, love's the great - est of all gifts.
 you don't call us to be help - less but to stand with dig - ni - ty.
 Ev - en sin - ners try to do this; they have friends that they em - brace.

How can we love those who hate us? How can we love en - em - ies?
 It's the wis - er, strong - er per - son who will break the chain of hate.
 Lord, when oth - ers are de - mand - ing, may we know they mat - ter more
 May we do, Lord, un - to oth - ers as we'd have them al - so do.

What of peo - ple who a - buse us? How can we love ev - en these?
 Love can ush - er in re - demp - tion; love can make a peo - ple great.
 than our mo - ney or pos - ses - sions. May we share, not keep - ing score.
 You have shown us: Love is ac - tion. May we love, and make things new.

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 New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com | Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com
 Harmonization © 2017 by Christopher Gage.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S PRAYER

*(This is one of several versions that we rotate through the year.
You may pray this or other wording familiar to you.)*

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come; your 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 yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

CALLS TO ACTION

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

“Ain’t Got Time to Die”

arr. Hall Johnson

*DOXOLOGY

**Praise God, who made all people one,
whose healing work is never done,
who calls us steadfast to abide
in mercy at each other’s side.**

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN

“The Gift of Love”

insert, pg. 9

*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

“Deep River”

Kyle Jones, *trumpet*

arr. Moses Hogan

❧ Plymouth Runs on YOU ❧

USHER: Frank Leonard **LITURGIST:** Rick Cowles
DEACONS ON DUTY: Heather Evans and Esther Zorn
COMMUNITY TIME: Doreen and Michael Chellis
COUNTERS: Sarah Whitton and Keith Jakway
FLOWERS: Esther and Tom Zorn - In memory of
sisters Cynthia Myers and Jane Gordon.
ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR: Tom Zorn

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

THIS WEEK AT PLYMOUTH

- Wed. February 26 Food Pantry, 2-4pm
- Thur. February 27 Bell Choir rehearsal, Sanctuary, 5:30pm
Choir rehearsal, Memorial Hall, 7pm
- Sat. March 1 Beginning of Ramadan for our Muslim neighbors
- Sun. March 2 Worship, Sanctuary and online, 10am
Learning Community, upstairs (during worship)
Transfiguration Sunday—Mary Jureller, preaching
Pancake Brunch following worship, in Kirtland Hall
Congregational Meeting to elect our Pastor Search Committee, in Kirtland 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.*

Please join us after the service for Community Time in Memorial Hall.

Start a New Tradition — Make a Donation whenever we sing a Spiritual. Here's how: You are invited to contribute \$1 every Sunday we sing a spiritual. Place your \$1 in the envelope in today's bulletin. Our gifts will be used to support the Creative Arts Academy (part of the Community Folk Art Center). CAA is a free visual and performing arts immersion program for young creatives ages 8-16. Courses include visual arts, piano, ballet, West African drum, personal development, and poetry. Participants also learn about freedom, activism, and community.

Parking Reminder: If you are using the Diocese parking lot, please be respectful of where you park. Do not park in front of the garages; there are vehicles that may be needed at any time. Thank you.

Music Notes for Sunday, February 23rd, 2025

For the enslaved Africans death was a constant. It is estimated that over 25% of captured Africans died in transit before reaching their final destination, either on the boats, or travelling after the ships docked. (Life expectancy in all of eighteenth-century America was only about 38 years, mostly because of the high rate of infant mortality.) It is no surprise that a major portion of spirituals focused on death. What may be surprising though, is that the tone of these spirituals ranged from extremely somber (Deep River) to upbeat and joyous (Ain't Got Time to Die).

Prelude:

*I don't want no trouble at the river when it's time for me to cross to the other side.
Sometimes I feel mistreated. Sometimes I feel defeated.
Sometimes I fell that I should just give up.
But then I think of Jordan; I've got to crosee that Jordan
And I don't want no trouble when it's time for me to cross to the other side.
I don't want no hold up at the river when it's time for me to cross to the other side.*

Anthem:

*If anybody asks you where I'm goin' soon, so if you wanna know where I'm going soon,
I'm goin' up a yonder to be with my Lord.
If I can take the pain, the heartache that it brings,
There's comfort that in knowing I'll soon be home.
If God gives me grace, I'll run this race,
And soon I'll see my Savior face to face.
I'm goin' up a yonder to be with my Lord.*

Offertory Anthem:

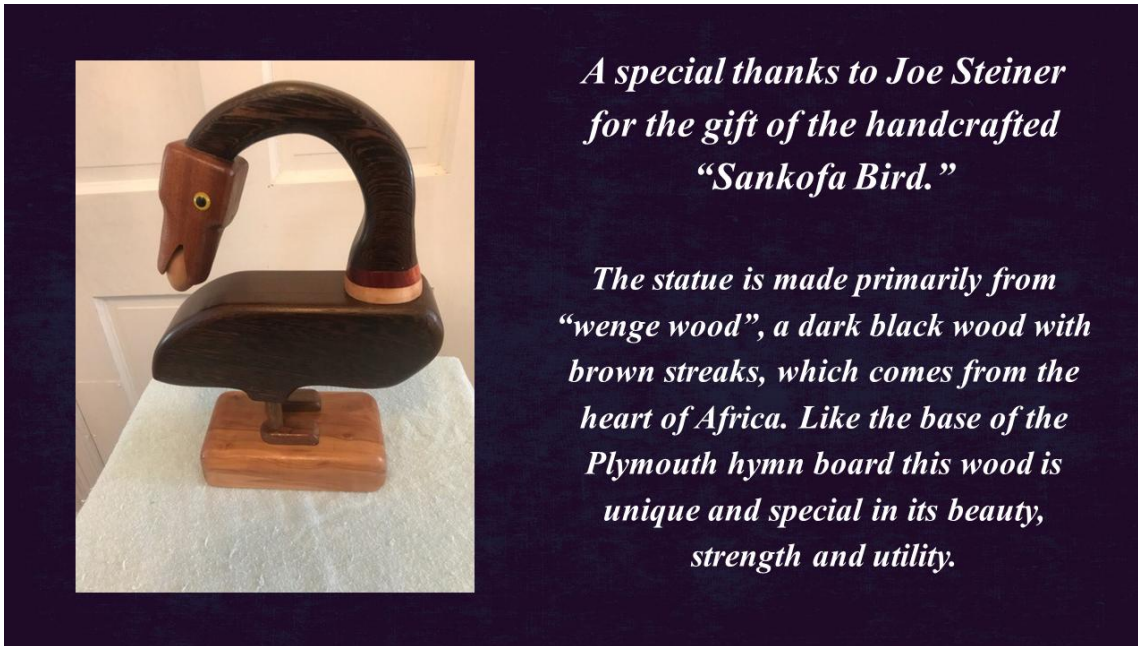
*Lord, I keep so busy praisin' my Jesus, ain't got time to die.
'Cause when I'm healin' the sick, I'm praisin' my Jesus*

*'Cause it takes all o' my time to praise my Lord.
If I don't praise him, the rocks goin' cry out: Glory and Honor!
Ain't got time to die!*

*Lord, I keep so busy workin' for the kingdom, ain't got time to die.
'Cause when I'm feedin' the poor, I'm workin' for the kingdom,*

*Lord, I keep so busy servin' my Master, ain't got time to die.
'Cause when I'm givin' my all, I'm serving my Master.*

Now, won't you git out o' my way, lemme praise my Jesus!



*A special thanks to Joe Steiner
for the gift of the handcrafted
“Sankofa Bird.”*

*The statue is made primarily from
“wenge wood”, a dark black wood with
brown streaks, which comes from the
heart of Africa. Like the base of the
Plymouth hymn board this wood is
unique and special in its beauty,
strength and utility.*

The Sankofa bird is a mythical bird that represents the importance of learning from the past to create a better future:

- **Meaning:** The word Sankofa is from the Akan tribe of Ghana and translates to "go back and get it". The symbol is based on the idea that the past can guide the future, and that people should learn from their past to achieve their full potential.
- **Symbol:** The Sankofa bird is depicted with its feet facing forward and its head turned backward. The egg in the bird's mouth represents the knowledge of the past, and the generation that will benefit from it.
- **Significance:** The Sankofa symbol represents the Akan people's quest for knowledge, and their belief that the past can guide the future.
- **For us:** The bird is a symbol of the principle of Sankofa which reminds us to be intentional about carefully reviewing the past, gathering good lessons, and using them to inform future directions in our work together to understand the legacy of white supremacy culture and stand against racism.

Join us for a Ramadan Dinner

Muslim Families of the
CNY RISE Center are hosting
iftars (dinners to break fast)
in their home this Ramadan

[Click here to join a family dinner!](#)



Ramadan 2025
March 1–March 30



☞ 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 Syracuseans 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.

“The Gift of Love”

1. Though I may speak _____ with brav - est fire,
 2. Though I may give _____ all I pos - sess,
 3. Come, Spir - it, come, _____ our hearts con - trol,

and have the gift _____ to all in - spire,
 and striv - ing so _____ my love pro - fess,
 our spir - its long _____ to be made whole.

and have not love, _____ my words are vain,
 but not be given _____ by love with - in,
 Let in - ward love _____ guide ev - ery deed;

as sound - ing brass, _____ and hope - less gain.
 the prof - it soon _____ turns strange - ly thin.
 by this we wor - _____ ship, and are freed.

WORDS: Hal Hopson, 1972 (1 Cor. 13:1-3)
 MUSIC: Trad. English melody; adapt. by Hal Hopson, 1972
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GIFT OF LOVE
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