

# **Plymouth Congregational Church**

*A Congregation of the United Church of Christ  
downtown Syracuse, NY*



Service of the Word  
January 18, 2026  
10:00 am – Worship

## ☞ Order of Worship ☜

### RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

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

### BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

#### PRELUDE

“There Is a Balm”

Joe Utterback

#### WORDS OF WELCOME

Craig French

#### CALL TO WORSHIP

Leslie Lawrence

One: We worship the God  
who inhabits our world and indwells our lives.  
We need not look up to find God.

**ALL: We need only look around:  
within ourselves, beyond ourselves, into the eyes of another.**

One: We need not listen for distant thunder to find God;  
we need only listen to the music of life:

**ALL: The sounds of children,  
the questions of the curious,  
the rhythm of a heartbeat.**

One: We worship the God

**ALL: who inhabits our world  
and who indwells our lives.**

#### \*HYMN

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”

#593

#### \*PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: Peace be with you.

**All: And, also with you.**

*Share a sign of peace with those around you.*

*\*Please stand as you are able.*



MESSAGE

“Living Curiously”

\*HYMN

“My Life Flows on in Endless Song”

#476

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD’S 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 the prayer with “trespasses” through April.*

**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; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

CALL TO ACTION

CALL TO GIVING

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

“Lamb of God”

F. Melius Christiansen

\*DOXOLOGY

**O Christ, our true and lasting light,  
Enlighten those who sit in night;  
Let those afar now hear your voice  
And in your fold with us rejoice. Amen.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

\*HYMN

“Called as Partners in Christ’s Service”

#495

\*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

“Shepherd’s Dance”  
*(from Amahl)*

Gian Carlo Menotti

❧ **Plymouth Runs on YOU** ❧

**USHERS:** Gert Danzy

**FLOWERS:** Heather Fais in memory of Marilyn Fais  
and her birthday on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**LITURGIST:** Leslie Lawrence

**DEACONS ON DUTY:** Leslie Lawrence and Cindy Perrine

**ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR:** Tom Zorn

**THIS WEEK (and beyond) AT (and around) PLYMOUTH**

- Today           Worship – “Living Curiously,” 10am, Sanctuary  
Community Time and Budget Review, 11:15am, Memorial Hall,
- Mon   Jan 19   **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** (Church Office will be closed)  
“Voices of Love in Times of Fear” MLK Prayer Vigil, 5:30pm,  
Columbus Circle (see page 7)
- Tue   Jan 20   Narcotics Anonymous (NA), 6:30pm, Memorial Hall  
Church Council, 5:30pm, Parlor\*
- Wed   Jan 21   Food Pantry, 2pm, Basement
- Thu   Jan 22   **NO** Bell or Vocal Choir Practice
- Fri    Jan 23   NA, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Sat    Jan 24   All-church “Search Process” event, 9am-4pm, Kirtland Hall  
NA, 12noon, Memorial Hall  
Sanctuary, 6pm – Live performance of “*Amahl and the Night  
Visitors*” — arranged by Klark Johnson.
- Sun   Jan 25   Plymouth’s Annual Meeting (following worship)

*\*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.*

**Our food pantry** is gathering hats, gloves, socks, coats, snow pants, and insulated underwear to help our clients during the cold weather.

For December 2025 we served 29 kids, 50 adults, and 21 seniors. (The numbers seem low because the food pantry was closed the Wednesdays before Christmas and New Year's due to the lack of volunteers.) If you want to volunteer you can email me at [plymouthchurchfoodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:plymouthchurchfoodpantry@gmail.com) or call/text me at 315-664-2206.

Heather Evans, Plymouth Food Pantry Coordinator

### ☞ Joys and Concerns ☞

#### **In the week ahead, you are invited to pray for:**

- John F., son of Lori and Maurice, on his promotion to sergeant with the Syracuse Police Department.
- The family of Barb and Craig F., following the sudden death of their sister-in-law, Vickie.
- Leslie A. recovering at home after surgery.
- The family of George T. (Linda K.'s brother) whose wife, Lisa, died. She was the mother of two sons, Geordie and Garrett.
- Sandra B. dealing with multiple myeloma and Alzheimer's.
- Susan G. who will be having hip replacement in February.
- Doris D. rehabbing at Menorah Park, following surgery after a fall.
- Stephen C. dealing with lung cancer.
- Folks dealing with mental illness, incarceration, and homelessness.

**From the Church Office:** I have noticed on more than one occasion, lately, lights have been left on. Now that Winter is in full swing, it is important that we try to keep lights off and doors closed when a room is not being used.

The Fire Marshall told me that if a door is closed, even if it has glass or plexiglass, it can hold back a fire by multiple seconds. Depending on how many doors are left open that greatly reduces the amount of time the Fire Department has to get to Plymouth to put out the fire.

As I have learned and I try to do this when I leave a room or hallway, I turn around and see if lights and fans are off and I make sure to close the door behind me. Please do the same and thank you.

Lori Forrester, Plymouth Church Administrator

**Voices of Love in Times of Fear**

Following the Example of Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Candlelight Vigil
- Prayers
- Readings from the works of Martin Luther King and Holy Scripture

*"I Have a Dream"*

**Monday, January 19th 5:30 - 6 pm**  
**Columbus Circle, Syracuse**

Bad weather location: St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 220 East Fayette Street

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:21*

Information: [Christians4nonviolence@gmail.com](mailto:Christians4nonviolence@gmail.com)

## Voices of Love in Times of Fear

Leaders of Christian congregations in Syracuse and the surrounding area will lead a candlelight vigil at 5:30 pm, Martin Luther King Day, January 19, 2026. The event is organized on the theme 'Voices of Love in Times of Fear'. It will be held at Cathedral Square, the plaza between the Onondaga County Courthouse and the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception.

This gathering is being organized in response to the violence being done to individuals and families in America by federal agents, including the separation of children from their parents and shootings of unarmed Americans. People who support nonviolence from all faith traditions, or of no particular faith tradition, are invited to attend. Handheld posters no larger than 11x17 inches are welcome.

One of the organizers, the Rev. Philip Major, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, stated, "We affirm the importance and value of interfaith and non-religious responses to the violence that is hurting the people of America. We follow Jesus' example in welcoming all people to join us. We also follow the example of Martin Luther King, Jr. in responding to the current crisis from our faith. We follow Dr. King's example when we follow Jesus' instructions to love all people, even those who behave as if they are our enemies. We strive to be voices of love in a time of fear."

The event will be 30 minutes in length, and will be led by clergy from local Christian congregations. The program will include prayers, periods of silence, readings from the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and from Holy Scripture, and peaceful singing.

In case of heavy rain or snow, the event will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 220 East Fayette Street. For more information about the event, write to [Christians4nonviolence@gmail.com](mailto:Christians4nonviolence@gmail.com).

## FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

# “Back to the Future” Remembering, Celebrating, Discovering

**Saturday, January 24th**  
**9am to 4pm**

- › Remember our past by taking a deep dive into the timeline we created together and by sharing important moments in our personal Plymouth experience
- › Celebrate our collective history as people of Plymouth
- › Discover key values and traits seen in and shaping Plymouth's life and work today and recurring themes or patterns (both healthy & unhealthy) in our life over the years

Register by January 18<sup>th</sup> by signing up in the bell tower.  
Lunch, snacks, and childcare will be provided.

We welcome your questions and thoughts – give us a call or have a conversation with us on any Sunday following worship. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Your Pastoral Search Committee: Michelle Bell, Josh Carroll, Sarah Cowles, Kathy Ferro, and Esther Zorn.

## Music Notes for Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Today, in addition to our regular liturgical schedule, we celebrate Martin Luther King Day.

Our **prelude** is based on the spiritual which was a favorite of Martin Luther King Jr. This arrangement is by Joe Utterback (b. 1944) who is an accomplished jazz musician who is the music director at the First Congregational Church of Stratford, Connecticut. Amongst his numerous publications are many spirituals using jazz harmonies and idioms.

Our reading today is from John 1 where John proclaims Jesus as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” This passage of scripture is so revered that it became a regular part of the Roman Catholic mass, assuring that it would be read (or chanted, or sang) in every service of that church. Because of this, there are literally thousands of musical settings of this text, often known by its Latin name “Agnus Dei” (“Lamb of God.”)

Our **anthem** comes from Giovanni Battista Pergolesi’s (1710-1736) *Stabat Mater*. Despite his short life (he died at the age of 26 of tuberculosis) Pergolesi was one of the most important Italian composers of the late baroque. His comic opera *La Serva Padrona* (The Maid Turned Mistress) led the way for the creation of the hundreds of Italian opera buffa (operas with silly plots and slapstick comedy) that filled Italian opera houses throughout the eighteenth century. The *Stabat Mater* is for soprano and alto but does not actually have an Agnus Dei movement. The original text is about when it is time to die, but the choir is using an arrangement that uses today’s text, first in Latin, then in English:

*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.  
Lamb of God, who takes the sins of the world, have mercy on us.*

Despite what you may think after watching *The Golden Girls*, there is no such town as St. Olaf in Minnesota. There is, however, a St. Olaf Choir, which was founded in 1912 by the composer of our **offertory anthem**, F. Melius Christiansen (1871-1955). This piece is based on a chorale melody from a 1540 hymnbook. Christiansen uses the strict rules of counterpoint from the sixteenth century so that the piece sounds as if it could have been written in the Renaissance period.

Please invite all your friends to the performance of Amahl and the Night Visitors this coming Saturday after our all-church retreat. *Amahl* was commissioned by NBC in the early 1950s to show regulators that TV could show some class. It was broadcast every year until the early 1960s, but it remains an annual favorite in live performance. Our **postlude** is the Shepherd’s Dance.

# ANDREW VANNORSTRAND & ALEX STURBAUM

*Bluegrass, Celtic and Folk music*

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15**

**12:00PM**

Plymouth Congregational Church  
232 E Onondaga St, Syracuse, NY



**Welcoming Children in Worship:** Children of all ages have a place in worship and in the life of the church. At Plymouth we try to engage all ages in different ways. Worship activity kits are available at our worship activity shelf in the back of the Sanctuary for our young children and youth (and for any adults who feel led to use them!). We hope that these activities will help worshipers connect with the service in ways that are meaningful to them. Please return the activity kits with all of the supplies to the shelf at the end of the service.

**Nursery Care:** Infants and toddlers have a special place in worship, too, and are always welcome. We also offer Nursery care for infants and toddlers starting at 9:45am. There are changing tables in the restroom just off the sanctuary, in the nursery, and in the men's restroom in the basement. The Service is piped into Memorial Hall, next door to the sanctuary, for those who would welcome a space apart.

**We are a Welcoming congregation:** Please wear your name tag during the Service and at Community Time, Forums, and Bible Studies. Let's get into the habit of letting people know who we are.

**Did you know** that an Instagram account was created for Plymouth Church? Please follow us @plymouthsyr and share our posts with your stories so people know what is happening here. If you have photos to share or church events you would like to promote, send an email to Stephanie at [spitzerhanks@gmail.com](mailto:spitzerhanks@gmail.com) so she can add your contributions to our newly expanded social media presence!

**Flowers** – Make our worship space even more beautiful for the glory of God and in honor of whatever you choose. A sign-up sheet is found in the bell tower entry. The cost is \$35 but plans for larger or multiple arrangements can always be made.

**Accessibility:** Individual listening headsets are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Please contact an usher for help. An elevator and ramp are available. Large print bulletins are at the back of the sanctuary.

**Ample free street parking** is available on the blocks around our church on Sundays, as well as in the lot behind the Catholic diocese building. For those able to walk a short distance, parking here will allow those with mobility impairments or small children to use the spots directly in front of the church.

**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. Also, please don't park in unmarked spaces. If it is not a designated parking spot, then it is used to get into and out of another area in the parking lot. If you park there, you will be blocking someone in or out of legitimate parking spaces. Thank you.

## ☞ About Plymouth ☞

Plymouth was founded in 1853 by a group of Syracuseans who wanted to create a Christian abolitionist bulwark in the city. Since then, we have fought against slavery, poverty, and war; for immigrant, native, worker, LGBTQ+ and women's rights; and sought to be agents of mercy in a hurting world. We believe in beauty, laughter, the struggle for peace with justice, taking risks for God, and the Way of Jesus Christ.

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

**We are Open and Affirming** We believe God calls us to welcome all and their gifts regardless of gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, physical ability, socioeconomic status, or religious background.

**We are Just Peace** We covenant to live actively within the holy longing that weds justice with the quest for peace – within us, between us, in community, and across the globe. We covenant to affirm the sacredness of all life and to honor and preserve creation.

**We are Sanctuary** We provide a space of physical, emotional, and spiritual safety for immigrants without documents, and specifically pledge to the principles of the national New Sanctuary Movement.

**We are Immigrant Welcoming** We seek to learn, support, and develop practices and programs that facilitate the respectful welcome and inclusion of all immigrants into our congregation and community.

**We are Progressive Christians** We try to walk in the way of Jesus Christ, our brother and savior. We believe God speaks new meanings for new days, and that She does so not only in the church and the ancient words of the Bible, but through the insights of science, the arts, the revelations of other religions, and the best strivings of the human spirit. We believe God has granted us a purpose, and that life is too short for long-faced religion. Join us!

Rev. Craig French, Bridge Pastor  
Dr. Joseph Downing, Director of Music  
Lori A Forrester, Church Administrator  
Emily Evans, Youth and Children's Ministries Coordinator

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