

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



Service of Word and Sacrament
March 1, 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

Jacob Wright

PRELUDE

“Partita on Herzlich tut mich verlangen”

Johann Pachelbel

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Craig French

CALL TO WORSHIP *(by Katherine Hawker)*

Kate O'Connor

One: For God so loved the world!

**All: The sparrows, the mountain lions,
the fish, and the people.**

One: For God so loved the world!

**All: In success and failure,
in sickness and health,
in mediocrity and extraordinary.**

One: For God so loved the world!

**All: Enough to become one of us,
enough to suffer along with us,
enough to offer new life for us.**

One: For God so loved the world!

All: Let us worship God!

*HYMN

“Amazing Grace”

#547

*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 if able.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(by Ted Loder, adapted)*

All: **Catch me in my aimless scurrying, Jesus,
and hold me in this Lenten season:
Hold my heart to the beat of your grace
and create in me a resting place,
a kneeling place,
a tip-toe place,
where I can recover from the dis-ease of the grandiosities
which fill my mind and calendar with busy self-importance,
that I may become vulnerable enough
to dare intimacy with the familiar,
to listen cup-eared to your summons,
and to watch squint-eyed for your crooked finger
in the crying of a child,
in the hunger of street people,
in the fear of the contagion of terrorism in all people,
in the rage of those oppressed because of race or gender identity,
in the smoldering resentments of third-world nations,
in the sullen apathy of the poor,
in my lonely doubt and limping ambivalence. Amen.**

ANTHEM

“God So Loved the World”

John Stainer

SCRIPTURE

John 3:1-17

(Common English Bible)

One: This is the word of God for the people of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

STORY FOR ALL AGES

Emily Evans

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

2233

Where Children Belong



This, this is where chil-dren be-long, wel-comed as part of the



wor - ship - ing thron. Wa - ter, God's Word, bread and



cup, prayer, and song: This is where chil-dren be - long.

WORDS: James Ritchie
MUSIC: James Ritchie

RITCHIE
Irregular

MESSAGE

“Spiritual Practices for the Weary & Anxious:
Restoring the Connection”

HYMN

“Gather Us In”

Insert

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

COMMUNION INVITATION (*Iona Community, adapted*)

One: We are here because Jesus has called us –
strangers and friends,
locals and visitors,
believers and doubters,
the certain and the curious.
It is always a mixed company that Jesus gathers
and invites to his table where, in bread and wine,
he meets us
and through him we, who are different,
are joined to each other.

So come, you who hunger and thirst
for a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world.
Come ... not because you understand,
but because you are understood.
Come ... not because of how you feel,
but because God has food for you.
Come ... not because you deserve a place,
but because Jesus invites you, just as you are.

COMMUNION PRAYER

One: Since you have called us,
since you have kept a place for us,
since your face lights up when we sit at your table,
gracious God,

ALL: How can we keep from singing?

One: When deep down ... despite the contradictions,
we know, we sense, we believe that life is good;
when one of your words rings truer than ever before;

when in one unexpected moment
we are given a glimpse of your kin-dom,
gracious God,

ALL: How can we keep from singing?

One: *In* this place where prayer has been made for many years;
in this place where so many different people
have found their common bond in your call and purpose;
in this place where the walls are waiting to echo your praise,
gracious God,

ALL: How can we keep from singing?

One: Therefore with the Church throughout the world,
with the Church on the other side of time,
with those who once praised you here
and have now joined the closer harmony of heaven,
we sing the song of your everlasting praise:

**ALL: Holy, holy, holy, Lord,
God of power and might.**

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

One: And now, lest we believe that our praise alone fulfills your purpose,
we fall silent
and remember him who came because words were not enough.

**ALL: Setting our wisdom ... our will ... our words aside,
emptying our hearts, and bringing nothing in our hands,
we yearn for the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving
which Christ alone offers.**

One: Merciful God, send now, in kindness,
your Holy Spirit to settle on this bread and fruit of the vine
and fill them with the fullness of Jesus.
And let that same Spirit rest on us,
converting us from the patterns of this passing world,
until we conform to the shape of him whose food we now share.

(Taking and breaking bread)

Among friends, gathered round a table,
Jesus took bread, and broke it, and said,
'This is my body — broken for you.'

(Holding up the cup of blessing)

Later he took a cup of wine and said,
'This is the new relationship with God
made possible by my death.
Take it, all of you, to remember me.'

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP (*communion by intinction*)

*Communion at Plymouth is open to all without regard for religion,
strength of belief, state of soul, or certainty of conviction.
In order to feast with God, all you have to be is hungry.*

(The bread is gluten-free; the cup is non-fermented grape juice.)

*To receive communion, form two lines in the center aisle
and move to the front of the Sanctuary.*

*You will be given a piece of bread to dip into the cup of juice,
then taste the goodness of God and find refreshment for your soul.*

*(If you need to avoid the common cup for any reason, you may eat just the bread,
and if you need assistance, please signal an usher or communion steward.)*

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

**ALL: In gratitude, in deep gratitude
for this moment, this meal, these people,
we give ourselves to you.
May we live as changed people,
because we have shared the Living Bread
and cannot remain the same.
Ask much of us, expect much from us,
enable much by us, encourage many through us.
May we live to your glory, God,
both as inhabitants of earth
and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven. Amen.**

CALL TO ACTION

CALL TO GIVING

OFFERING

Today we receive a special offering for Plymouth's Food Pantry to support our weekly ministry to some of the most vulnerable in our community. To contribute, please write a check payable to Plymouth Church with the words "Food Pantry" in the memo line or note "Food Pantry" on the offering envelope in the pews or click on the "Donate" link on Plymouth's website and choose "Food Pantry" from the drop-down menu.

OFFERTORY SOLO

"God Help the Outcasts"
Addison Flower, *mezzo-soprano*

Alan Menken

*DOXOLOGY

Throughout these Lenten days and nights,
we turn to walk the inward way,
where meeting Christ, our guide and light,
we live in hope of Easter Day.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*HYMN

"Standing in the Need of Prayer"

#519

*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

"Sarabande"
Kyle Jones, *trumpet*

Jean Hubeau

Call to Special Congregational Meeting

A special congregational meeting of Plymouth Congregational Church is hereby called for Sunday, March 15, immediately after morning worship to approve revisions to the 2026 budget and to amend Article XI, Section 3, of the bylaws, on Ministry Teams, to set membership of the Pastoral Relations Committee at five to seven members.



Something to Think About

“Lent is not a self-improvement project. It is a season for paying attention—to God, to your own heart, and to the ways your daily habits shape your capacity for love. If Lent is simply about self-improvement, we’ve lost the plot. As Emily Freeman recently shared from Mike Cosper’s book, Recapturing the Wonder, “Any approach to the Christian life that seeks self-improvement as the end goal will fail. A life of prayer, fasting and spiritual disciplines can easily be a life of empty religious effort, if that goal isn’t communion with God. We don’t need self-improvement; we need to come home.”

Anam Cara Ministries

❧ Plymouth Runs on YOU ❧

ACOLYTE: Jacob Wright

USHER: Barbara Genton and Cindy Perrine

FLOWERS: Esther and Tom Zorn

DEACONS ON DUTY: Kathy Ferro and Esther Zorn

LITURGIST: Kate O’Connor

COMMUNION COORDINATOR: Arne Hook

COMMUNION SERVERS: Frank Leonard, Cindy Perrine and Esther Zorn

COMMUNION HELPERS: Eli and Aspen Wright

ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR: Tom Zorn

COUNTERS: Susan Hawks and Keith Jakway

THIS WEEK AT PLYMOUTH

- Today Worship, 10am, Sanctuary
Community Time, 11:15am, Memorial Hall*
Book study, 11:15am, Parlor (chapters 3 & 4)
- Tue Mar 3 Urban Jobs Taskforce, 5:30pm, Parlor
Narcotics Anonymous (NA), 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Wed Mar 4 Food Pantry, 2pm, Basement
- Thu Mar 5 Bell Choir Practice, 5:30pm, Sanctuary
Vocal Choir Rehearsal, 7pm, Memorial Hall
- Fri Mar 6 NA, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Sat Mar 7 NA, 12noon, Memorial Hall
- Sun Mar 9 Worship, 10am, Sanctuary
Community Time, 11:15am, Memorial Hall*
Book study, 11:15am, Parlor (chapters 5 & 6)

**You are invited to join us for Community Time for coffee, tea, and refreshments in Memorial Hall after worship.*

If asked for a handout (\$) during worship at Plymouth, we encourage you *Not* to do so. Instead, welcome each person lovingly and respectfully, as a sister/brother/sibling in Christ. Then, make a gift—especially on communion Sundays—to Plymouth’s Good Samaritan Fund. This allows our pastor (on your behalf) to respond to requests for financial assistance.

Joys and Concerns

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

- Our shut-in congregants; Leslie A., Myrtle B., Fung-Chan C., Joanne C., Geri H., Pat H., Marilou O. and Mable W.
- Jeff C. recovering from a bad auto accident.
- Marva Hudson, a Plymouth Food Pantry volunteer, is in the hospital.
- Elizabeth M’s sister in recovery.
- Keith J’s mother-in-law who is dealing with heart issues.
- Leslie A. recovering at home after surgery.
- Sandra B. dealing with multiple myeloma and Alzheimer’s.
- Stephen C. dealing with lung cancer and other health issues.
- Folks dealing with mental illness, incarceration, and homelessness.

**The listings for Joys and Concerns will be kept for one month; after that you can request they be re-upped by contacting the Church Office.*

Music Notes for Sunday, March 1st, 2026

In the baroque period, the word *Partita* was used for two different things. Most musicians think of it as a suite of dance pieces, but to church musicians (organists in particular) it meant a series of variations on a chorale tune. Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) was born in Nuremberg, and returned there after living in many places with many relatively short-term positions, all of which ended due to circumstances beyond his control (death of his patron, war breaking out, etc.) This particular partita has seven variations, but I will edit out a few in the interests of time.

John Stainer (1840-1901) was an enormously popular English composer in his day. Today he is mostly remembered for his oratorio, *The Crucifixion*, from which our **anthem** is taken. Both this anthem and the text (John 3:16) are among the most popular in Christendom.

Alan Menken (b. 1949) wrote the music for numerous Disney movies (*The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, *Pocahontas*, *Beauty and the Best*, etc.) our **offertory solo** is Esmeralda's prayer from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. It could be the prayer of any immigrant or refugee. Addie Flower will graduate from Syracuse University's Setnor School of Music this spring with a degree in composition. Of course, we all appreciate her skills as timpanist and percussionist and as the Alto Section Leader of the Plymouth Choir.

*I don't know if you can hear me, or if you're even there.
I don't know if you would listen to a sinner's prayer.
Yes, I know I'm just an outcast; I shouldn't speak to you.
Still, I see your face and wonder, were you an outcast too?
God help the outcasts, hungry from birth.*

*Show them the mercy they don't find on earth.
God help my people, they look to you still.
God help the outcasts, or nobody will.*

*I ask for nothing. I can get by,
But I know so many less lucky than I.
Please help my people, the poor and downtrod.
I thought we all were the children of God.
God help the outcasts, children of God.*

Jean Hubeau (1917-1992) taught at the Paris Conservatory. After graduating from Syracuse University, Kyle Jones earned a Master's degree in trumpet performance from McGill University before returning to Syracuse. He is currently the Music Librarian for the Syracuse Orchestra and is the Section Leader of the Tenors in the Plymouth Choir.

☞ 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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