

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



Service of the Word
March 8, 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

“Passion Chorale”

J. S. Bach

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Craig French

CALL TO WORSHIP *(by Christine Longhurst)*

the Kurt family

One: We come to worship God,
who makes streams flow from rock,
who turns parched earth into springs of water,
who sends rain from heaven
and makes the wilderness blossom and flourish.

**All: As the deer thirsts for flowing streams,
so we thirst for You, O God.**

One: Come, let's worship our life-giving God,
who pours out living water on all who thirst.

*HYMN

All Are Welcome

Insert

*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 Renee C. Jackson)*

One: God of mercy, hear the prayers of your thirsting people.
For every time we have attributed your miracles in our lives
to our own hands alone,

ALL: Forgive us, we pray.

One: For every time we promised to trust you, but turned to our own way
when your response did not come soon enough
or in the way we expected,

ALL: Grant us mercy, O God.

One: For the many opportunities to extend forgiveness
that we have refused,

ALL: Show us, again, what it means to love, dear Jesus.

One: For each way we put our own understandings above your wisdom,
and for each time we resist your command to be reconciled
with those who believe differently from us,

ALL: Direct us in the way of peace, we pray.

One: For our silent sins, our quiet acts of violence,
and our indifference to the suffering around us,

**ALL: Forgive us, Loving One, and quench our thirst with your grace.
Remake us into vessels of tenderness and compassion.
For Christ's sake, we pray.**

SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS AND ASSURANCE

ANTHEM “Jesus Met the Woman at the Well” Folk Tune

SCRIPTURE John 4:5-18, 27-34 *(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 throug. 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:
The Gift of Hospitality”

HYMN “There Is Room” Insert

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.

CALL TO ACTION

CALL TO GIVING

OFFERTORY

“O Saviour of the World”

John Goss

*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

“Community of Christ”

#314

*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

“Prelude on St. Thomas”

Healey Willan



Something to Think About

“Find Christ in the restless teenager, demanding parent, insensitive employer, dull preacher, lukewarm congregation.... Create a hospitable space for whoever and whatever God sends into [your] lives now.”

Elizabeth Canham

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.

USHER: George Bain

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

DEACONS ON DUTY: Kathy Ferro and Frank Leonard

LITURGIST: the Kurt family

ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR: Tom Zorn

COMMUNITY TIME: Ken Johnson

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 5 & 6)
- Mon Mar 9 Board of Trustees, 6pm, Parlor**
 Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Choir, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Tue Mar 10 Narcotics Anonymous (NA), 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
 Board of Deacons, 7pm, Parlor **
- Wed Mar 11 Food Pantry, 2pm, Basement
- Thu Mar 12 Urban Job Taskforce Advocacy Committee, 5pm, Parlor
 Bell Choir Practice, 5:30pm, Sanctuary
 Vocal Choir Rehearsal, 7pm, Memorial Hall
- Fri Mar 13 NA Business Meeting, 6pm, Parlor
 NA, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Sat Mar 14 NA, 12noon, Memorial Hall
 NA Business Meeting, 1:30pm, Parlor
- Sun Mar 15 Worship & One Great Hour of Sharing offering, 10am,
 Sanctuary
 Special Congregational Meeting, 11:15am, Sanctuary
 Community Time, 11:30am, Memorial Hall*
 Book study, 11:30am, Parlor (Chapters 7 & 8)

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

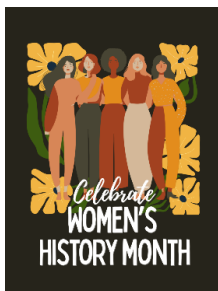
If asked for a handout (\$) during worship at Plymouth, we encourage you *Not* to do so. Instead, welcome each person lovingly and respectfully, as a sister/brother/sibling in Christ. Then, make a gift—especially on communion Sundays—to Plymouth’s Good Samaritan Fund. This allows our pastor (on your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

☞ Joys and Concerns*☞

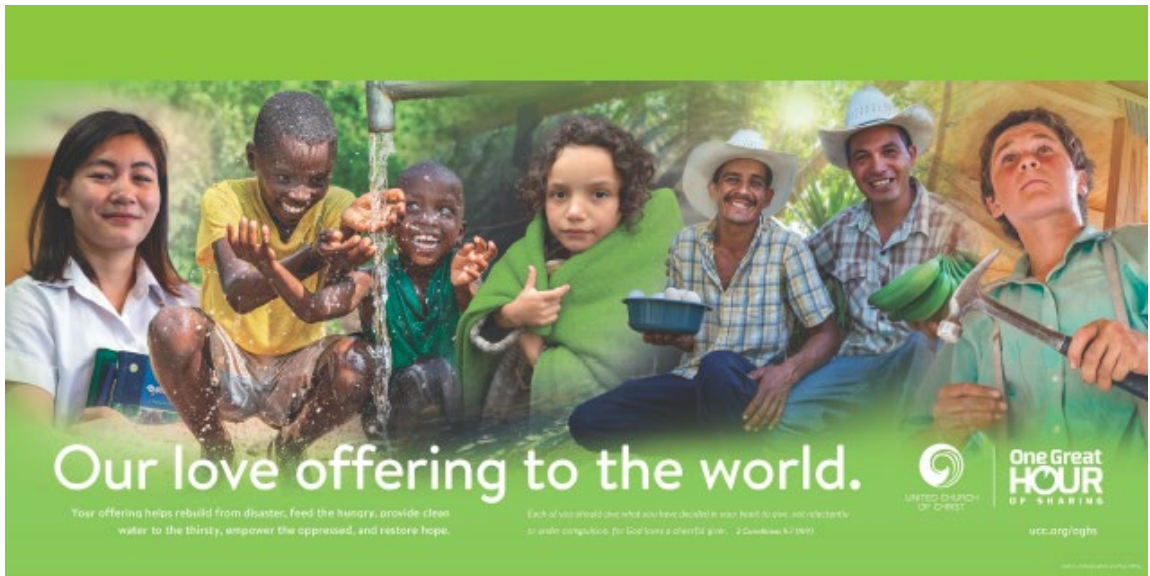
In the week ahead, you are invited to pray for:

- James, currently in a hospital in Philadelphia, father of Meghan M. of Syracuse.
- Sandra and Rollin B. as they move into Alzheimer's care in RI as Sandra's illness progresses with all that entails.
- 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.*



What began as a local effort by teachers in Santa Rosa, California in 1978 to bring about more awareness of the contributions that women have made to society quickly became a nationwide celebration. President Jimmy Carter declared the week of March 8th to be National Women's History Week, urging everyone in the United States to participate. Congress passed a resolution in 1987 which designated March as Women's History Month.



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital special mission offering of the United Church of Christ. It connects you to disaster relief, refugee assistance, and development efforts around the globe. When disasters strike, or when individuals are displaced due to violence or poverty, OGHS ensures immediate response and ongoing recovery. Through your support, OGHS funds comprehensive development programs in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, food security, microfinancing, and women's empowerment. By partnering with Global Ministries and international response networks, OGHS maximizes its impact. Your contributions help meet urgent needs while addressing the root causes of vulnerability, ensuring long-term, sustainable solutions for affected communities.

OGHS is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports partners worldwide with ministries that fund health, education, and agricultural development, emergency relief, refugee ministries, and both international and domestic disaster response. Thank you for your support of this offering!

Music Notes for Sunday, March 8, 2026

We continue our series of chorale preludes using the tune of the Passion Chorale with this one by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) as our **prelude**.

Our **anthem** is a traditional folk song from the southern USA whose origins are lost. The oldest recordings date from 1947, but the roots of the song go back further. It has been recorded by about twenty different artists, including Mahalia Jackson, Peter Paul and Mary, Ian and Sylvia and Bob Dylan. The song uses a typical simple blues accompaniment of three chords.

Sir John Goss (1800-1880) was a British composer, organist and teacher who was known mainly for his choral music. You may know his famous hymn, *Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven* or his Christmas carol *See Amid the Winter's Snow*. Our **offertory anthem** is written in the much-more-strict style of Renaissance music with carefully controlled dissonances that give the music direction. (You can't have a dissonance in the Renaissance without it pushing the music onward to find a resolution!) The text begins with a quote from the final verse of today's scripture reading:

*O Saviour of the world,
who by thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us,
Save us, and help us, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.*

In the same year that John Goss died, Healey Willan was born (1880-1968). He moved to Canada to assume the prestigious position of organist at St. Paul's Anglican Church in downtown Toronto, but eventually gave up that position to lead the music program at St. Mary Magdalene – a much smaller church, but one that used the “high Anglican” traditions (sometimes referred to as “smells and bells”). The program there became exemplary for all of North America, and the church maintains those traditions to this day. Willan was also on the faculty of music at the University of Toronto and served as an examiner for the Royal Conservatory of Music. He was highly honored in his lifetime, being named a “Companion of the Order of Canada” and also awarded the *Lambeth Doctorate* by the Archbishop of Canterbury – the first non-British musician to receive such an honor. I was honored to be given the Healey Willan award by the Royal Canadian College of Organists for receiving the highest national grades when I earned the Associate and Fellow diplomas of that organization. Our **postlude** plays the tune for this hymn (alas! Not in our hymnbook!) in the pedals after first hinting at fragments of each phrase in the manuals.



Saturday March 28, 12 – 2pm EDT @ Kinne Rd & Erie Blvd E, Lining the East end of Erie Blvd De Witt, NY 13214

**We have the power and are claiming it together.
No Thrones. No Crowns. No Kings.**

What began in 2025 as a single day of defiance has become a sustained national resistance to tyranny, spreading from small towns to city centers and across every community determined to defend democracy. Our peaceful movement is bigger than ever.

When our families are under attack and costs are pushing people to the brink, silence is not an option. We will defend ourselves and our communities against this administration's unjust and cruel acts of violence. No Kings in Syracuse/CNY was a smashing success along Erie Blvd in Dewitt. Plan to join your neighbors there again for the next huge National Day of Protest and visibility. Our recent success with car caravans will add to the visibility and participation. Plan to bring your most creative and passionate self for a roadside show of support OR a driving caravan, your choice. More details to follow.

On March 28th, rise up, take to the streets, and say it loud: no thrones, no crowns, no kings. We're not watching history happen—we're making it. Join us.

A core principle behind all No Kings events is a commitment to nonviolent action. We expect all participants to seek to de-escalate any potential confrontation with those who disagree with our values and to act lawfully at these events. Weapons of any kind, including those legally permitted, should not be brought to events.

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

We are a Welcoming congregation: Please wear your name tag during the Service and at Community Time, Forums, and Bible Study. Let's get into the habit of letting people know who we are, whether they are new or just visiting.

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.

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 place, then it is used to get to 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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