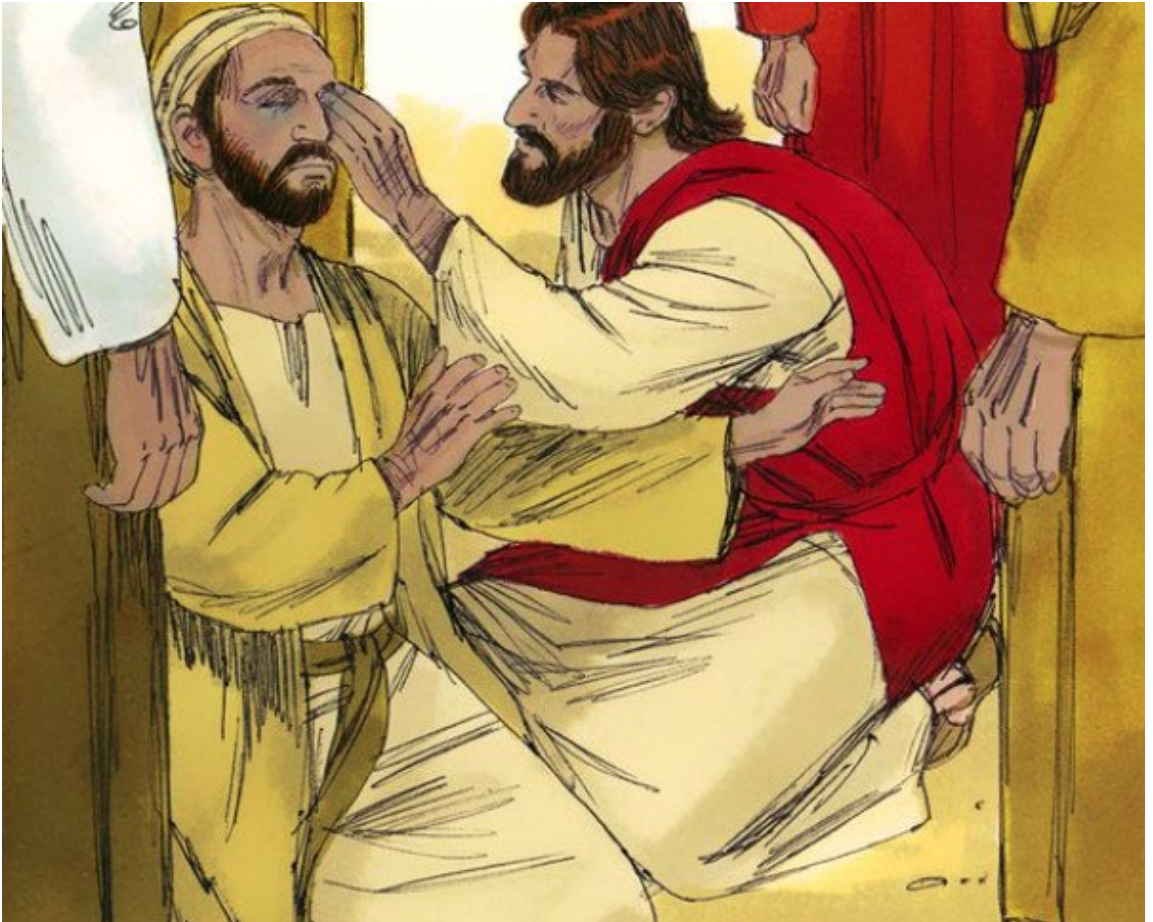


Plymouth Congregational Church

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



Service of the Word
March 15, 2026
10:00 am – Worship

PRAYER OF CONFESSION *(by Steve Garnaas-Holmes, adapted)*

One: Jesus said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned;
He was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.”

**ALL: God, help me to trust
that with you there is no deserving,
no punishment,
no imprisonment in the past.
Only grace ...
and the opportunity to receive it.
Open the eyes of my heart,
that whatever my circumstances
I may see your grace,
trust your unfinished work in me,
and know that you stand beside me,
ready to heal.**

SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

ANTHEM “Christ, You Made the Blind Man See” Traditional

SCRIPTURE John 9:1-15, 18-21, 24, 25, 39-41 *(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:
Rethinking God”

HYMN “God’s Eye Is on the Sparrow” #475

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.

CALL TO ACTION

CALL TO GIVING

Today we will receive the one Great Hour of Sharing Offering.

This special offering enables our church and our worldwide partners to provide immediate aid and long-term support to people experiencing hunger, thirst, disaster, or crisis around the world.

To contribute, please make a check out to Plymouth Church and write "OGHS" in the memo line or place your offering in the special envelopes found on the pews.

OFFERTORY "By Cool Siloam's Shady Rill" Traditional Tunes

*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 "Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing" # 77

*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE "Chaconne" Louis Couperin

Something to Think About

“Christians spend so much time arguing about what is ‘biblical’ and ‘unbiblical’ when we really should be distinguishing between what is Christlike and what is un-Christlike. Writer Jordan Harrell says it like this: ‘Genocide is biblical. Loving your enemy is biblical. But only one is Christlike. Slavery is biblical. Chainbreaking is biblical. But only one is Christlike. Patriarchy is biblical. Counter-cultural elevation of women is biblical. But only one is Christlike. Retributive violence is biblical. Grace-filled restoration is biblical. But only one is Christlike. Segregation is biblical. Unity is biblical. But only one is Christlike.’”

Zach Lambert, Better Ways to Read the Bible

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: Gert Danzy

FLOWERS: Gert Danzy, in memory of my older cousin, Carolyn Wallace, on her birthday and because she loved Spring.

DEACONS ON DUTY: Heather Evans and Esther Zorn

LITURGIST: Kim Dill

ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR: Tom Zorn

COMMUNITY TIME: Dawn Franits, Doreen Todorov, and Mike Chellis

COUNTERS: Keith Jakway and Tom Zorn

THIS WEEK AT PLYMOUTH

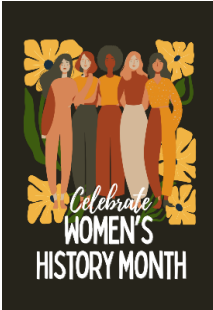
- Today Worship, 10am, Sanctuary
Special Congregational Meeting, 11:15am, Sanctuary
Community Time, 11:30am, Memorial Hall*
Book study, 11:30am, Parlor (chapters 7 & 8)
Labyrinth walk, 11:30am, Kirtland Hall (final day)
- Mon Mar 16 Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Choir, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Tue Mar 17 Narcotics Anonymous (NA), 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Wed Mar 18 Food Pantry, 2pm, Basement
- Thu Mar 19 Church Council, 5:30pm, Parlor**
Bell Choir Practice, 5:30pm, Sanctuary
Vocal Choir Rehearsal, 7pm, Memorial Hall
- Fri Mar 20 NA, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Sat Mar 21 Search Committee, 10am, Parlor
NA, 12noon, Memorial Hall
- Sun Mar 22 Worship, 10am, Sanctuary
Community Time, 11:30am, Memorial Hall*
Book study, 11:30am, Parlor (Chapters 9 & 10)

**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.

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



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.

☞ Joys and Concerns*☞

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

- Kathleen W. is celebrating the recent birth of two grandsons. Ford was born to Katya on February 1, and Zayden was born to Ana on March 8. Big brother and cousin, Austin Waters, is thrilled and grateful he is the oldest.
- 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; Myrtle B., Fung-Chan C., Joanne C., Pat H., Marilou O. and Mable W.
- Jeff C. recovering from a bad auto accident.
- Marva H., 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.
- 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 15, 2026

I play a lot of baroque music (roughly 1600-1750) because that music speaks to me. Max Reger (1873-1916) was a composer/organist/conductor from the late German Romantic period (roughly 1850-1910). Our 1930 organ was built with the aesthetics of the late Romantic period in mind. What are the differences? In Baroque organs, most stops are equal in volume to all others, and there are no swell boxes (pipes enclosed with shutters) to control volume. The organs can be voiced quite brilliantly. Late Romantic organs have stops, with varying volumes, usually enclosed (like ours) in boxes with shutters to further control volume. Our **prelude** uses volumes that range from *pp* (very soft) to *ppp* (extremely soft!) Reger plays the first phrase of the chorale and then answers it with the melody upside down! He repeats this pattern of melody followed by its inversion for each phrase of the choral, using the richly chromatic harmonies of the late nineteenth century.

Our **anthem** takes the familiar tune *Aberystwyth*, and adds a new text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, a pastor living in Owego, NY.

*Christ, you made the blind man see; with some mud you healed his eyes.
So you acted lovingly, bringing health and changing lives.
Yet it was a Sabbath Day; rules were all that some folks saw;
They were quick to scorn the way you put love before the Law.*

*Christ, you came to judge the earth, bringing truth and life and light,
Showing humble ones their worth, giving vision, bold and bright.
Those who proudly think they see are the ones who often find
Though they act quite boastfully, they, in fact, are really blind.*

*God, we pray that we will be people filled with light and grace.
Show us what we need to see in this culture, time and place:
We are called to be your light, telling how you've changed us here.
Love can make the darkness bright; faith in you makes all things clear.*

Give a pastor any text, and they can write a sermon on any topic using that text. Well, that's my experience at least! Our scripture reading today mentions Siloam, and so does our **offertory anthem**. We're only singing the first verse (using two different hymn tunes) because the subsequent verses of this hymn wander off in a way that is totally unrelated to our theme today.

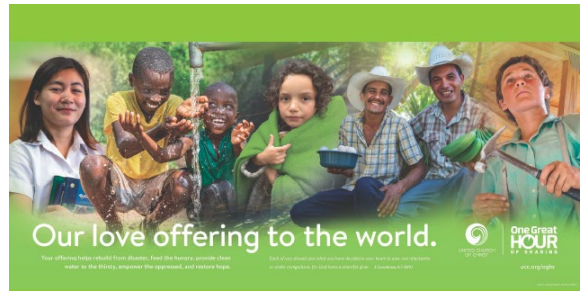


Louis Couperin (c. 1626-1661) was one of the better-known members of a French musical family dynasty. This chaconne alternates the first eight measures with new material in an ABACADA pattern.

What is a Love Offering

In 2 Corinthians 8-9, the Apostle Paul lays out his stewardship campaign to gather an offering to be sent to the Christian church in Jerusalem.

Commonly known as “the collection for the saints,” the offering occupies a significant place in Paul’s missionary work.



Paul’s calling was to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. He preached generosity and hospitality. He brought Jewish and Gentile

believers into one community, despite their differences of nationality, tribal affiliation, and economic standing. He encouraged unity, love, compassion, and service.

Paul’s stewardship campaign called for members to set aside money each week, above and beyond their regular tithes and offerings, to help Christians in Jerusalem. The offering was a gift, with no strings attached, no expectation of repayment or reward, and no ulterior motives. This collection was a love offering, embodying the word of Jesus: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35, NIV)

Members of the early church took seriously the command to love God and neighbor. The Apostle’s focus on the collection highlights the hallmarks of community life that God and Jesus emphasized: care of the poor and vulnerable; use of resources to benefit those who need help; loving one’s neighbor; caring for the environment; and advocating social justice so all can live and thrive. Communities grounded in Jesus’ sacrificial life and death embody radical generosity, often pooling their resources for their common good (see Acts 2:44-47).

The term “love offering” may not be a familiar one in your tradition. A love offering is a voluntary monetary gift: to show appreciation for a beloved pastor, a guest preacher, or special speaker; to support a specific occasion, like an anniversary or commemoration; or, to support a particular church or community program, mission, ministry, or project. The love offering is separate from one’s regular tithe and giving and is often collected on special days or occasions.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) has been gathering love offerings for over 75 years. Each year, we are invited to participate in a giant love fest—giving our dollars and time for the sake of sisters and brothers around the globe. Our contributions are our love offering to the world!



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.

Watch also for information about a special gathering for faith communities.

☞ 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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