

# **Plymouth Congregational Church**

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



*Jesus with Martha and Mary*

Service of the Word  
March 22, 2026  
10:00 am – Worship



OPENING PRAYER (*from unfoldinglight.net*)

**ALL: Gracious God,  
like Lazarus in the tomb,  
our hearts are still and waiting for your call.  
Speak to us now.  
May your Word call us out of our death, out of old lives,  
into the light of your grace and your presence,  
and the loving companionship of Christ.**

SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND GRACE

ANTHEM

“Lazarus”

Cydney Olson Van Duker

SCRIPTURE

John 11:1-45

*(Reader’s Version)*

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:  
   Soul Mates”

HYMN    “Give Me Jesus”    #409

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

OFFERTORY ANTHEM                    “Rejoice O Bethany”    Syrian Orthodox Hymn

\*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    “Jesus Is a Rock in a Weary Land”  
*Congregation to join the choir at the Refrain.*

\*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

“Voluntary VII: i) Allegro”

John Stanley

## Something to Think About

*After having heard that Lazarus was ill,  
he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.  
(John 11.6)*

Maybe he knew he couldn't keep his friend safe,  
or protect even his loved ones from the reality of death.  
Maybe he stayed to remind himself.

Sure enough, when he arrived, both sisters cried,  
“If you'd been here Lazarus wouldn't have died.”  
But he would have. We all do.

Oh, how we want God to quell the germ,  
deflect the bullet, guide the tires.  
Life, a marble rolling safely down a track.

Instead, we pray that we be open  
to the intimate presence of the Beloved  
even in our trials and suffering.

Maybe the grace of God  
is not a shield that protects us from all harm  
but an energy that changes everything.

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Steve Garnaas-Holmes



**USHER:** Frank Leonard  
**FLOWERS:** Bernie Peterson in memory of  
 Geraldine Sophia Pasternacki and Franklin Delano Peterson  
**DEACONS ON DUTY:** Nancy Gwin and Arne Hook  
**LITURGISTS:** Susan Hawks, Kaily Wright and Shiu-Kai Chin  
**ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR:** Tom Zorn  
**COMMUNITY TIME:** Lori and Maurice Forrester,  
 in celebration of our 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.  
**COUNTERS:** Kathleen Deters-Hayes and Elaine Wolf

### **THIS WEEK AT PLYMOUTH**

- Today                      Worship, 10am, Sanctuary  
                                   Community Time, 11:15am, Memorial Hall\*  
                                   Book study, 11:15am, Parlor (chapters 9 & 10)
- Mon Mar 23              Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Choir, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Tue Mar 24              Narcotics Anonymous (NA), 6:30pm, Memorial Hall  
                                   Christian Formation, 7pm, Parlor\*\*
- Wed Mar 25              Food Pantry, 2pm, Basement  
                                   Pastoral Search Committee, 5:30pm, Parlor
- Thu Mar 26              Bell Choir Practice, 5:30pm, Sanctuary  
                                   Vocal Choir Rehearsal, 7pm, Memorial Hall
- Fri Mar 27              NA, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Sat Mar 28              NA, 12noon, Memorial Hall
- Sun Mar 29              **Palm Sunday** Worship, 10am, Sanctuary  
                                   Palm Sunday Neighborhood Procession, 11:15am, outside  
                                   Pancake Brunch after the walk

*\* 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:**

- Healing and health for Jasmine (friend of Amanda P.)
- 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 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., Chris 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.*

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

## Music Notes for Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

By the 1890s, Brahms' compositional output slowed considerably. He wrote only the two viola (or clarinet) sonatas and eleven chorale preludes for organ, an instrument that he had pretty much ignored up until this point. (Some people thought that, with the organ's connection to church, that he might have been "cramming for his finals.") It is significant that TWO of these final works are based on the Passion Chorale. For those interested in music theory: the final note of the Passion Chorale is e. In the original renaissance tune, this is the final note of the Phrygian mode, and music in the Phrygian mode ALWAYS ends on a major chord, so the final chord would have been an E major chord. In most hymnbooks today, we use a Baroque-period harmonization, where the final e is the third of a C major chord. Today's **prelude** is the only one I know where the final e is the fifth of an A major chord.

Cydney Olson Van Duker is a living composer who writes extensively for church choirs and children. The text (by Mark Hardy) of our **anthem** takes an unusual look at the raising of Lazarus from the dead, concentrating on how he must have felt waking from the dead with his burial wrappings around him:

*Never such peace I felt when bound so tightly there,  
To hear his footsteps near, to know that he had come,  
To feel the wrappings fall.*

*Such compassion, I had never known, for me whom he called "friend."  
Until within his soft command to arise, come forth and to embrace  
I heard the wrappings fall.*

*Never will I know such love! With all his strength, his might, his mind,  
He only asks that I be kind, that I might know he loved me first.  
I will let the wrappings fall.*

*"Lazarus, arise!" Behold how Jesus loved him!  
"Lazarus, come forth!" Oh, how Jesus loved him!  
Can I be like Lazarus? Behold how Jesus loves me, oh how Jesus loves me!  
Because Jesus loves me, I will let the wrappings fall.*

Our **offertory anthem** is a hymn from the Syrian Orthodox church retelling the story of Lazarus.

John Stanley (1712-1786) was a blind English organist/composer whose principal compositions include a dozen concertos and thirty organ voluntaries.

## **March is Women's History Month**

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. Since March 8th had already been proclaimed as International Women's Day, organizers chose a week early in March to include March 8th. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter declared the week of March 8th to be National Women's History Week, urging everyone in the United States to participate.

Initially a week-long event, Congress passed a resolution in 1987 which designated March as Women's History Month. It has been celebrated as such from then on.





**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.**

**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, Transition Pastor  
Dr. Joseph Downing, Director of Music  
Lori A Forrester, Church Administrator  
Emily Evans, Youth and Children's Ministries Coordinator

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