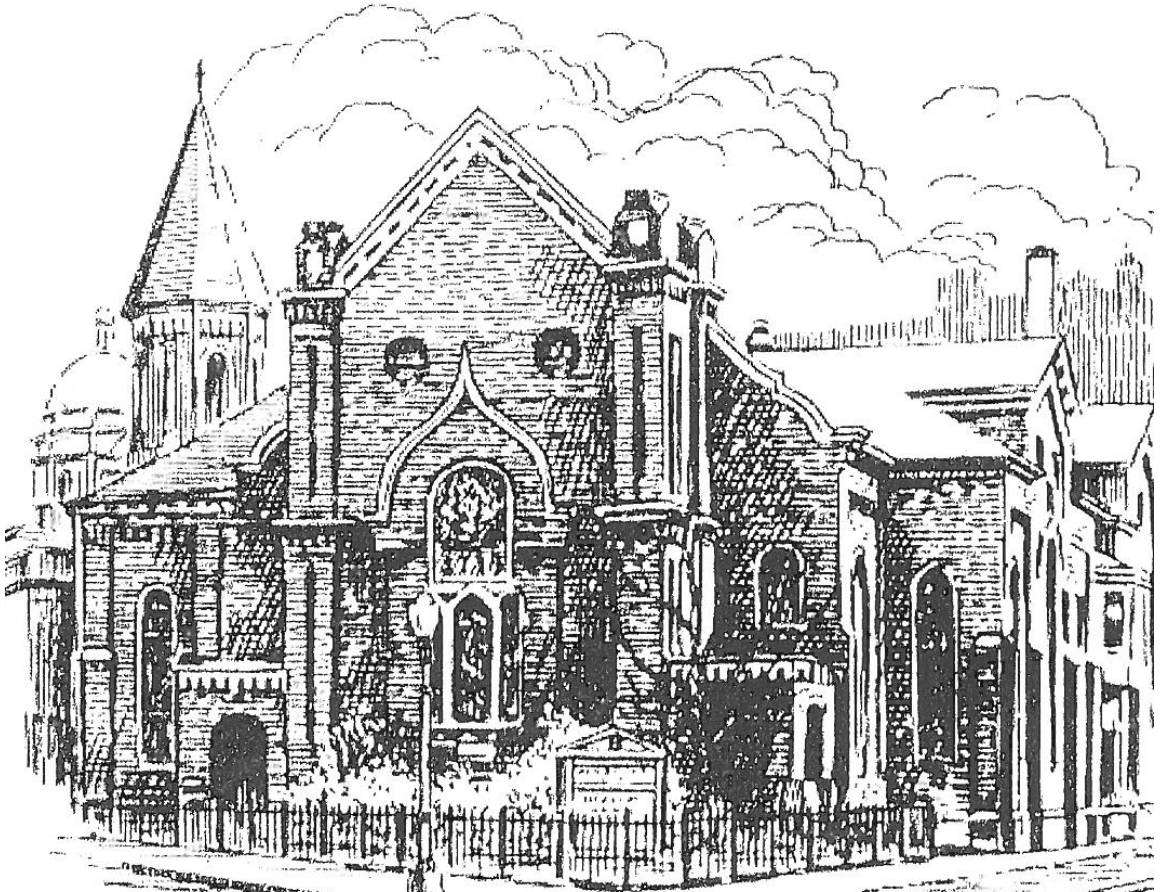


Plymouth Congregational Church
a Congregation of the United Church of Christ
in downtown Syracuse, NY



Plymouth Congregational Church
Syracuse, N.Y. —

Service of Word and Sacrament
May 3, 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

Antiphon III

Marcel Dupré

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Craig French

CALL TO WORSHIP *(by L. Annie Foerster, adapted)*

Maurice Forrester

One: The ringing of a bell calls us to worship.

ALL: The pounding of a drum calls us to war.

One: The popping of a cork calls us to celebration.

ALL: What is the sound that calls us to hear one another?

One: Listen ... Listen carefully ... Listen deeply ...

Here in the silence

the beating of our hearts calls us to ourselves:

ALL: calls us to our true selves ... our best selves.

One: Listen ... There is another sound ...

The breath of our neighbor calls us beyond ourselves:

**ALL: calls us to be companions;
calls us to allies; calls us to partners.**

One: May our worship today

bring us closer to both God and our neighbors

ALL: that we may be well and do good in this world together.

*HYMN

God of Grace and God of Glory

#436

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

**Please stand if you are able.*

One: Peace be with you.

ALL: And, also with you.

Share a sign of peace with those around you.

A PRAYER FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE

**ALL: Holy and gracious God, you have made of one blood
all the peoples of the earth.**

**Look with compassion on the whole human family,
whom you have made in your image and according to your
likeness.**

**We thank you for the many and diverse peoples and traditions.
Open our eyes to see, our hearts to know, and our mouths to
proclaim**

**that our common humanity precedes our religious differences,
and that our religious differences
are the many and particular expressions of your universality.**

**Take away the arrogance, fear, and hatred which infect our hearts.
Break down the walls that separate us, and unite us in bonds of love.**

**Open the borders of our hearts and minds,
and guide us in the way of holy friendships,
that we may learn to better love you, one another, and ourselves.**

**Grant us inquiring minds, searching hearts, and curious spirits
that we might deepen our own faith
by learning of your ways from those who differ from us. Amen**

ANTHEM

Deep River
Plymouth Bells

arr. Anna Laura Page

STORY FOR ALL AGES

Craig French

*Following the Story for All Ages, children and youth
please return to your families.*

HYMN

Halle, Halle, Halle

#236

SCRIPTURE

John 14:1-14

Common English Bible

MESSAGE

Who Belongs? (*Part 2*)

*HYMN

Welcome

Insert

COMMUNION PRAYER (*adapted from A Wee Worship Book, Iona Community*)

One: Jesus so often met people gathered around the table,
where he could see people face to face,
listen to their stories, and share in their pain and laughter.
We gather around this table because this is where
Jesus has promised to be for those who want to meet him.

**ALL: We accept his invitation, and we feel welcomed at this table.
Jesus invites us to be his guests.**

One: What we do here, we do because Jesus wanted us to do this,
in order to remember him. Once, in an upstairs room,
he was sitting at a meal with his disciples.
During the meal, Jesus took bread. When he had blessed it,
he broke it, and said to his disciples,
“This is my body. It is given for you. Do this to remember me.”
Later in the meal, he took a cup of wine.
After he had given thanks, he said,
“In this cup is the new relationship with God
made possible because of my death.
Drink it, all of you, to remember me.”

**ALL: So, now, we will do as Jesus did. We take this bread and this wine,
the produce of the earth and the work of human hands,
through which we are renewed, spiritually nourished,
and strengthened for service.**

One: As Jesus said a prayer before sharing, so we follow his example.

**ALL: Eternal God, it is right to praise you, for you are the One
from whom we came and to whom we will return.**

**You conceived the universe, wove the world together,
and hold all life in your hands.**

**We praise you that you watch over us, waking or sleeping,
That you keep every tear we shed, that you hear every prayer
we make, and that you know both our best and our worst,
and yet you will not let us go.**

One: Blessed is he who was born among us incognito;
who grew up without privilege or status;
who walked the way to heaven
 through the backstreets of this world;
who told the deepest truths in ordinary language;
who touched and healed, blessed and disturbed without fear or favor;
who showed inclusive love in all its unconditional glory.
Blessed is he who, for all this, was crucified, died and was buried;
who, for all this and all of us and all creation, rose again;
who is always with us through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**ALL: God beyond holiness, as we do what once Jesus did,
may your Spirit move among us, stirring our souls,
so that you may be in us and we may be in you, now and forever.
Amen.**

One: These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

COMMUNION INVITATION

COMMUNION MUSIC

Amazing Grace
Plymouth Bells

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.)*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**ALL: Most Gracious God, we praise you for all that you have given us
and for all that you have promised us here.
You have made us one with all your people,
those in heaven and those on earth.
You have nourished us with new life
and you have renewed us for your service.
So, now, we give ourselves to you.
We ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your Kingdom,
and that our love may be your love,
reaching out into the life of this world.
Through, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.**

CALL TO ACTION

CALL TO GIVING

OFFERING

OFFERTORY ANTHEM In My Father's House John Ness Beck

*DOXOLOGY

**Let trumpets sound and voices sing!
Let all on earth their praises bring!
For Christ has conquered sin and death,
and given life eternal breath.**

*HYMN In Christ There Is No East or West #395

*BENEDICTION

CARRYING OUT THE LIGHT

POSTLUDE

Antiphon V: How Fair and Pleasant

Marcel Dupré

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Something to Think About

“No one comes to God but through me.”

Jesus, as the embodied love of God, is speaking on behalf of God.

In other words, “No one comes to God
except through God’s gracious love and mercy, which I offer you.”

There’s no technique, no requirements, no religion.

Just grace. Just love.

We come to God “through” Jesus ... by participating in his life.

“No one comes to the Father except through me” does *not* mean
that no one can come to God except by being a Christian.

It means the way we know God is to receive God’s love, and live lives of love.

This can happen in the context of any, or no, religion.

Steve Garnaas-Holmes

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.

☞ Plymouth Runs on YOU ☞

DEACONS: Andrea Abbott and Arne Hook

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

USHERS: Barbara Genton and Cindy Perrine

LITURGIST: Maurice Forrester

COMMUNION COORDINATOR: Kathy Ferro

COMMUNION SERVERS: Andrea Abbott, Cindy Perrine,
Esther Zorn, and Arne Hook

ONLINE WORSHIP COORDINATOR: Tom Zorn

COUNTERS: Linda Milosky and Susan Hawks

THIS WEEK AT PLYMOUTH

- Today Worship, 10am, Sanctuary
Community Time and Forum, 11:15am, Memorial Hall*
Weird History Coalition, 3pm, Parlor
- Mon May 4 Syracuse Gay and Lesbian Choir, 6pm, Memorial Hall
- Tue May 5 Narcotics Anonymous (NA), 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Wed May 6 Food Pantry, 2pm, Basement
- Thu May 7 Bell Choir Practice, 5:30pm, Sanctuary
NA, 6:30pm, Parlor
Vocal Choir Rehearsal, 7pm, Memorial Hall
- Fri May 8 NA, 6:30pm, Memorial Hall
- Sat May 9 NA, 10am, Memorial Hall
NA, 12noon, Memorial Hall
Myrtle Bryant's Funeral, time to be determined.
- Sun May 10 Worship, 10am, Sanctuary
Community Time, 11:15am, Memorial Hall*

Today's forum is making puppets! After last Sunday's appearance of Mother Earth to inspire us, we learned that anything can be a puppet. All are invited.

**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.*

☞ Joys and Concerns ☞*

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

- Kathleen W. recuperating after a successful hip surgery.
- Keith J. would like us to pray for two friends of his. Shelly is scheduled for brain surgery. And Elizabeth who is dealing with lung cancer.
- It is with a heavy heart that we let you know that Myrtle Bryant passed away on April 25th due to complications after a recent stroke. Our prayers go out to her family and friends.
- Mable W. asking for your prayers. She and her family are going through some emotional medical issues.
- Chris H. in rehab at Loretto.
- Our shut-in congregants; Fung-Chan C., Joanne C., Elizabeth H., Geri H., Pat H., Chris H., Marilou O., and Mable W.
- 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.*

Standing on Holy Ground...

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

Just a reminder Plymouth Congregational Church Administrator's office hours are 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday. We appreciate your awareness of this schedule change and encourage you to reach out during these hours for assistance. Remember that on Sundays Lori is attending as a member of the congregation, not the Church Administrator. The Office will be closed on Federal Holidays.

Another reminder: When you leave a room, hallway, or stairway **turn around** and make sure the lights, fans, etc. are off and the doors are closed and locked, this includes all outer doors. This saves Plymouth money and allows more time for the fire department to arrive if a fire is detected. Closed doors slow down fires.

Music Notes for Sunday May 3, 2026

Coincidentally, today is the birthday of Marcel Dupré (1886-1971). He was probably the most important composer/organist of the twentieth century. A child prodigy from a privileged family, he began organ studies at the age of 10, practicing on a home pipe organ built by Cavallé-Coll – the top organ builder of the nineteenth century. During his life, he performed over 2,000 organ recitals, including on at least two occasions a series of 10 recitals where he performed the entire works of J. S. Bach. *By memory!* He authored an important organ method (which I used when I was young – although no one plays the organ in that strict legato style anymore.) Our **prelude** and **postlude** come from a collection of 5 pieces based on texts from the Song of Solomon.

Today we continue our celebration of Easter with the Plymouth Bells leading us in worship. We are honored to have been chosen, a few years ago, as the new home for the *James Lowell Harris/Robert Brian Ellis/Marilyn Roney Lyon Memorial Whitechapel Handbells* which are being played in today's service. We especially welcome Sarah Wright as the new director of the Plymouth Bells.

Anna Laura Page (b. 1943) has written for children's choirs, organ, piano and handbells. She served as the Editor for Handbell music for Alfred Publishing Company.

John Ness Beck (1930-1987) was a prolific composer of choral music. He left the faculty of the Ohio State University School of Music to join forces with John Tatgenhorst in creating Beckenhorst Press, which remains an important publisher of church anthems to this day. You will recognize the text of our **offertory anthem**, which comes from today's reading:

*In my father's house are many mansions.
If it were not so I would have told you.
I go to prepare a place for you,
And if I go, I will come again to receive you,
That where I am, ye may be also.*

What are the 50 days of Easter (Eastertide)

The 50 days of Easter, or "Eastertide," constitute a joyous liturgical season in Christianity spanning from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. It celebrates the Resurrection, the ascension of Jesus, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, acting as a period of reflection on new life and the continued presence of Christ.

Key Aspects Eastertide and Poem

- **Beginning and End:** It begins with the Easter Vigil (Saturday night/Sunday morning) and concludes on Pentecost Sunday.
- **The Octave of Easter:** The first eight days (Easter Sunday through the following Sunday, known as Divine Mercy Sunday) are celebrated as a single, solemn "octave," treated with the same high joy as Easter Sunday itself.
- **Ascension:** The Ascension of Jesus is celebrated on the 40th day, a key milestone within this season.
- **Pentecost:** The 50th day celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, marking the birth of the Church.
- **Significance:** It serves as a contrast to the 40 days of fasting in Lent, representing resurrection, renewal, and hope.

During this period, Christians often focus on reflection, celebrating the "resurrection people" mindset, and attending church services that highlight the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

It is the destruction of the world,

It is the destruction of the world
in our own lives

that drives us half insane, and more than half.

To destroy that which we were given
in trust: how will we bear it?

It is our own bodies that we give
to be broken,

our bodies existing before and after us

in clod and cloud, worm and tree,

that we, driving or driven, despise

in our greed to live, our haste

to die. To have lost, wantonly,

the ancient forests, the vast grasslands

in our madness, the presence

in our very bodies of our grief.

by Wendell Berry

☞ 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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