



# 2025 Annual Report

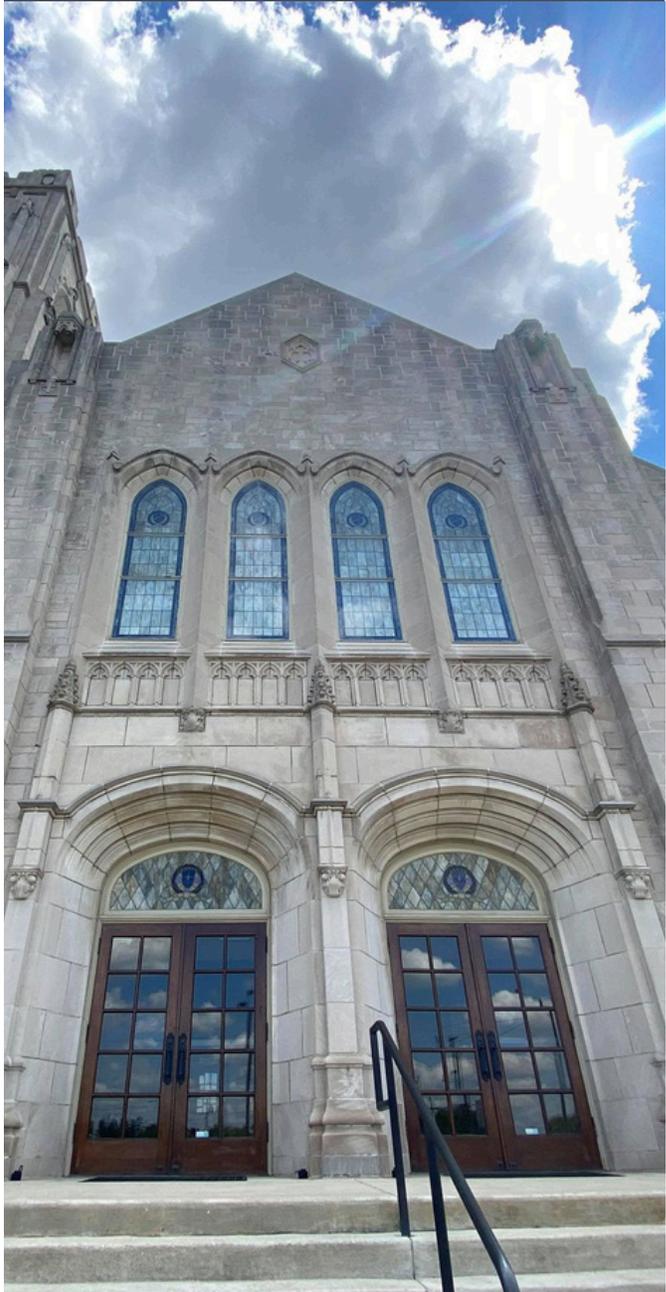
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# Table of Contents



About Us	3
Moderator Report	4
Senior Pastor & Teacher	6
Associate Pastor	9
Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care	12
Clerk Report	14
Worship Attendance Information	17
Youth Director	19
Sunday School Director	21
Licensed Minister	23
Conference Delegates	24
Music Ministry	26
<b>Boards, committees and other activities</b>	
Boars Head and Yule Log Festival	30
Christian Education	33
Congregational Life	35
Deacons	37
Evangelism and Marketing	40
Growing Hope Globally	42
Human Resources	43
Nominating Committee	45
Peace and Justice	47
Property Board	48
Stewardship and Finance	50
Benevolence	52
Financial Summary	57
Church Staff	59

# About Us



## ***We welcome all who seek God's presence in their lives!***

We are...an **Open and Affirming** (ONA) congregation (2001), proclaiming extravagant welcome, particularly to LGBTQ members, friends, and neighbors. We find strength in our diversity, and a way to understand the inclusiveness of God.

We are...a **Just Peace** congregation (2008), centering our life in prayer, study, and worship. We seek the things that make for peace and justice within the whole human family. We are committed to defending and protecting the human rights of all people.

We are...a **Global Mission** congregation (2012), as recognized by Global Ministries, a common witness of Wider Church Ministries, UCC, and Division of Overseas Ministries, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). We are committed to mission endeavors that are "intensely local, intentionally global."

We are...an **Earthwise** congregation (2015), having vowed our resolve to be good stewards of creation. As a community we seek to reduce energy consumption, advance energy conservation practices, and embrace renewable energy sources. We urge prudent use of earth resources as a display of intergenerational solidarity – for our good, and the good of all future generations.

## **The Plymouth Church Covenant (Rev. 2011)**

We affirm our faith in  
the God  
whose mercy calls us  
into the church.  
We are united in our  
quest to promote  
justice and peace for  
all who dwell on earth.

We are committed to  
the patient rule of  
Jesus Christ:  
we rejoice in the  
wisdom of his  
teaching,  
and the excellent way  
of his love.

With the guidance of  
the Holy Spirit,  
we covenant to  
support the local and  
global mission  
of the church with  
prayer,  
participation in  
worship and generous  
financial support.

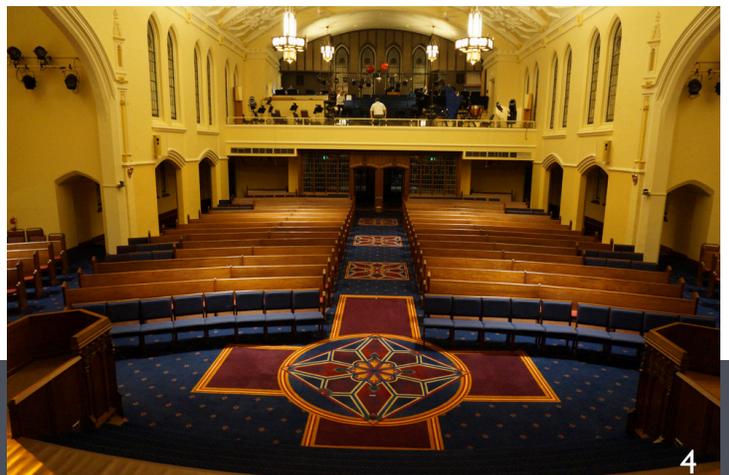
# Moderator Report

As Moderator of Plymouth Church, I strive to create a seamless connection between the congregation and the pastoral staff, bringing together our collective vision for what this beloved church is to be about. Our time-tested organizational structure, which empowers members and friends of Plymouth to have a “seat at the table” through board and committee service, is the vehicle to make that happen. As Moderator, I help facilitate that structure.

Making this structure work well, in my experience, depends on each of us as lay leaders being empowered with basic leadership skills and, ideally, a spiritual outlook so we can remember that all our “work” is sacred service, furthering the mission of Plymouth Church in its various ways. To that end, we began the year with a board orientation training session in January to ensure that all elected persons were equipped with the necessary information to serve effectively.

To facilitate the church business throughout the year, I carried out my role as Moderator through a combination of large and small meetings. On the small end, each month, I, along with Assistant Moderator Scott Avery, met with Reverends Timothy and Sara; these meetings create a valuable bridge between the staff and the congregation. Additionally, I chaired the monthly Executive Council (EC) meetings. This council consists of a representative from each board, as well as the Recorder, Clerk, and Treasurer, and two At-Large Members. The collective wisdom and diverse perspectives of this Council create a healthy structure for overseeing church finances, approving new people who wish to serve on boards, and handling decisions that are beyond the scope of individual boards. The EC is also the pathway for members of the congregation to bring their ideas or concerns forward through the At-Large Members, who were Lowell Beineke and Patty Pendleton.

Three larger meetings involving the entire congregation were held in 2025. At the January Annual Congregational Meeting, the 2025 operating budget was approved. At a congregational meeting held in June 2025, a new, simplified Investment Policy was approved,



aligning the Special Fund Account policy and the Church Endowment Fund policy into one. And finally, in October 2025, at the annual Election Meeting, the incoming officers and board members were officially elected, and the outgoing elected members were acknowledged and thanked for their service.

Boards and committees were hard at work all year on their specific missions, as well as on our four covenants. Plymouth is a busy place with a lot of dedication to those goals! Those activities will be summarized in the specific reports that follow in this annual report.

However, one weighty, strategic topic the Executive Council wrestled with in 2025 was whether there is an adequate level of engagement to sustain the church in the coming decades, considering attendance numbers, age demographics, and current and projected financial support. This discussion at EC meetings led to the creation of a congregational satisfaction survey to gather data about these factors, as well as to identify those things Plymouth is doing well and any possible gaps that need to be addressed. The survey was conducted in September, survey results were shared with the boards in October, and at year-end and in early 2026, the boards will consider what, if any, changes they recommend. A summary of the survey results will be shared with the congregation in early 2026. This is an exciting project and a wonderful example of the growth and improvement we can create when we work together for good!

I close with gratitude to Scott Avery for his support, guidance, and example over the past two years as I stepped into the role of Assistant Moderator in 2024 and then Moderator in 2025. I also gratefully acknowledge the long line of excellent leaders whose shoulders I stand on. Blessings to Scott for his service, and a warm welcome to Ian McCormick as the incoming Assistant Moderator, who will partner with me in 2026 as we continue to build up this spiritual home we all love.

Gratefully and in service,

Cammy Sutter  
Moderator



*"Journey with Jesus." He Qi © 2021. All rights reserved.*

# Senior Pastor & Teacher

Two new staff were hired at the beginning of January: Zach Heimach as the Communications Specialist and Brandon Porter as the Associate Music Director. Since their additions, there have been no further staff changes in 2025, and all staff are working well together. We are fortunate to have such committed and competent individuals serving in their various roles.



One major event this year was Plymouth serving as host congregation for the Indiana-Kentucky Conference's (IKC) Annual Gathering in August. This fulfilled a possibility that had been under consideration since 2019. It went very well and we were complimented repeatedly by staff and organizers for both our space and the quality and attitude of our volunteers.

In February, the three-year lease we had with Fort Wayne Pride expired for the 527 W. Berry building. A lease was renewed by the end of the month for another three-year term. I find this relationship valuable and believe it demonstrates in a tangible way to the broader community our commitment to the LGBTQ community.

One area of notable faith activism this year was responding to the genocide in Gaza, which escalated substantially after a ceasefire collapsed in March of 2025, resulting in mass starvation of the civilian population. In response to this need, and inspired by Rev. Ofner-Seals' efforts, I joined in an 11-day water-only hunger strike at the start of June. There were a lot of positive responses in the community, including the Jewish Federation, given that the strike was limited to the single demand of allowing food and humanitarian aid into Gaza. There was, unfortunately, limited response from federal elected officials. At the end of the year, a ceasefire in name only endures with the rate of killing reduced but daily violations continuing from the Israeli Defense Forces with muted international criticisms and scant accountability. I continue to include this regularly in my pastoral prayers and periodically in my sermons.

I attended a water discipleship retreat in August, which was located along Lake Michigan and included the featured speaker Ched Myers. It was worthwhile and gave me some ideas for a Lenten theme for 2026.

Academically, I was part of an online conference for Process and Faith called “Renewing Faith” from January 23-25. I was ultimately asked to write a short essay for the edited book collection from the conference, which I submitted and was included. While these opportunities are limited, I appreciate the church’s permission to engage in sporadic academic pursuits such as this one.

I continued to serve as a mentor to a Ph.D. student through the Disciples Seminary Foundation. We met via Zoom every couple of months as he is located in Portland, OR.

I helped co-facilitate an anti-racism training on February 22 in Bloomington, IN. A September training was canceled on account of low registration. I’ve also helped with the conference’s anti-racism task force look into doing a racial justice audit for the IKC. My other primary denominational engagements (Disciples of Christ and UCC) were continuing as the co-chair of the Disciples Peace Fellowship, serving as the treasurer of the Northeast Association of the IKC, and attending the DOC General Assembly in Memphis in July as a clergy delegate. The latter directly conflicted calendar-wise with the UCC General Synod, preventing me from attending both.

Educationally, I led three Chapel classes series over the course of the year on the topics of Sustaining Hope, Institutional Racism (where I led one of the two sessions), and on Christology. I will continue to take cues from the Christian Education Board on new suggested topics or whether it’s time to repeat one of my past series topics.



*Indiana-Kentucky Conference’s (IKC) Annual Gathering August 22-23, 2025*

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**‘I’ll eat when they eat’: Indiana pastors participate in nationwide fast for Gaza**

by [Kayla Berkey](#) | published on Jun 24, 2025

*Hunger Strike for Gaza Aid Press Conference June 3, 2025*

Something new that was started in 2025 was a Progressive Christianity 101 series, which was offered on Wednesday evenings. In conjunction with Rev. Ofner-Seals, we did this twice, once in late spring and again in late fall. We have started these in response to the sense that many newcomers are not familiar with how progressive Christianity differs in theological orientation from more culturally dominant strands. While scheduled around Welcoming Groups, it is also open to longstanding members, and the makeup of the group spans a wide range of membership longevity.

I preached 37 times at Plymouth this year at Sunday morning services. We had a few notable guest preachers, including Pastor Raymond Dix,, Jr. with our pulpit exchange with Pilgrim Baptist in August, and Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac from Palestine. Special services that I led included Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, the Easter Sunrise service, the Thanksgiving Day service, and the 10:00 pm Christmas Eve service. I assisted with the Good Friday Tenebrae, Luminous Night, and the 4:00 pm Christmas Eve service. In terms of memorial services, I led six and assisted in two.

After over seven years as your senior pastor, I continue to find this role to be meaningful and appreciate the trust you have placed in me to serve here. I am not able to predict the future with any specificity, but I believe I have still more to offer here and am taking things one year at a time. Here's hoping that 2026 is a good one!

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy



*Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac (left, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope - Ramallah) and Pastor Raymond Dix (right, Pilgrim Baptist Church of Fort Wayne) served as guest preachers in 2025*

# Associate Pastor



In last year's annual report, I mentioned that if there was one word to sum up 2024, it was community. In 2025, I feel we have built on that foundation and worked as a community to accomplish many things. Here are some of the highlights:

We began a new ministry in the winter of 2025, experimenting with the possibility of offering showers to our unhoused neighbors. We got the space prepared with toiletries and towels, recruited volunteers, and then opened our doors to guests referred to us by InAsMuch Ministries. The numbers of people showing up for showers turned out to be lower than expected, but those who took advantage of the ministry were very appreciative. In the spring, the YMCA opened its doors to the unhoused community for showers and so we ended the ministry for the time being.

In March, the Reproductive Rights action team partnered with the Christian Education board to sponsor a training for Our Whole Lives, a comprehensive sexual education program that was developed by the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist denomination. Ten people were trained, including several members of Plymouth (including me!), to teach 7-9 and 10-12 grade OWL students.

Our Green Team remained very active in 2025, keeping busy with their regular Greenway Trail Cleanups as well as special events such as the Soarin' and Solar event in March and the Fall Fest in September. In July, the Green Team sent me and member Kimberly Koczan to a thriving congregations retreat, hosted by Faith in Place, where we met with a cohort of five other green teams from across the state of Indiana to talk about environmental issues facing the state. This retreat was the beginning of a two-year commitment, which will include quarterly meetings with the cohort and an additional retreat in 2026. The Green Team also worked with property board to get approval for the installation of additional solar panels on the roof.





*Rev. Sara joined Indiana Center for Middle East Peace Director Michael Spath, board chair Pam Etheridge and others at Wi'am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center in Bethlehem in May.*

In May, I was fortunate to get to travel once again with Michael Spath to Israel-Palestine on a solidarity tour. I was away for two weeks and visited with many peace activists, both Israeli and Palestinian, representing Christianity, Judaism and Islam. While there, I was able to visit our Global Mission partners at Wi'am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center.

In June, Evangelism and Marketing and the Pride at Plymouth taskforce worked together to host our fourth annual Pride at Plymouth event. This year we experimented with having concessions instead of food trucks. All of the money raised from concessions were donated to Road 2 Recovery, the only recovery house in Fort Wayne for transgender women. Evangelism and Marketing also co-hosted the event Make the Yuletide Gay in December, featuring drag singer-songwriter Flamy Grant and others.



One aspect of community life that we are constantly looking to improve upon is relationship building within the congregation. One way we attempted to address that need this year was through the formation of small groups. This effort has mostly stalled at this point, largely due to scheduling difficulties. One group that has gotten off the ground is a Nature and Spirituality group. In addition to those efforts, several congregation members, along with Congregational Life, started a program called Food and Fun, which gathers groups of eight members for activities once a month. This program is up and running and seems to be going well. Other community life events included a Fat Tuesday pancake supper, a Tincaps game, the church picnic, and a Euchre tournament. Wednesday Night Live continues to be a valuable educational and fellowship program at the church.

This year we held two welcoming groups for prospective members, one in the spring and one in the fall. As a result we welcomed 11 new members. Rev. Timothy and I also added a new element to our new member onboarding procedures, which is to offer an Introduction to Progressive Christianity class



each time we welcome new members (twice a year at this point). The first time we offered the class was in May/June, and we had a fantastic response. Many people attended, including members and non-members, and new and long-time members. The first time we offered it we included four sessions, but found that people wanted more, so we added a fifth session when we offered the series again in the fall.

Education continues to be an important part of community life at Plymouth. Our Christian Education board started off the year with a retreat to layout plans for the year, which was very helpful. Over the course of the year, I led several chapel class series, including a study on the Genres of the Bible and a study on Congregational Song. I co-led a series on the parables of Jesus with member Garrett Pogue, and led a session with Zoughbi Zoughbi from Wi'am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center in Bethlehem (on Zoom). In November, I organized a non-cooperation training with facilitators from Ignite Peace that was well attended by members of the congregation and people from other congregations and the community at large.

My work in the denomination continues on two fronts. I continue my work on the steering committee for the UCC Movement for Palestinian Solidarity, which meets once a month on Zoom. Much of my work for this group includes writing content for and editing the monthly e-news and being part of the liturgical resources team. I attended a planning retreat with the group in October. In addition, I am now serving as the chair of the minister support team for the Indiana Kentucky Conference, which is part of the IKC unified committee on ministry.

I continue to incorporate personal activism into my work at Plymouth. Perhaps most notably, at the end of May, I started a hunger fast for Gaza, committing to eating only 250 calories at day for 40 days (the average caloric intake of Palestinians in Gaza at the time). This was to raise awareness of the starvation in Gaza, and Rev. Timothy joined me in this effort, going on a total hunger strike for 11 days. During the 40-day fast, the congregation was engaged by being asked to call their elected officials and share the news of the effort with friends. Unfortunately, our elected officials did not respond to our efforts.



*In July, clergy from Plymouth Congregational Church and Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren hosted an immigration education/letter writing advocacy event about barriers immigrants face in Indiana, and how sensible reforms can improve life and policy.*

Over the course of the year, I also attended protests, vigils and hearings related to immigration and the planned data center in Fort Wayne.

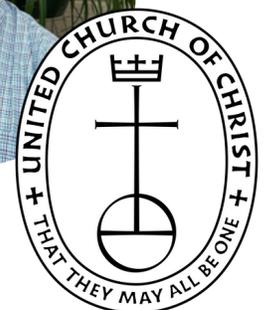
Of course, in addition to all of the work mentioned above, there is the ongoing work of planning Sunday morning worship, writing sermons, planning special services, meeting with boards and committees, visiting people in the hospital, and meeting with members in their homes, at church, or in coffee shops. The work of the church is never done, but it's work that I love in a community that I cherish. I've said it before, but it's worth repeating: I consider myself very fortunate to serve at Plymouth Congregational Church, and I hope to serve for many more years to come!

Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals

# Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care

Hello goodly folks of Plymouth! As always, it is with real gratitude I submit the following report of my work as Plymouth's Associate in Pastoral Care for 2025.

It remains true that pastoral visitation is a source of fulfillment and, frankly, pleasure. Not only are the Plymouth members I visit good, interesting, and thoughtful folks, they remain committed members of this community, and we all should be grateful for that.



When able, they watch or listen to our streaming worship services, they read the bulletin and ask about what we have going on, and they're always happy to hear when new members have joined. Despite various reasons for not being able to attend service "on location," they are invested in the life of our community, and I invite you to include them in your prayer time, as well as occasionally calling on those you miss seeing in service, if you don't already do so.

Helping to keep Plymouth more fully engaged with our longtime members are several volunteers who transform our weekly altar flowers into two or three smaller arrangements and then deliver them to different folks and visit for a bit. This year our volunteers have been Beth Balasia, Barb Duch, Jan Gibson, Lucy Hess, and Jan Younger. Their work truly is a ministry of this church, and a real gift of time and care.

It felt as if this year had more than its share of losses for our faith community, with 14 members entering the mystery of eternity. I had the privilege of participating in the memorial concert for Pat Adsit on March 30 and assisting with the service for Dan Kaufmann on April 26. And it was an honor to lead memorial services celebrating the lives of Barb Hill (May 24), Kris Conner (Nov. 15) and Mike Popp (11/18). While it is good and right to mourn the loss of such good and unique people, it is also good and right to celebrate the gifts they put to good use in our community and on behalf others. I'll take this opportunity to echo Rev. Sara's November Bell article and encourage you to attend every Plymouth memorial service you are able to attend. Yep, even if you didn't know the person. You'll get to know a bit about them at the service, and understand a little bit better your extended faith family ancestry. And those who are grieving will see evidence that their loved one was and is respected and loved within the life of this church.

Administratively, I took care of a couple of boundary training credits – one session on current political context (July 19) and one on healthy congregational systems (August 22). A new experience was attending a clergy retreat! It was a lovely two days at Waycross Conference Center and Camp in Morgantown, IN, where we explored "Claiming Our Courage as Clergy – Professional, Personal, and Prophetic." It was timely and helpful, and it was a great opportunity to get to know other clergy within the Indiana-Kentucky Conference – I'm glad I went.

Finally, I am delighted to report that Tapping Into Faith will continue into 2026 after a couple of bumpy months due to work commitments elsewhere on Monday evenings. The plan is to meet on the last Tuesday of each month (7 pm at Mad Anthony's, at Broadway and Taylor) beginning in January. If you've never ventured out to give it a try, it is always a great evening of sharing appetizers and good, honest conversation about our experiences of living into this faith we practice, with a few poems for thematic inspiration. C'mon over – everyone is welcome!

# Clerk Report

The Clerk collaborates with the Office Manager to make certain there is a faithful record of membership rolls and proceedings of the church. The data includes admissions of new members, removals of members, deaths, weddings and baptisms.

Below is a summary of member additions and removals for 2025. Eleven people became new Plymouth Church members and one reinstated. There were twelve deaths and four transfers out, and five withdrawals. This year the deacons removed 42 inactive members, resulting in a net decrease of 51 members for the year ending December 31, 2025. The total member count as of December 31, 2025 is 393 members.

<b>Total Members as of January 1, 2025</b>				<b>444</b>
	<b>Additions</b>			
		Letters of Transfers In		0
		Affirmation of Faith		11
		Baptism		0
		Confirmation		0
		Reinstatement		1
		<b>Total Additions</b>		<b>12</b>
	<b>Removals</b>			
		Deaths (members)		12
		Deacons' Removal		42
		Withdrawn by Request		5
		Letters of Transfer Out		4
		<b>Total Removals</b>		<b>63</b>
	<b>Net change in members</b>			<b>(51)</b>

<b>Total Members as of December 31, 2025</b>				<b>393</b>
<b>New Members</b>				
	Name		Date	How Received
	Jeanne Sheridan		5/25/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Cassidy Cwiertnia		6/29/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Mason Darnell		6/29/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Skylar Misewicz		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Charles Kelsey		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Vicki Kelsey		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Steve Gentz		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Judy Gentz		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Jo Parker		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Glen Bogan		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Rodrigo Vergara		11/23/2025	Affirmation of Faith
	Rob Getrost		10/31/2025	Reinstated
<b>Baptisms</b>				
	Name		Date	Officiant
	Lachlan Ives Kolb Lutz		4/27/2025	Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals and Wayne Peterson-Stephan, Deacon
<b>Weddings</b>				
	Name		Date	Officiant
	none			

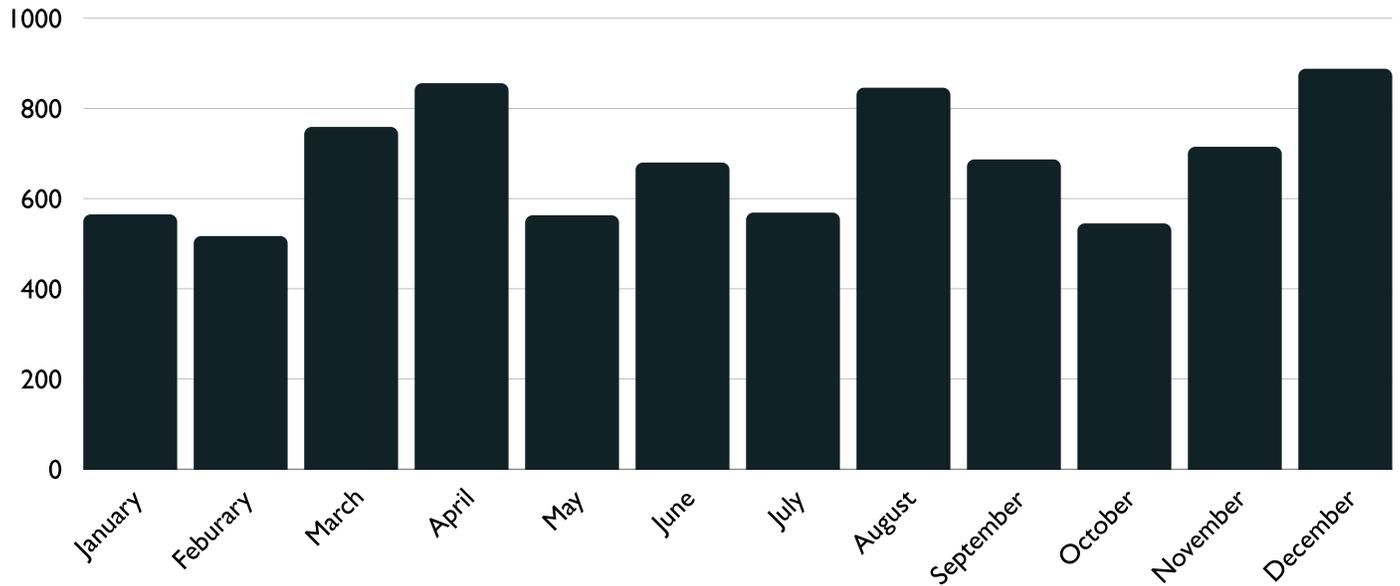
<b>Deaths</b>						
	Name			Date		Affiliation
	Roy Gilliom			1/9/2025		Member
	Jeane Spoor			10/16/2024		Member
	Patricia Adsit			2/13/2025		Member
	Dan Kaufman			4/5/2025		Member
	Barbara Hill			4/17/2025		Member
	Ed Gomez			6/7/2025		Member
	Terry Springer			6/12/2025		Member
	Al Bohnstedt			8/19/2025		Member
	Carol Lehman			8/24/2025		Member
	Michael Popp			8/25/2025		Member
	Carole Green			9/1/2025		Member
	Kris Conner			9/3/2025		Member

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Carboneau, Clerk

# Worship Attendance Information

Church annual attendance for 2025 came to a total of 7,625



The following attendance for the special services were included in the totals above.

Ash Wednesday	47
Maundy Thursday	30
Good Friday	64
Easter Sunrise	26
Pentecost	131
ICC Evening Worship	90
ICC	65
Wayne Peterson-Stephen Ordination	40
Thanksgiving	22
Luminous Night	35
Christmas Eve 4 PM	103
Christmas Eve 10 PM	121



The following charts provide a comparison of the 2024 and 2025 average Sunday worship attendance by month, with a final average for the 10:00 am service representing each year:

<b>2024 Worship Averages</b>	
Month	10 am
January	118.25
February	127
March	148.2
April	155
May	129
June	110
July	126
August	130.75
September	154.4
October	133.25
November	164.75
December	144.2
Monthly	137.08

<b>2025 Worship Averages</b>	
Month	10 am
January	141.25
February	129.25
March	142.4
April	184
May	141
June	138
July	142.25
August	138.5
September	156.8
October	136.25
November	138.6
December	127.5
Monthly	142.85

# Youth Director

As always, writing the Annual Report has snuck up on me. I really should just submit this in October before Boar's Head takes over my brain. I continue to keep a tidy calendar and I track who comes to what events and such, but again, stopping long enough to try to remember what we were doing last spring and summer always confuses me, while reminding me of how wonderful our young people are! Another report is due, and each year it's no different, I get to report that our youth are awesome!



Each winter still brings us Show Choir, Jazz Band and ISSMA season for many of our youth. If your children are in the Arts, you know this is a crazy-busy time for families. Show Choir competitions keep kids out into the wee hours on Saturday nights, and honestly, for many, Sunday mornings are the only days our kids have to be at home and rest. Youth activities can really be hit or miss September through February every year, but we roll with it.



- Youth at Tincaps – August 18, 2024
- Youth – Felt Squares service project in September 2024
- Youth Lock In & Bread Sale – November 23 and 24, 2024
- Youth Christmas Party – December 15, 2024

Each January, busy kids or not, the youth cook, prepare, serve and clean up our annual Casa d'Plymouth lunch fundraiser. This meal goes hand in hand with Plymouth's Annual Business meeting with the spaghetti and meatball lunch continuing to be a church favorite!

In February the youth gathered again at Headwaters Park Ice Rink, which continues to be a fan favorite. March and April brought us some smaller group gatherings, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, then Spring Break happened. April also helped us to reconnect, and have some time to hang in the Youth Center. There were no high school graduates this year. The program year ended with ice cream with our congregation.

Our summer was busy with Plymouth Pride on June 28. We made meals for Just Neighbors on Sunday, March 9 and November 10.

The youth continue to be busy, but they make Youth Group and our events a priority, something I still admire about them. They are building and growing friendships that could last a lifetime, and knowing that Plymouth Church is a safe place for them to come and be themselves is truly something special.



Respectfully submitted,

Kara K. Jaurigue, Youth Director



# Sunday School Director



41 unique kids have attended our in-person Christian Education offerings this year. On Sundays we average six kids total in our two classrooms. Some weeks our attendance reaches into the mid-teens, but many weeks we have only a couple students. 32 households regularly receive quarterly mailings of family faith activities. These numbers are undoubtedly creeping downward – and that is a concern. But I also see so many ways that our church welcomes and nurtures our young people throughout our community. I know I am grateful, as a parent, for Plymouth’s role in my children’s lives. And regardless of numbers, I work to make sure any kids who come through our doors have the chance for similar positive experiences.

Our Godly Play curriculum for our preschool and elementary students largely follows the seasonal bible stories, with some extras. In January and February we learned about the lives of modern-day saints working for justice. This fall we took a closer look at practices in worship such as communion, baptism, and the Lord’s prayer. Amy Coursen, Karra McCormick and Anne Boyko have been regular teachers in the children’s classroom this year.



*Planting seeds during the Service Blitz*



*Bounce House at Pride at Plymouth*



*Drumming at Mini Music Camp*



*(left) Sheep and shepherd puppets used to tell the story of the Good Shepherd on Kickoff Sunday*

*(right) Impromptu angels in week 3 of our Pageant in Parts*

Next door, Kristen Miller and Misha Chemy continue to work with the middle and high school class – Brian and Kimberly Koczan-Flory jumped in several weeks this fall as well. In the spring they finished up a year of learning about the personalities of the New Testament. And this fall they've been taking on some tough questions in Christianity – and more importantly explores how to discuss differences with respect.

This past semester, we have been experimenting with new ways to invite the children to minister to our congregation during worship. On Kickoff Sunday in September, they heard the story of the Good Shepherd in Sunday school, and then brought a larger version of the story – complete with sheep puppets – into worship. During the four weeks of Advent we performed a “Christmas Pageant in Parts.” Each 5-minute segment invited the kids present in worship that week to tell a piece of the Christmas story.

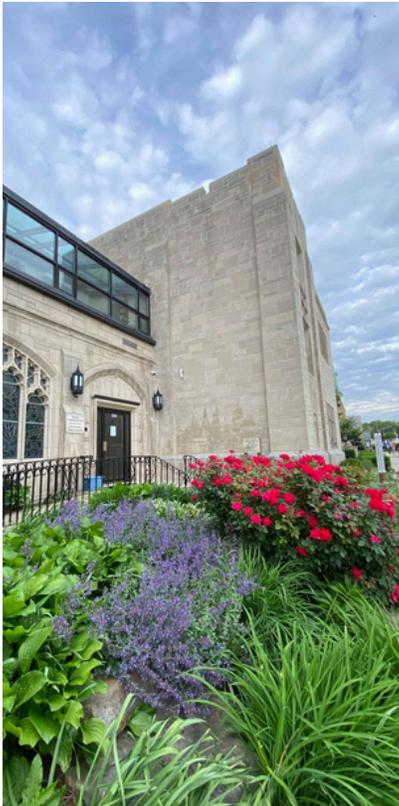
Our Whole Lives, our curriculum for sexuality education, continues to be an important offering to our Plymouth kids and the community. Last spring, Allie Brown and I taught a class to eight first and second graders – most from outside Plymouth. In March, Plymouth's Reproductive Rights Action Team hosted a facilitator training for new OWL teachers.

I am thankful for the opportunities I have as a staff member for continuing education. In October, I attended the annual gathering of the Great Lakes Association of United Church Educators. In November I attended online training on facilitating stories about racism in the United States, and plan to bring these intergenerational stories to Plymouth early in the new year.

This year I have offered children's activities at many of our community events – such as our Easter breakfast, Congregational Picnic, Plymouth Pride, and Las Posadas. Kids have been active participants at Mardi Gras, the Good Friday walk around downtown, the Fall Festival at Eagle Marsh, our Euchre tournament, Cocoa and Carols, and of course, Boar's Head. The experiences and relationships built around the church are perhaps more important to children's spirituality than age-specific classes. And so I am thankful for the ways Plymouth cheers on our kids – both through support of our children's ministries, and through inclusion of our young people in the life of our congregation.

Katie Watson

# Licensed Minister



I continue to learn and live the role of licensed minister at Plymouth Church. The past year has provided several opportunities to participate in the life of the church. It included two Sundays of assisting with worship services; one Sunday where I lead the service by providing the pastoral prayer, shared the story “What Was I Made For,” and provided the invitation to communion; attending the IN/KY Conference Annual Gathering hosted at Plymouth Church; writing the devotional “Hope, Time, and Tending” to include in the Plymouth Advent Devotional.

As part of my licensed ministry, I continue to be aware of the need to be present and available in the everydayness of life, living the role of licensed minister. There is much going on in the lives of those around me; both in my church family and the community where I live. Sometimes folks just need a listening ear or a helping hand. I am learning to leave space in my day for the unexpected times that require me to step into my ministerial role.

This year I also continued to focus on the balance of being both a licensed minister and an active church member. There are so many interesting opportunities to participate in at Plymouth Church and it continues to be a fine balancing act. In addition to not wanting to over extend myself, I also am aware of potential confidentiality and conflict of interest issues that may come up serving in multiple roles. For 2026, I am entering my final year on the Benevolence Committee. I will be serving as chairperson and have prioritized creating a smooth transition of leadership into 2027, streamlining some of the process of the Benevolence Grants Program, and cultivating an ongoing working relationship between the committee and Plymouth office staff.

I continue to be thankful for the supportive community of Plymouth Church. You called me and have given me the opportunity to learn and serve as a licensed minister. For me it is important work that I take seriously. I look forward to the year ahead and the opportunities it may bring for me, and for each of us, to reflect the light and love of Jesus into the world around us.

# Conference Delegates

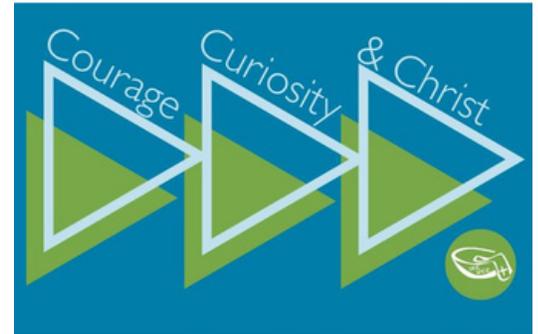
The 61st Indiana-Kentucky Conference Annual Gathering, hosted by Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne, was held on Friday, August 22 and closed in the afternoon of Saturday, August 23, 2025. This year's conference theme was Courage, Curiosity & Christ. The organizing committee, led by Scott Avery, executed an exceptional task in welcoming delegates, providing delectable and abundant meals, establishing comfortable and functional spaces for workshops and vendors, and, in general, providing an overall rewarding experience for all attendees.

Friday focused on clergy, with a Boundary Training workshop, a clergy mixer, and a celebration of the adoption of ONA by the IKC Conference at the previous Annual Gathering. Opening Worship was provided by The Many, an intentionally diverse group of musicians committed to faith, peace-making, economic & racial justice and LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Saturday began with recognition of Rebecca Barganza, honoring her for her thirty years of exceptional service to the Conference. IKC leadership expressed everyone's gratitude to Rebecca with flowers, gifts and a check.

Next on the agenda was a panel discussion featuring Rev. Dr. Christal Williams, Regional Minister of the Disciples of Christ of Indiana;

## IKC Annual Gathering 2025



August 22-23  
Plymouth Congregational UCC  
Ft. Wayne, IN



Rev. Dr. Patrick G. Duggan, Exec. Dir. of UCC Bldg. & Loan Fund; and Rev. Dr. Jamesetta Ferguson, founder of MOLO Village in Louisville, KY. Their message: Courage - keep pressing on. Curiosity - everything has possibility (until it doesn't). We can't succeed without Community. Christ - Be relentless about who Jesus really is; change the popular American narrative. Most of Jesus' time was spent "out there," not in the synagogue. We, the Church, are Jesus' hands and feet in the world.



Lunch was followed by Ministry Milestones, a presentation describing the Sri Lanka partnership and annual awards. Workshops filled the remainder of the afternoon program. They included Church Growth and Evangelism; Church Finance and Fundraising; Stewarding Space Wisely; Best Practices for Pastoral Relations Committees; Rural, Small Town or Part-time Ministry; Building Community Partnerships; Workshop Resources and Design; Advocacy and Social Justice; Mental Health Ministry; and Open and Affirming Resources



Maestro Robert Nance, Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals, Janice Furtner, Tim Cunningham, Kara Jaurigue and oboist Barrett Seals provided beautiful music preceding and during the closing worship in the sanctuary. As delegates departed around 4 pm on August 23, the leadership, the staff and the entire congregation can be extremely proud of the job exceptionally well done by all who had a part in the 2025 Annual Gathering of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Submitted by Ahnee Conner

# Music Ministry

I am privileged to present my 26th Annual Report on the activities of the Music Ministry at Plymouth Congregational Church. I, along with our excellent music associates, members of the Music Committee and volunteers have worked diligently to maintain a dynamic pastoral music ministry where our priority is to provide faith enrichment through the arts. We have accomplished this through our worship, our parochial programs, our outreach through the music series and partnerships with other area non-profits in the community. We continue to help local artists and arts organizations by generously sharing our facilities with them for meetings, rehearsals and performances. We also make it a priority to feature local artists in our programming to help sustain our artists and support local culture.



## Highlights of 2025:

On January 19, Plymouth Music Series presented our annual community **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** commemoration program. The service was presented at Pilgrim Baptist Church and featured Thee Combo (Robert Nance, Brad Kuhns and Dave Mendenhall), Janice Furtner, Rev. Timothy Murphy, Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals, Rev. Raymond Dix, Rev. Bill McGill, Pastor Karen Staton, Rev. Timothy Lake, Chris Lahr from Alive Community Outreach, Rabbi Meir Bargeron, and singers from Heartland Sings, Pilgrim Baptist Church and Plymouth Church.

On February 9 the music series presented a concert entitled **“Songs of Motherhood”** featuring soprano Natalie Young, mezzo soprano Ashlee Bickley McCrory and pianist Nicole Busarow. This concert was designed to explore the triumphs and trials of early motherhood. Featuring art songs composed in the last hundred years, many from the perspective of female composers, the aim of this program was to acknowledge the joys and challenges mothers face from pregnancy to early postpartum. The program highlighted local agencies that provide support for mothers, and was live-streamed via our YouTube channel.

On March 30 we presented a concert **in memory of Patricia Mae Adsit**. This concert featured members Philharmonic Players Association, Heartland Sings, and speakers from the community. Her life was celebrated in word and song, and tributes were made in honor of her many years of faithful service to the community, her generous support of the arts, and for her leadership and loyal friendships. The concert was well attended and by all accounts a fitting tribute to her.

April 23-30 was holy week during which the music ministry provided special music for **Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter**.

On June 8, members of Plymouth church participated in a concert presented by Heartland Sings called **“A choral testament.”** This concert was conducted by Maestro Nance and was a tribute to his 28-year tenure as the founder and artistic director of Heartland Sings. The concert took place at Auer Performance Hall on the campus of PFW.

During the summer, the Plymouth Music Series presented three concerts. On June 29, a concert of **New Orleans Jazz** was performed by the Plymouth Dixieland Ensemble with Maestro Nance leading from the keyboard. Then on July 24, 25 & 27 (Fort Wayne Pride weekend), the musical **IN PIECES** was performed in the sanctuary, directed by Brandon Porter and Heather Brackeen. And rounding out the summer season, on August 24 we presented Heartland Sings principal artist mezzo soprano **Alejandra Sandoval-Montañez** in recital with Maestro Nance accompanying. Each concert featured an ice cream social and each was well attended and live-streamed via our YouTube channel.

On August 27, the Music Ministry began the fall season of **Wednesday Night Live** activities with dinner and activities including Sweetcakes entertainment (balloons and face painting) and Plymouth Trivia led by Reverends Murphy and Ofner-Seals.

On September 7, we started off the church year sharing programming information with the congregation at the annual church fair. Then on September 28, the music series opened the 25-26 season with a centennial celebration of **Winnie the Pooh**. The concert, created and performed by Heartland Sings baritone David Bobay, was a resounding hit by all accounts. David was accompanied by pianist Reggie Berg and the program featured a multi-media component. This program was live-streamed via our YouTube channel.

On November 9, the music series presented in concert the **Plymouth Bell Ensemble** under the direction of music associate Tim Cunningham. Their performance was enhanced with narration by Janice Furtner. Overall the performance was both informative and inspiring, and was live-streamed via our YouTube channel.



On December 14, the music series presented “**Feliz Navidad.**” This program featured the Spanish language community choir, Canto de Corazón, under the direction of Maestro Robert Nance and guitarist Cote Godoy. This choir is supported by Heartland Sings and Plymouth Music Ministry with a goal to provide an opportunity to sing exclusively in Spanish for the purpose of bringing two cultures together through music and engender greater understanding.

From December 28-30, we presented the **49th Annual Boar’s Head & Yule Log Festival Service** in the sanctuary of Plymouth Church. This year’s presentation featured a chorus of 49 plus a 24-piece orchestra all under the direction of Maestro Robert Nance.

## **General Program Information:**

The Plymouth Music Ministry has a wide range of opportunities for musicians of all levels. Opportunities range from the Sanctuary Singers (choir for older youth and adults), Youth Music opportunities (high school and middle school), Children's Choirs (PreK-2, 3-5), Plymouth Bell Ensemble (older youth to adults), Thee Combo (contemporary piano, bass, and percussion), and various individually tailored opportunities for interested members of the congregation to share their talent in worship.

The Music Ministry is a steward of some of the finest musical resources in the city, including an extensive music library and excellent instruments. The music library is quite a treasure trove of choral, handbell, keyboard and orchestral selections. We continue to make improvements to the music library with ongoing maintenance, including retirement of titles, replacement of deteriorating or lost copies of titles, new storage boxes, and the acquisition of new music.

Plymouth is blessed with some of the finest instruments in the city, which are openly available to qualified musicians and students when schedules permit. We have a custom made Allen Digital Renaissance Concert Organ (largest of its type in the region), two concert-grade Steinway grand pianos, a Yamaha AvantGrand™ digital grand piano (not portable), a Yamaha P-250 digital keyboard (substantial yet portable), a 4-Octave set of Malmark Handbells and a 4-octave set of Choir Chimes, a substantial set of Orff Instruments, various percussion instruments and sundry other instruments used for the musical education. All of the instruments are carefully maintained and the quality of Plymouth's musical instruments and equipment ranges from good to outstanding. We are blessed to be the stewards of such equipment for our use in worship, special services and concerts.

All in all, it has been a good year, and I am grateful to the many members and staff who have risen to help offer music for worship and public outreach concerts. I continue to make it a priority to present concerts from Plymouth as often as possible featuring the many talented folks at Plymouth Church as well our local musicians who help to contribute to the quality of life in our community.

## **Music Ministry Staff:**

Maestro Robert Nance, Director of Music

Timothy Cunningham, Music Associate (handbells)

Brandon Porter, Music Associate (choirs)

## **Music Committee (a subcommittee of Deacons Worship):**

Anne Hughes, Chair; Linda Balthaser, Janice Furtner, Jane Meredith, Eric Miller, Laura McCoy, Emma Walker, Jan Younger, and Virginia Zimmerman

## Boards, Committees and Other Activities

# Boar's Head & Yule Log Festival Committee

The 49th annual Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival filled Plymouth Church on December 29 and 30, with services at 5:30 pm and 8:00 pm each day. This year BH fell on a Monday and Tuesday evening, and even with unplanned winter weather on Monday, we had approximately **453** people in attendance, and approximately **635** on Tuesday night, totaling **approx. 1088 people** in attendance (these numbers come from the tickets collected by the Beefeaters, and we know folks sneak in or do not have an actual paper ticket to turn in!). Kara Jaurigue completed her third year as Festival Director, which she could not have done without the help from everyone on the Production Team. Jim Schmidt, former Director, again enjoyed watching his family in the festival along with his wife Jeanette, and he plans to help behind the scenes or in the cast next year for our 50th anniversary celebration.



As per tradition, the production team and volunteers arrived on December 26 at 10:00 am to prepare the sanctuary, put up the set, clear out all necessary spaces, set out props and get the building ready for 5 days of Festival fun in the church. I like to tell people, all this magic happens in just 5 days, and it really does! Set up, rehearsals, dress rehearsal, 4 festival services with dinner in between, then tear down, pack up the set and leave no signs, or very little signs, that we were even there.

**Production Team members include:** Robert Nance, Rob Getrost, Beth Walker, Misha Chemey, Brandy Logan, Maddie Hartman, Eric Miller, Laura McCoy, Meredith Minchski, Karen Neisus-Roeger, Roger Eversole, Emma Walker, Christopher Hartman and Chad Logan.

Our Festival **Costume Crew** works hard all year long to create, build and repair existing costumes. Our Costume Crew, under the direction of Brandy Logan, was made up of: Chad Logan, Maggie Fiedler and Sue McCurdy. I want to mention Jim Clauser and Lousie Misegades, who had worked on the crew for many years, were not involved this year, and they were both missed. Both hold the title of “BH Cast Members for 48 years.”

Finding volunteers to cover our child areas isn’t easy. Our **Parent volunteers** that covered the Sprite Room and Youth Center, which houses our children ages baby Jesus to 12 years, when they are not in the sanctuary need mentioned, and thanked! Thank you to Michelle Grim, Amanda Minchski, Katie Watson, Mariah Grim, Anne Boyko and Emma Bowen.

**Our Make Up Artists**, Elyse Jaurigue and Samantha Ames assisted the cast with stage makeup for each service. Normally Janice Furtner would be a part of this team, but days before production, she got Covid and was unable to join us, and she also was missed.

The Festival this year was composed of 146 cast members, close to 100 musicians, and a crew of close to 25 people. These numbers can flex due to illness.



The entire Plymouth staff continued to offer great support for the Festival. This year, Zach Heimach joined the staff, and coming new, knowing nothing about the Festival, helped us tremendously! The production team and I want to extend the biggest **THANK YOU** to Tony Ray, our Office Manager. This was his second year on staff during BH and as always, he ROCKED IT! Thank you to Jake Slone for handling all the tickets, printings and mailings. Thank you to John Holderele and Jamal Taylor for being the Custodial staff on duty during the festival, as this is no easy job! They were both ready and available to take care of anything that was needed while Plymouth hosted over 1,000 people each night.



**Our Festival Patrons** are a very special part of this production, and Boar's Head could not happen without their financial support. At the time of this report, over 100 people/families donated to this year's production. The program QR code got us \$340.00 in donations, and being the second year to use a QR code, it proves to be a beneficial addition to the program, allowing folks to donate right from their seats!

The weeks and months leading up to the Festival can feel hectic. There is also a feeling of pure joy for those who are involved and dedicated to making the magic happen. The experience of tradition is revealed during "Let All Mortal Flesh" and as the characters of Mary and Joseph carry that small bundle out of the sanctuary, while the congregation sings "O Come All Ye Faithful." Then we see the small child in the arms of Rev. Timothy Murphy and Katie Watson, carrying the Christ flame into the world, as the sounds of the harp "In the Bleak Midwinter" whispers to the silent, dimly lit sanctuary. We value and honor this gift Plymouth offers the community each year. We are excited for the 50th annual Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival, and planning for the celebration will take place all year long. We are hopeful for a historical video to be produced, to have BH "merch" to be offered to both cast/crew as well as festival patrons and attendees, and any other ways we can find to celebrate this huge milestone.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Jaurigue, Artistic Director

# Christian Education

*“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

– 2 Peter 1:5-8

Richard Rohr tells us that “the great task of religion is to keep us fully awake, alert and conscious.” Our religion presently appears to be falling drastically apart. How we bring the foundational belief in divine love to ever more deepening consciousness is a daily challenge.

A big part of walking in the way of Jesus Christ is to add to our faith (among other things) knowledge – not simply information, but, especially, wisdom. To be fully awake, alert, and conscious is to grow in our knowledge of how the love, grace and justice of God can intersect with our experience, and with the life of the community in which we live. The more we understand the theological and practical aspects of following Jesus, the more productive and effective we will be as disciples, and the more we will know whatever it is that we need to know.

To this end, the Christian Education Board has been tasked with providing opportunities for the people of Plymouth to increase in the knowledge of how God operates in their hearts and minds and in their everyday lives. The following is a list of the opportunities offered this past year through the Sunday adult Chapel classes. The CE board is very grateful to all who have led these classes.

Submitted by:  
Reggie Troutt,  
Christian Education Chair



**January Chapel Classes:**

January 5: Elder Care (Gabrielle Ginder)  
 January 12: Elder Law (Bryan Nugen, Elder Care Attorney of Law)  
 January 19: Parables Series – The Prodigal Son (Garrett Pogue)  
 January 26: Parable Series – The Good Samaritan (Rev. Sara Ofner- Seals)

**February Chapel Classes**

February 2: Parable Series – The Rich Man and Lazarus (Garrett Pogue)  
 February 9: Parable Series – The Workers in the Vineyard (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)  
 February 16, 23: Sustaining Hope in an Unjust World (Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy)

**March Chapel Classes**

March 2: Homelessness (Mary Ann Ming)  
 March 9: Immigration (Martin Garcia)  
 March 16: Hymn Study (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)  
 March 23: Hymn Study (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)  
 March 30: Hymn Study (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)

**April Chapel Classes**

April 6: Zoughbi Zoughbi( Zoom Presentation)  
 May 11: The Pacifistic Nature of Mother’s Day (Garrett Pogue)  
 May 18: Homelessness (Amanda Fall – Homelessness Director)  
 May 25: Memorial Day – No class  
 Summer Break

**September Chapel Classes**

Sept 7: Intergenerational Class (Katie Watson)  
 Sept 14: Guest Speaker Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac from Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hope - Ramallah  
 Sept 21: Plymouth and Racism Legacy (Anti-Racism team Plymouth Church)  
 Sept 28: Plymouth and Racism Legacy (Anti-Racism team Plymouth Church)

**October Chapel Classes**

Oct 5: Understanding the Genres of the Bible (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)  
 Oct 12: Understanding the Genres of the Bible (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)  
 Oct 19: Christian Nationalism (Jim Boeglin)  
 Oct 26: Christian Nationalism (Evan Davis)

**November Chapel Classes**

Nov 2: Christology (Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy)  
 Nov 9: Christology (Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy)  
 Nov 16: Christology (Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy)  
 Nov 23: Story Telling (Alan Haynes)  
 Nov 30: No Class Thanksgiving Break

**December Chapel Classes**

Dec 7: Kairos Palenstine (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)  
 Dec 14: Kairos Palenstine (Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals)  
 Dec 21: No Class – Carol Sing in the Folsom Room  
 Dec 28: No Class – Christmas Break

# Congregational Life

The Congregational Life Board helps promote opportunities for fellowship through providing coffee and doughnuts before Sunday services, as well as a number of special events throughout the year. Below are the additional events Congregation Life members offered:

“Food and Fun” was organized to put groups of up to 8 people to get together regularly throughout the year to meet outside of church to enjoy supper together at a restaurant or in one of the member’s homes. Several groups are up and running.

Plymouth’s Annual Euchre Tournament was held in February. We had 16 people playing, with four tables in rotation. Eric Bilinski won for the second time.

We had 45 people who attended Shrove Tuesday supper, with four griddles for making pancakes. We also had a king cake from George’s International Market.

Easter Morning Breakfast was served to the congregation immediately after early morning Easter Service. CL Board Members contributed homemade casseroles.

Ice Cream Social for the end of the program year – after Sunday Service, the Congregational Life Board dished up ice cream provided by the 05 Scoop Shop. About 100 people stayed after service and enjoyed ice cream and fellowship.

TinCaps baseball game – Plymouth Church again rented one of the homerun porch boxes at Parkview Field to watch a TinCaps baseball game. The homerun porch box included free hamburgers, hotdogs, side dishes and soft drinks.

Plymouth’s annual picnic attracted 73 people at Hefner Pavillion at Franklin Park. Grilled chicken and pork butt roast was provided, and members brought side dishes to share.

September 7th - Plymouth Church Resource Faire. After Sunday service, Laurel and Bill staffed a table representing Congregational Life Board to share what we do and raise awareness among the congregation about our activities.

September 16th - Two new members to the board were introduced to fill the vacancies left by Renee and Nate. Joy Grow will fill the remainder of Renee's term, and Jeff Williams will fill the remainder of Nate's term.

Congregational Life Board provided cake and refreshments following Wayne Peterson-Stephan's ordination as a UCC Pastor, which took place at Plymouth.

Heritage Sunday – After Sunday service, Congregational Life provided two large sheet cakes which were devoured, as well as giving out the remainder of the ice cream leftover from the Ice Cream Social.

New Member Luncheon – CL Board provided sandwiches, chips and drinks for eight new-to-be members who later on November 23 joined the church.

Euchre Tournament – Responding to the congregation's desire for another Euchre Tournament, the CL Board hosted another tournament. Twenty Euchre players came and we had another eight people playing Yahtzee.

The Congregational Life Board (primarily AJ Calkins) prepared Thanksgiving Dinner to church members and friends. A total of 39 people came to the dinner.

# Deacons

## Deacons 2025 Year End Summary

### January

Annual retreat held to greet new member and acquaint everyone about Deacon duties, and update our manuals. 2 hours duration with a light brunch.

Three members attended the annual church board training meeting. Purchase of and completion of a new "Standard Time" communion table cloth of green with the church's new logo upon the center front facing the congregation. We have ordered two additional cloths for Lent and Advent. The Standard Time cloth will be used following Pentecost. Our budget for 2025 was accepted and approved.

### FEBRUARY

We are starting the process to review inactive memberships, which has not been done for more than 5 years. Wayne will create and keep an updated spreadsheet with Jake Slone. Vicki Kruse will lead the creation of the Membership Taskforce of tri-yearly contacting members who have not been as active in the last 6 months along with Rev. Timothy and Jake Slone gathering names and forming a "caller guide."

### MARCH

The membership review's second letters were sent out. Consensus question for the congregational survey was whether to add back into the Sunday bulletins the weekly church schedule for visitors to see what happens at Plymouth and where they may find belonging.

### APRIL

A vacancy on our board as Claire Simms steps down, her term ends in 2025. Membership responses trickling back from second letters; 20 responses - 10 retain, 1 transfer, 4 request removal, 5 not recorded.

The new order of fake chancel silk flowers for Standard Times will be purchased from The Secret Garden & Florist Shop owned by Nate & Jason Vanover (Plymouth Members who have been donating live chancel flowers), at a cost of \$330-400 for the permanent fake silk bouquets. Jenna Rupp joins our board to fulfill Claire's term until end 2025. Membership review is now into actual phone call phase.

## **MAY**

Slow month, chancel flowers placed and they are beautiful and fresh looking.

## **JUNE/JULY**

EC via Rev Timothy reported that prospective members are asking for a definition and explanation of the affirmation statement "Do you profess JC as your Lord & Savior" confessed upon joining Plymouth. Some are uncomfortable with the wording used. EC motion passed for both Ministers to discuss and come up with options. Sign up sheet posted for people to make tri-yearly calls for check-in's to members. Calls will range in 5-10 minutes each.

Centering Prayer group is asking for the purchase/creation of two additional cushions. \$50/ each of \$100 total, from our larger budget, voted and passed.

## **AUGUST**

Conversation about purchasing new hymnal, current ones are 30 years old. EC is asking for a representative from Deacons to join the search committee. Cost could range \$10,000; conversation about how to budget and pay for that new expenses. Wayne Peterson-Stephan accepted a call to Zion UCC in the South Bend area and is thus stepping down from Deacons. Abby Powers will assume recorder duties.

## **SEPTEMBER**

A huge surprise at the departure of Jason Vanover (and husband Nate) from active membership and thus from Deacons Board and chair, which happened in August. Vicki Kruse was voted to become board Chair until her term ends in 2025. Two names sent to the EC Board for their approval to replace departed members. Beth Balsaia (term end 2026), Laurice Harris (end 2025).

Hearing enhancement devices are being updated and improved for worship.

Sadly there were several memorial services this year to cover with ushers; Al Bohnstadt, Carol Lehman, Carole Greene, Michael Popp, and Kris Conner. Change to purchasing Chancel flowers from Armstrong Floriat on Dupont and FTW. Jeff Williams, Alan Haynes and Toby Watson have agreed to join the group which changes the large sanctuary banners.

## OCTOBER

Jenna Rupp has announced she will be stepping down from Deacons. Beth will take over EC representative duties. Calling Card Ministry group had their first meeting to organize: Michelle Glim (chair), Erin Archer, Jan Younger, Barb Duke, Trevor Harkenrider, Ann Escosa Griffin, Vicki Kruse, Timothy Murphy, Melissa Richard.

## NOVEMBER

Incoming 2026 members Dan Van Amerongen and Darlene Smith sat in to get acquainted with their new board. Ann Escosa- Griffin has been accepted by EC to join Deacons Board starting in December.

Submitted by;

Vicki Kruse, chair



# Evangelism & Marketing

The main function of E&M is to represent Plymouth Church and our covenants to the community of Fort Wayne. Through advertising, sponsorships, and public events, we work to publicize Plymouth's ministries and hopefully attract visitors and potential new members who are seeking a worship community that is open and affirming, earth-wise, working for justice, and supportive of local ministries.

This year's board members included Ahnee Conner, Michele Dollarhite, Mark Friskney, Trevor Harkenrider, Nathan Rupp, Jordan Peterson-Stephan and Vicky Pogue.

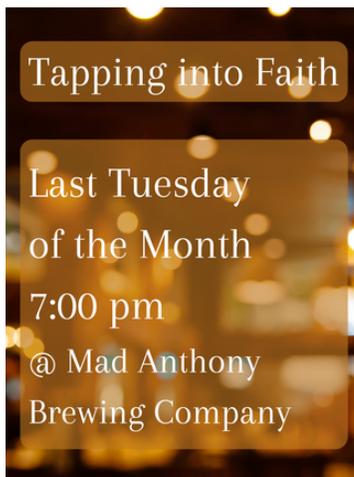
We seek to promote Plymouth as much as possible through participation in community events and sponsorships. Purchased advertising is mainly through public service announcements on WBOI, our local public radio station. We also purchase ad space in the Journal Gazette pull-out section supporting Fort Wayne Pride, and in the Gazette's annual Fort Wayne City Guide which is distributed in magazine form throughout the community. Thanks to Zach Heimach for excellent use of Instagram and Facebook. Costs for social media and for the Plymouth website are part of the E&M budget each year. Special events are posted in the newspaper and Whatz Up community calendars, and occasionally covered by local news media. This year Plymouth Church was nominated for Best Place of Worship in Fort Wayne Newspaper's annual "Best of Fort Wayne" contest. Thanks to online support by members and friends, we received a third place honorable mention, going up against many much larger congregations.



The  
**Journal Gazette**



We continue to financially support Tapping into Faith, a monthly gathering for friendship and discussion at Mad Anthony Brewing under the leadership of the Rev. January Simpson. We also support our resource table at Fort Wayne Pride and at the Electric Works Pride Event. This year we purchased a new table covering for community events that beautifully displays the Plymouth Church logo. Other church events we helped support included Fort Wayne City of Churches, and the recent Make the Yuletide Gay concert.



Financial and/or material support were given to the following groups in 2025: Wellspring, Positive Resource Connections, The Center for Nonviolence, Decatur Pride (including an ad), Road to Recovery, Three Rivers Music Theater, Just Neighbors, and the Fairfield Elementary School teachers.

On June 28 we conducted another successful Pride at Plymouth. We added our own concessions this year, and a bounce house for children. Our resource fair filled the Folsom Room with community agencies and vendors. Local music artists and drag queens provided entertainment. E&M could not have pulled off this day without the support of a very active and creative task force. We did notice a drop in overall attendance this year, probably due to several other similar events on the same day, including Decatur's first ever pride festival. Pride at Plymouth has traditionally been held on the last Saturday of June, but we may alter that in 2026 if we see conflicting activities again. One important note - I have had conversations with Plymouth members who have never checked out Pride at Plymouth because they see it only of interest to the gay community. Pride at Plymouth is a family event for anyone who is an LGBTQ+ ally, and who supports our open and affirming covenant. It is a come and go as you please event and is full of positivity and fun. Please consider attending in 2026 if you haven't before.

Vicky Pogue  
2025 Evangelism and Marketing Chair

# Growing Hope Globally

For the 21st year, Plymouth Church and its congregation have supported its Global Mission Covenant by contributing to Growing Hope Globally. Our 2025 contributions as of December 7 total \$7,220, which include a \$1,000 Plymouth Benevolence grant. This will be combined with contributions from Peace UCC and Pleasant Chapel Church of the Brethren to make a joint donation to Growing Hope Globally. Last year the Growing Hope Globally organization served more than 209,573 people in 49 agricultural development programs in 31 countries.

What does Growing Hope Globally do? They partner with local farmers and rural & urban churches like Plymouth to help international families and communities break the cycle of hunger and poverty to lead healthier, more productive lives. Plymouth church members have in the past helped communities in Honduras as well as Burkina Faso in western Africa.

This year the Task Force reaffirmed its commitment to Growing Hope Globally. We, along with our church partners, hosted a speaker from Burkina Faso. Kinani, an organizer of the Burkina Faso project we support explained how GHG has made a difference. We learned a lot about how GHG helps his people, especially people displaced by violence and terrorism.

Growing Hope Globally supports programs such as building water storage, providing eco-stoves, developing water intolerant seeds and improving farming techniques. This in turn increases money available to the family and the potential for an improved quality of life. Participants are committed to pass this information forward to others in their community.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie & Charlie Carboneau  
Growing Hope Globally Leadership



*GHG partner Pleasant Chapel Church of the Brethren, in Ashley, IN*

*Burkina Faso, in western Africa*

# Human Resources

The Human Resources Board has the largest budget of any of the church boards. Each year it becomes more difficult to manage the budget and still provide competitive compensation and benefit package to our staff including the senior ministers.

The Human Resources Board has had a goal of increasing the senior ministers compensation each year to bring it in line with the compensation of other senior ministers at comparable or average size UCC churches. That has been a challenging goal while also maintaining competitive compensation for the rest of our staff. Our ability to compensate our senior ministers and staff each year comes down to what the Stewardship and Finance Committee can raise during the annual pledge campaign. When making your pledge in the future please remember our staff and senior ministers and how much Plymouth Church means to you. We enjoy great staff and need to work hard to keep them.

We continually face the challenge of providing our excellent church staff and ministers with appropriate income and benefits. Each year the challenge becomes more difficult with continually rising health insurance cost, inflation, and competitive wage market.

## **Health Insurance Program**

2026 marks the second year for a new Health Insurance program that we first implemented in 2025. Previously we purchased health insurance for all qualified staff members through the United Church of Christ Pension fund. The insurance costs became too high, and our type of plan was being phased out. We researched different alternatives and were able to place our staff on a new plan that is related to the Affordable Health Care Plan (ACA). That provided significant savings in 2025 but with the Federal Government budget cut to the ACA subsidies for the 2026 plans, our health insurance cost has increased again. If the Congress votes to enact a subsidy or modified plan, that would be extremely helpful.

## **Staff Changes**

We have two new staff hires in 2025. Zach Heimach is our new part-time communications specialist; you will often see him in the front office greeting you. Brandon Porter has joined the staff as the new Associate Director of Music assisting Bob Nance.

## **Budget Management**

The Human Resources Board operated within its 2025 budget and ended the year with a small surplus.

## **Additional Activities in 2025:**

1. Reviewed staff evaluations prepared by senior department administrators, including the Senior Pastor and Associate Pastor.
2. Reviewed Plymouth's current health insurance and pension plans.
3. Reviewed the current Human Resources Policy.
4. Prepared and submitted the Annual Human Resources Board Budget to the Stewardship and Finance Board.
5. Monitored monthly expenditures of the Human Resources Budget.
6. Collaborated with other boards and committees on human resources-related issues as needed.

## **Board Member Departures**

I would like to recognize Beck Hollingsworth and Anne Rowland who served our Board well but left the Board at the end of 2025. They were both active members of the Board. Becky served as our liaison with the Executive Council.

I will be leaving the Board this year as my term has expired. I have enjoyed working with all the exceptional members of this committee for the past 6 years. The new committee members and leadership will do an excellent job of continuing to manage the Human Resources Board needs of Plymouth Church.

## **Looking Ahead to 2026**

Our priorities for the coming year include:

- Continuing to monitor health insurance and benefit costs and explore options for sustainability.
- Supporting leadership development and staff well-being initiatives.

## **Closing**

The Human Resources Board thanks the congregation for its ongoing support. Together, we strive to create a workplace that reflects Plymouth's commitment to justice, inclusivity, and care for all.

Respectfully Submitted

John Hoffman, Human Resources Board Chair

# Nominating Committee

The Plymouth Church Nominating Committee works to identify and invite church members willing to serve on Boards and as Officers of the church. Our church is organized with the members driving the work and decisions of the church, relying heavily on the members who volunteer to do so.

The committee’s work begins by checking in with the people currently serving whose terms are due to expire to see if they can serve again (there are term limits) and to ask if they would be willing to serve again. Our next step is to determine how many vacancies we need to fill and then we begin to identify potential candidates for these openings. The committee shares the responsibility of contacting potential candidates. We share the responsibilities of the vacancy with the candidate - and ask them if they would be willing to serve.

Our meetings began in early April 2025. This year proved to be a year where our efforts stretched into the fall to fill openings. We could not have asked for a better group of people working together on the committee to make all our contacts and to identify church members to contact and nominate. We finished our work by early October, with one open seat unfilled.

We presented a slate of nominees in October to the Executive Council and the congregation at the Annual Election Meeting. The congregation affirmed our work by approving the slate of candidates.

Thank you to ALL church members who agreed to renew or accept a position to serve beginning in January 2026.

2026 Plymouth Church Leadership Slate				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Cammy	Sutter	Moderator	2026	3
Ian	McCormick	Assistant Moderator	2026	1
Jan	Evrard	Treasurer	2026	3
Laura	Ramsey	Assistant Treasurer	2026	1
Beth	Pascal	Clerk	2026	1
Lindsay	Solon	Recorder	2026	1
Lowell	Beineke	At-Large Member*	2026	3
Linda	Kerr	At-Large Member*	2027	1
Conference Delegates				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Ahnee	Conner	Conference Delegate	2027	2
Allen	Haynes	Conference Delegate	2027	1
Lucy	Hess	Conference Delegate	2026	2
Christian Education				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Amy	Coursen		2027	1
Wayne	Gerard		2027	1
Misha	Gray-Chemey		2027	1
Karra	McCormick		2026	1
Garrett	Pogue		2027	2
David	Siples		2027	2
Genny	Van Amerongen		2026	1
Congregational Life				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
A.J.	Calkins		2026	2
Laurie	Eggers		2027	1
Joy	Grow		2027	1
Starla	Steckbeck		2026	1
Laurel	Van Amerongen		2027	2
Jeff	Williams		2027	1
Vocont			2026	1
Deacons				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Beth	Balasia		2026	
Tony	Kell		2026	2
Kimberly	Koczan		2027	1
Abby	Powers		2026	1
Jenna	Rupp		2027	1
Darlene	Smith		2027	1
Dan	Van Amerongen		2027	1

We would encourage any church members interested in serving in the future to speak with one of the pastoral staff members – the Moderator or Assistant Moderator – or the Nominating Committee chair – to express your interest. The Nominating Committee will begin their work again in Spring 2026 to fill vacancies for 2027. Hearing from church members about their interest in serving is always good news for this committee! Please let us know.

I would like to extend my personal Thanks to the 2025 committee members: Laura Coon, Roger Eversole, Jan Gibson, Karen Goss, Pat Pendleton – and Joe Bir for returning for one year to fill a vacancy due to a committee member moving out of state. You were all a pleasure to serve with! Thanks also to Staff Consultants Rev. Timothy Murphy and Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals – and their superb spreadsheet mastery!

Plymouth is a church with many talented and committed members; members who commit their time to many worthwhile efforts outside the church, as well as within the church. We are a busy bunch! If you are not already doing so, I ask you to please consider adding your talents to the important work of the boards and committees at Plymouth Church in 2027. Thank you!

Peace,

Beth Walker

Evangelism and Marketing				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Ahnee	Conner		2026	1
Mark	Friskney		2027	2
Trevor	Harkenrider		2027	3
Patty	Meriwether		2027	1
Jordan	Peterson-Stephan		2026	1
Vicky	Pogue		2027	2
Nathan	Rupp		2027	2
Human Resources				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Margie	Dougherty		2027	1
Linda	Hite		2026	1
Dee	Hoffman		2026	1
Nancy	Messinger		2027	1
Peg	Schilb		2027	2
Kristin	Steckbeck		2026	2
Vacant			2026	
Property Board				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Bill	Balasia		2026	1
Joe	Bir		2026	1
Laura	Coon		2027	1
Bill	Lambert		2027	1
Sam	Lipscomb		2027	2
Monty	Millage		2026	1
Karen	Nesius Roeger		2026	1
Stewardship and Finance				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Susan	Bolinger		2026	1
Charlie	Carboneau		2027	1
Dave	Christiansen		2027	1
Dick	Conklin		2027	3
John	Escosa		2026	2
Jan	Evrard	Treasurer	2026	3
Laura	Ramsey	Assistant Treasurer	2026	1
Nominating Committee				
First Name	Last Name	Position	Term Year	Term #
Lowell	Beineke	At-Large Member*	2026	3
Katie	Carboneau		2027	
Terry	Dougherty		2027	
Roger	Eversole		2026	
Sally	Gerard		2027	
Jan	Gibson		2026	
Karen	Goss		2026	

# Peace & Justice

Here is a summary of PJs work in 2025:

- Church World Service donation event:
  - PJs obtained \$2,300 in funding to prepare 36 Clean Up Kits to send to California for fire damage recovery.
  - kits (buckets with supplies) were assembled by congregation members on May 17, saving some materials for the youth group to assemble buckets that Sunday. Once all were completed, they were delivered by two PJs members to Elkhart for processing and shipping to the distribution location.
- Action Teams:
  - reviewed the work of, and financially assisted (when requested), the action teams
  - requested 2026 cost estimates from action teams to factor into PJs budget request
- Peace Scholarship:
  - reviewed applications for the Peace Scholarship
  - awarded a scholarship
- Funding and support:
  - continued support of Study Connection, fulfilling funding requests as needed
  - contributed financial support to other peace and justice related initiatives
- Food distribution:
  - continued coordination of Plymouth food contributions to manage how random donations of food (other than those connected with a particular food drive) are distributed.
- PJs publicity and communication of events:
  - met with Zach Heimach to discuss ways to let the congregation know about peace and justice events and action team activities
  - follow-up will continue into 2026.



As one of our covenants, peace and justice touches on many aspects of our church. Each action team, donation, event, scholarship, and program linked to PJs reinforces that underpinning of who we are and our values as a congregation.

Submitted by Linda Hite

# Property Board

## Highlights:

This has been an active year for the property board with a focus on congregational safety, maintenance of our facilities, and investment in clean energy to power the church.

Our Safety Committee, led by Monty Millage, has put together a team of attendants to oversee the narthex during the Sunday morning service. Continued thanks to all the volunteers who help keep our congregation safe.

- Conducted a fire drill in May
- Additional security cameras were approved and waiting to be ordered and installed
- CPR Training for staff and safety committee members
- Provided security during Plymouth Pride Fest
- Parish Nurses provided health education:
  - Conducted 122 blood pressures, pulses and oxygen saturations
- Narcan training was conducted and it's now available

The Church HVAC and Boilers have been inspected and are in good working order.

The Pride Center requested some needed repairs and they were completed before our September meeting.

A new water fountain was installed to replace the broken one.

The biggest project our committee evaluated and approved this year was the purchase of the new solar panels. A certified engineer inspected the roof and gave the ok.

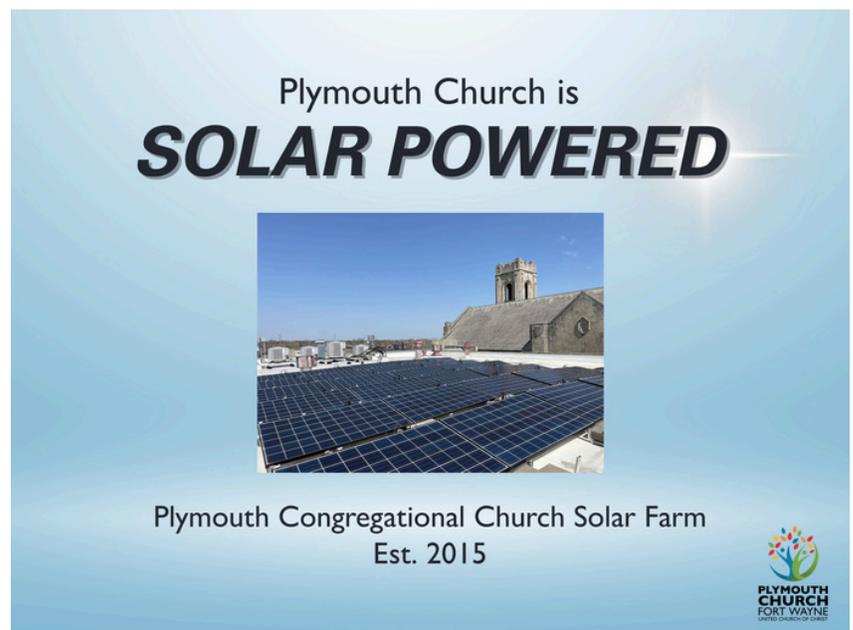
60 New panels will be installed in addition to the existing 30 panels for a total of 90 panels.

- Total cost of \$90,000
- \$26,000 tax rebate next year
- \$450 average monthly savings
- Panels are already on site.
- Homeland security permit will be secured on 12/16/25
- New panels will be installed shortly after

The budget for the Solar Panels comes out of the major maintenance fund. Thanks to this fund, the church can accomplish important tasks without the need to request additional help from the congregation.

Respectfully,

Samuel Melo  
Chair



# Stewardship & Finance

During 2025 the work of the Stewardship and Finance board (S&Fbd) concentrated on 5 distinct projects. The congregations' current and future financial strength was the common thread running through the bulk of the board's work.

Completing the 5 year audit of the church financials was primarily supported by Stephen Cook, Church Financial Administrator. The audit identified specific recommendations that were reviewed by the S&Fbd and, hence, were assigned to the appropriate church board, committee or individual for implementation. During 2026 the S&Fbd will monitor that work.

During the preparation of the 2025 budget, members of the S&Fbd worked with each church board and committee. After receiving feedback from the boards and committees, that support process was revamped. The preparation of the 2026 budgets was completed using better information and instructions. The annual Budget Outcome Task Force was convened to determine how to handle anticipated remaining funds in excess of budgeted amounts at the end of 2025. While a surplus is anticipated, it was decided to retain that money in the S&Fbd Undistributed Funds Special Fund to support any future annual budget shortfall.

When studying the previous and current budgets, the S&Fbd became increasingly aware and concerned about the level of funding needed from the endowment to support the annual budget. Hence, the S&Fbd began working proactively with representatives of PNC bank, managers of the church endowment. After many months of work spearheaded by Doug Powers and Ian McCormick, the S&Fbd initiated a number of strategic actions.

1. The S&Fbd requested a special congregational meeting in June to approve changes to the church's investment policies. Those changes will now give PNC Bank specific directions for current and future management of endowment investments.
2. Sizable cash balances which had been held in "Special Funds" and "Property Maintenance Funds" have now become part of the endowment portfolio.
3. An equivalent of four months of the annual church operating budget will now be carried as cash investments.

4. S&Fbd members will now receive quarterly PNC investment reports, with April and October sit down meetings with PNC representatives.

Each year, at the conclusion of the fall Stewardship Campaign, members of the church who have pledged or gifted in the past but who have not responded to the campaign, are then contacted directly. Jan Gibson and Steve Hollingsworth have initiated some important changes to that process that have had very positive results. Also, thanks to Garrett Pogue for serving as member-at-large on this year's campaign task force.

As the S&Fbd representative to the church Executive Council, Ian McCormick carried the board's request to the council to initiate a strategic planning process. It came as a result of recognizing changing membership demographics, new programs and missions/projects, and ever increasing budgets. At the same time, the board began discussing "What's next?" to identify current and future financial trends, needs and issues to be addressed by S&Fbd.

There are always normal agenda items for the board. The annual grant request for the English Bonter Mitchell trust was prepared by Cammy Sutter and Rev. Murphy. Again this year we were grateful to receive a \$75,000 gift. The board approved funding Wayne Peterson-Stephens denominational fee for member-in-discernment. A request to be a Day Shelter site was approved, contingent on support from the City of Fort Wayne which did not occur. With immense gratitude, the Patricia Mae Adsit gift of \$300,000 was received for special church music programs.

The S&Fbd in 2025 has more than ever been acutely aware of its responsibility to provide oversight of the church's assets and resources while striving to support the work of the church. Our church has been so blessed with members of the congregation who have been extremely generous of their time, talents, and resources.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Conklin, Board chair

Board members: Susan Bolinger, Richard Conklin, John Escosa, Ian McCormick, Jean Vrabel (resigned in August), Steve Hollingsworth (completed vacancy balance of term), Jan Evrard, Treasurer, Doug Powers, Assistant Treasurer.

Staff supports: Rev. Dr. Timothy Murphy and Stephen Cook, Financial Administrator

# Benevolence

The Benevolence Committee, a subcommittee of the Stewardship and Finance Board, awards funds to selected non-profit applicants and denominational programs every year. These funds are part of the annual budget and are calculated based on 15% of pledge commitments plus 10% of the annual endowment dispersal.

**2025 Benevolence by the Numbers** – \$105,118 was given, by the people of Plymouth, to these organizations highlighted in gray:

2025 Benevolence Grants	Amount
Allen Co. D&A Consortium/Brave Alliance	\$ 1,000
Amani Family Services	\$ 2,000
Blue Jacket	\$ 1,000
Center for Nonviolence	\$ 2,000
Children's Autism Center, Inc.	\$ 1,000
Chill, Inc.	\$ 1,000
Creative Women of the World	\$ 2,000
Crossroad	\$ 1,000
Fort Wayne Dance Collective	\$ 1,000
Foster Grandparents Program	\$ 1,000
Give Hear	\$ 1,500
Growing Hope Globally	\$ 1,000
Homebound Meals	\$ 2,000

Indiana Center for Middle East Peace	\$1,018
Just Neighbors (IHN)	\$2,000
Long Term Care Ombudsman	\$2,000
Matthew 25	\$1,000
Mustard Seed	\$1,500
Pilgrims of Ibillin	\$2,000
Positive Resource Connection	\$2,000
Shepherd's House	\$1,000
St. Joseph Missions	\$2,000
Thirteenth Step House	\$1,000
Turnstone	\$1,600
USF Jesters	\$1,500
Vincent Village	\$1,000
<b>Benevolence Grants Total</b>	<b>\$37,118</b>

<b>2025 Denominational Support</b>	<b>Amount</b>
OCWM-IN/KY Conference (UCC)	\$40,000
Open and Affirming (UCC)	\$5,000
CUE Seminaries (UCC)	\$3,000
<b>Denominational Support Total</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>

<b>2025 Benevolence Capacity Grant</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Wellspring Interfaith Social Services	\$20,000
<b>Capacity Grant Total</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

<b>2025 'Emma Feigley Fund' Grants</b> Grants are awarded by the Benevolence Committee	<b>Amount</b>
PRRAT	\$2,500
Fort Wayne Urban League	\$500
Peace and Justice Committee	\$1,800
Alive Community Outreach / Peacemakers Academy	\$2,500
Weisner Park 5th Grade	\$2,812
Heartland Sings, Inc.	\$2,000
<b>Emma Feigley Fund Grants Total</b>	<b>\$12,112</b>

<b>2025 Congregational Special Offering Disbursements*</b> *Totals are reported in the year they are disbursed, which may not be the same year they are collected	<b>Amount</b>
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$2,520
Strengthen the Church	\$2,232
Global Mission Partner	\$636
Christmas in July	\$988
Neighbors in Need	\$2,057
Thanksgiving Offering	\$1,228
Christmas Offering	\$3,030
<b>Special Offering Disbursement Total</b>	<b>\$12,691</b>

<b>2025 Donated Use of Plymouth Space</b>	<b>Value</b>
Monetary Value of Community Usage of Plymouth Space	<b>\$ 22,840</b>

## Plymouth Grants Explained in 5 Points

1. Plymouth gives grants every year to non-profits that align with our four covenants. In 2025, Plymouth gave \$105,118 — through the Benevolence Committee — in three categories:
  - A. a capacity-building grant of \$20,000 to a non-profit to permanently impact and improve the agency's ability to carry on its mission (see Wellspring below);
  - B. denominational support to Our Church's Wider Mission Indiana/KY conference, the Open and Affirming Coalition, and CUE seminaries;
  - C. 26 benevolence grants of up to \$2,000 to local non-profits that align with our four covenants.
2. Benevolence grant totals do NOT include the special offerings collected for UCC initiatives;
3. Benevolence grant totals do NOT include the grants given through the Emma Feigley Fund, which is separate and focused on social justice issues;
4. The source of benevolence grant money is our "first fruits" — the 1st 15% of total pledges for a year;
5. In the last 10 years, Plymouth has given out nearly **\$1 million dollars** — just in Benevolence Grants — to local, denominational, and international organizations. That's seriously amazing, isn't it?



Refrigerators and freezer Wellspring Interfaith Social Services was able to purchase through Plymouth's 2025 Benevolence Capacity Grant



## 2025 Capacity Grant Spotlight: Wellspring Interfaith Social Services

The 2025 Benevolence Capacity grant for \$20,000 was given to Wellspring Interfaith Social Services to purchase three large commercial grade refrigerators and a freezer. I toured Wellspring recently, and was blown away by how much these fridges and freezer will greatly expand their ability to accept and store fresh and frozen food. You've changed their trajectory for years!

I learned that food banks have really changed over the past several years. Many food banks now get most of their food from individual donations — or — intermittent large donations from retail businesses like Panera or Costco.

Wellspring will now be able to accept and manage these large donations far more effectively:

- cooling fresh items they know they'll be able to give away more quickly;
- and freezing those items they can give longer life to, like bread from Panera or meat, for more effective distribution.

Food donations are very uneven — and that was before the government shut off the SNAP funding distributions.

***Actually, the timing of our capacity grant could not have been more critical.***

Prior to our grant, Wellspring was not even able to be considered for some very large intermittent donations from larger food banks — they just didn't have capacity to manage a huge intake. They do now, thanks to YOU!

— Susan Bolinger, Benevolence Committee member and Wellspring grant reviewer

2025 Benevolence Committee Members:

Allen Haynes, co-chair, Wayne Peterson-Stephen, co-chair, Mark Friskney, Beth Walker, Cher Jackson, Susan Bolinger, Daveana Schieler, and Brian Flory

Staff Consultants:

Rev. Timothy C. Murphy; Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals

# Financial Summary

Year: January 1 - December 31, 2025	2025 Actual	2025 Budget	2024 Actual
<b>Resources:</b>			
Contributions (pledge income & additional gifts)	\$514,562	\$519,314	\$498,778
Other income (parking, rent, grants, trusts)	\$165,196	\$158,500	\$179,575
Endowment fund transfers	\$264,048	\$264,045	\$269,212
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>\$943,806</b>	<b>\$941,859</b>	<b>\$947,565</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>			
Staff salaries and expenses / HR	\$573,030	\$595,480	\$562,857
Office and other expenses / S&F	\$44,115	\$40,950	\$41,199
Building and grounds / Property	\$148,421	\$138,780	\$125,072
Boards	\$42,665	\$52,480	\$37,870
Budget Outcome Task Force			
Benevolences	\$104,118	\$105,118	\$99,959
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$912,349</b>	<b>\$932,808</b>	<b>\$866,957</b>
Rounding Entry	(\$1)		(\$1)
<b>Net Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$31,458</b>	<b>\$9,051</b>	<b>\$80,607</b>

# Financial Summary

Year: January 1 - December 31, 2025	2025 Actual	2025 Budget	2024 Actual
<b>Working assets (funds @ market value):</b>			
Cash in checking	\$1,234,568		\$1,195,858
Endowment funds:	\$46,022.00		\$45,657.00
Undesignated / Unrestricted Funds	\$7,776,911		\$7,778,887
Designated / Special Funds	\$2,249,774	2025 INVESTMENT POLICY CHANGES*	\$1,211,340
<b>Total Assets</b>	\$10,026,685		\$8,990,227

# Church Staff

Senior Pastor and Teacher  
Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy  
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Youth Director  
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Custodian  
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**PLYMOUTH CHURCH**  
FORT WAYNE + UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST