



# BELL

## From the Senior Pastor

The church year can move by in a flash depending on what is going on. We finished celebrating Christmas, are in Epiphany, but before you know it, Lent will begin. One program change every Lent is switching from the Wednesday Bible Study to a book series through Easter. After giving this some thought, I've decided that our Lenten book will be *Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology*, written by Dorothee Soelle. She may be new to you, but Soelle (1929-2003) was a German liberation theologian, mystic, and activist.



*Pictured: Dorothee Soelle*

Now the word “theology” might sound intimidating. But all it really means is talking about God, or more broadly, talking about our faith. Theology helps give language and tools to feel more comfortable expressing what we believe. Her book is a good start, or review, on how to do this, and more importantly, why it matters.

Here is a quick book summary from Amazon: “Developing out of a series of public lectures given to a large audience of non-theologians, this is one of the most attractive introductions to theology which has appeared so far. Perhaps, as Dorothee Soelle points out, in fact, “introduction” is not the right word, for this is above all an invitation to share her enthusiasm for theology, her delight in the beauty and the power of religious and theological language and the themes it expresses.”

This is a great book that reviews the major themes of Christian thought and practice. We will be reading selected chapters, focused around the topics of how to think theologically, understanding sin, who is Jesus, the kingdom of God and the church, and a theology of peace.

If you have not come to the Bible Study before, or you are looking for a change of pace, this might be up your alley! Soelle is one of my favorite Christian thinkers; she is deeply committed to justice, peace, and the gospel, and offers helpful ways to integrate these together in our lives.

Copies, both new and used, are available off Amazon. If you struggle with online purchases, let me know and I can arrange for a few copies to be available when we begin. This series will start Wednesday, March 4 and conclude Wednesday, April 8.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy  
Senior Pastor & Teacher

During the month of **February**, Plymouth prays for **CUE Seminaries** and the **United Nations High Commission on Refugees**.

## 2020 Chancel Flowers

There are plenty of dates still available if you would like to dedicate chancel flowers this year. Please reserve your special date on the floral calendar in the Folsom Room; the cost is \$40. Please make your check payable to Plymouth Church. For more information, contact Maressa at [mfe@plymouthfw.org](mailto:mfe@plymouthfw.org).



## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

Plymouth will be hosting its annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner on February 25 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. This dinner will feature pancakes, sausage, Mardi Gras beads and New Orleans music!



## Komets Game

Congregational Life presents an evening with the Komets on March 13 at 8:05 pm. The Komets will be playing the Toledo Mud Hens at Memorial Coliseum. Tickets are \$21 for adults \$16 for those under 12. Tickets will be on sale in the Folsom Room after service beginning Sunday, January 26.



## Bell Subscriptions

With the start of a new year, a new decade, and the new Plymouth database, the office has decided to update the Bell mailing list! Previously, we had duplicate addresses and difficulty combining members into a single household for mailings in our database. The updated database makes it much easier to handle these sort of issues and we now have the opportunity to also update our mailing lists.

Please email Mackenzie at [mmg@plymouthfw.org](mailto:mmg@plymouthfw.org) for the following reasons:

- You wish to receive the Bell via email only
- You have seasonal addresses (please include them)
- You and your partner each receive a copy of the Bell, but wish to share (or vice versa)
- You do not wish to receive the Bell at all

Those who wish to continue to receive the printed Bell do not need to take any additional steps.

## 45<sup>th</sup> Boar's Head Now Part of Church's History

The 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival was presented to more than 1700 people in our Sanctuary on 5 different services on December 28, 29, and 30.

Close to 200 patrons contributed over \$19,000 to support the Festival and a free-will offering brought in an additional \$6,000, allowing Plymouth to once again present the Festival and offer tickets for free.

Thanks to all who participated in the leadership roles, the cast, choirs, crews, orchestra and the Plymouth staff for their gifts and talents making the Festival a moving experience for those who attended. Three individuals have been a part of the Festival since its first service in 1975: James Clauser, Louise Misegades, and Michael Popp.

Mark your calendars for the 46<sup>th</sup> Festival 2020!

## Prayer and Meditation Time

All people in the Plymouth family are invited, gently nudged even, to come together in prayer and meditation twice monthly. On the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 12 noon, join us in the Chapel for a short time of prayer and quiet reflection. If you cannot be physically present you are encouraged to set these times apart each month to be in prayer with us from wherever you are for just a little while.

We pray in community for the good of our church family and staff. We pray for common vision as we engage in kin-dom work and service. We pray for our community and for our world. And we pray for ourselves as we see clearer what a friend we have in Jesus. We know as the Psalmist knew that, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in time of trouble."

## Effective Letter Writing

You can influence officials and others in your community through effective letter writing, emails, and calls. The following are tips to writing a constituent letter that is convincing and to the point.

- Address the letter and state the reason for writing
- Add a personal reason why this matters to you
- Ask your representative to support your view
- Include your complete contact information
- Mail your letter - possibly with a hand-written envelope

One of the easiest ways to find those legislators representing you is to go to [www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/](http://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/) and submit your address. Everyone from the president to your city council will display, and you will have the contact information as well as connection to their homepage where you can submit emails. Also, letters to the editor are valuable in making your opinion known and influencing the community.

Here are other valuable resources:

- [www.lwvfw.org](http://www.lwvfw.org) (League of Women Voters)
- [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)
- Congressional Switchboard: 202-224-3121
- [www.journalgazette.net](http://www.journalgazette.net)

Jan Evrard  
Peace & Justice Committee

## Poor People's Campaign Moral March on Washington

On June 20, 2020, the Poor People's Campaign will come together in Washington DC in a national call for moral revival. There are 140 million poor and low income folks in the United States, which is not only unacceptable in a country as rich as we are but morally wrong.

The Peace & Justice Committee is looking into getting a group of folks from Plymouth together who would like to be a part of this powerful assembly. To learn more about the Poor People's Campaign and this march, go to the following: [www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/june2020/](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/june2020/).

At this point, we are simply wanting to inform you about the work of the Poor People's Campaign as well as any interest you may have in taking part. Please contact me if you would like to get involved or simply want more information.

Jan Evrard  
[jevrard52@gmail.com](mailto:jevrard52@gmail.com)  
260-602-1268

## PEOPLE IN OUR PRAYERS:

Archer Family, Diana Bauer, Elizabeth Bayle, Janis Bohnstedt, Trevor Burns, Casey Cade, Kris Conner, David Cornwell, Brad Crowder, Casey Curry, Barb Duch, Betsy Graham, Quinn Hacker, Ray Hoverman, Dwight James, Susan Jarvis, Nancy Jordan, Ginny Laudadio, Brian Laurenz, Joan Lipscomb, Sheldon Lockwood, Bonnie Pennock, Noel Resor, Anne Rowland, Sharon Sale, Jacqueline Sanders, John Shannon, Charmaine Siekmann, Johanna Smith, Terri Stumpf, Camille Wallace, Ervin Walter, Gordon Walter, and Virginia Zimmerman.

**New Life** is welcomed in the birth of a daughter, Penelope Grace Frecker, November 14, in Italy, to proud parents Taylor (Puitz) and Dale Frecker. Delighted grandmother is Tina Puitz.

**New Life** is welcomed in the birth of a son, Alden William Blake, January 16, to proud parents Kate and Jake Blake. Eager siblings are Stedman and Anna and delighted grandparents are Jeanette and Jim Schmidt.

**Sympathy** is extended to Dee Hoffman and Brian Beifus, Allyn and Veronica Beifus, on the death of mother and grandmother, Carol Hoffman, October 31.

**Sympathy** is extended to Rev. John P. Gardner and George Gardner on the death of sister and aunt, Mary Wegman, November 24, Canal Winchester, OH.

**Sympathy** is extended to Lucy Hess, Nick and Tiffany Hess, on the unexpected death of sister-in-law, friend, and aunt, Barbara Keener, December 3, Detroit, MI.

**Sympathy** is extended to Curt Smith and family on the death of wife, mother, grandmother, Dee Smith, December 13.

## Sesquicentennial Moment: Global Mission

Since Plymouth's founding in 1870, we have been to some degree a global mission church. In 2012 we "officially" became a "Global Ministries" church. In that year, Pastor John Gardner asked the Benevolence Committee to seek accreditation through the Global Ministries organization as a global mission church. Members of the committee including Mary Bir, Sandy Moliere, Peg Schilb and possibly others sought this designation. They contacted Global Ministries to ask what we needed to do to become a global missions church and included a list of Plymouth's activities for their review. In a short time the organization came back with a welcome to the organization letter stating that we were most welcome and were doing much more than was needed to meet the criteria for acceptance!

Global Ministries is a joint witness in mission between the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ. Their vision is that all God's people and creation should share in God's abundant life. Their mission is to receive and share the Good News of Jesus Christ by joining with global and local partners to work for justice and reconciliation for all people. To accomplish this vision, Global Ministries rests upon the core values of the following: Community that is building interdependence and unity among all God's children by providing mutual support and collective dreams for the future. Mutuality, meaning sharing the vision and not directing it. Justice to all. Peace, by embodying reconciling relationships with God, humanity, and creation. Presence which manifests God's love by living in intentional, committed relationships which provides a bold vision of togetherness.

So, that is the mission. How have we fulfilled it as a church community over these many years? Since we say we are "Intensely" local and "Intentionally" global, we will look at both aspects of this covenant. We will begin with the global. As stated at the beginning, we have always been a mission people, but the earliest documentary evidence we have found to date of giving in this way, begins in the 1920's. We will look at nine examples of our mission outreach.

- Contributed to the "Pilgrim Memorial Fund" through the National Churches of Congregational Ministers to assist retired, indigent ministers consistently in the 1920s.
- Sent funds to help build two churches in India and one in Africa continuing throughout the 1920s.
- Sent funds to Europe and China to deal with famine in both areas at the end of WWI from 1920-1925.
- Sent funds for the support of the all black Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama throughout the 1920s.
- Gave funds for the building of the "Evangelical Hospital" in Napoli, Italy Churches in the 1950s.
- Designated funds for the support of the "International Christian University" in Japan throughout the 1950s and 1960s. As thanks to Plymouth, member Harry Takimori bought and planted two Japanese cherry trees in the gardens at the front of the church in 1962.
- At least three International Fairs were organized to raise funds for foreign missions in the 1970s. Joe and Ginny Laudadio, Bill Shedd, and Char Rehrer were particularly instrumental in organizing and running these events.
- Gave both money and labor for Habitat for Humanity projects across the U.S. between 1992-1999. Kara Jaurigue headed the youth contingent and Sam Lipscomb was the general contractor.
- Doug and Gale Cunningham led Plymouth to become involved in Foods Resource Bank, now Growing Hope
- Globally, to help people in need find ways to grow and maintain their own food in 2005. To date, Plymouth has contributed \$174,969 to this effort.

In terms of local mission, our record of giving is exemplary. In reviewing the 2018 Annual Report, pp. 39 and 40 and selecting Local Projects only, our giving totaled \$65,869.18. Additional giving to Miscellaneous Gifts from Standish Circle alone totaled \$1450. As with the other Covenants we base our faith on at Plymouth, we are very much living our faith.

Finally, I would like to conclude with a quote from John Calvin, one of our Congregational forefathers. "Our prayers must not be self-centered. They must arise not only because we feel our own need as a burden we must lay on God, but also because we are so bound up in love for our fellow man that we feel their need as acutely as our own." This statement applies not only to prayer but to our expenditure of funds and our labor to improve the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves, whether here in Fort Wayne, or other places across our nation, or in the wider world as a whole.



# February Birthdays



1 Terry Anderson  
 1 David Cornwell  
 2 Allen Haynes  
 3 Bill Deans III  
 3 Jakob Feasel  
 3 Theo Garcia  
 3 Merideth Minchski  
 5 Jim Eitsert  
 5 Candace Murphy  
 7 Bill Balasia  
 7 Ginny Laudadio  
 8 Jim Graham  
 8 Dee Harding  
 10 Sara Sprunger

11 Nicholas Brattain  
 11 Benjamin Hoffman  
 11 Jeff Moore  
 12 Ruth Phillips  
 13 Robin Grissom  
 13 Karen O'Neal  
 13 Andrea Reichard  
 15 Gale Cunningham  
 15 Bill Lambert  
 16 Allyn Beifus  
 16 Christopher Butler  
 18 Kris Jensen  
 18 Halley Woehner  
 19 Andrew Spath

20 Donna Childs  
 20 Chuck Knox  
 21 Margie Dougherty  
 21 Nick Eitsert  
 22 Brian Augspurger  
 22 Miriam Brown  
 22 Ren Moore  
 23 Elle Hollingsworth  
 23 Verne Mitchell  
 24 John Escosa  
 25 Linda Balthaser  
 25 Vicki Braun  
 25 Ashlee McCrory  
 28 Betty Deans

## Spring Fun Things for Fairfield Elementary School

The following items have been requested from our Rising Star partner Fairfield Elementary School. We will collect these items until the middle of February.

Paper towels, cleaning wipes, dry erase markers, ribbons, buttons, beads, fabric, sequins, stickers, and Play-Doh.

Please put your contributions in the bin marked Fairfield in the Folsom Room.

## Chapel Class 2020

Christian Education board is planning wide-ranging subjects for study in our 9:00 am Sunday Chapel Classes. Upcoming class facilitators and leaders include Rev. Timothy Murphy, Licensed Minister David Grim, and Rev. Dr. Michael Spath. If you are interested in leading a class or series, please speak with any Christian Education board member or one of our Pastors.

## Sunday School

In Sunday school, we are continuing our exploration of what we do in worship. During January and the beginning of February we are focusing on Scripture. While we often learn Bible stories in Sunday school, we are taking this time to look at the structure of the Bible, where it came from, what's in it, and why reading it is central to our worship and our lives as Christians.

We don't do a lot of rote learning in Sunday school, but we are working on memorizing the books of the Bible. Committing the order to memory lets our kids feel comfortable around the Bible, and gives them ownership of our scripture. It also makes it easier to look up a passage, or to understand when folks start talking about sections of the Bible, such as the gospels or the prophets.

At the end of February, we'll spend a few weeks learning about Islam. We'll have the Hands on Islam stations out in the Education Lounge for all ages to explore. Stop by and learn a little something about our neighbors in faith!



**Plymouth Congregational  
Church of Fort Wayne**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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**Looking for our email addresses?**

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Using your smart phone's barcode scanner, this QR Code/Scanner tag will take you to the Plymouth page at [eservicepayments.com](http://eservicepayments.com). Use this secure and confidential link to support Plymouth Church's ministry and mission! Your gift helps advance the local and global outreach of Plymouth benevolence. Please be generous!

**Vision Statement**  
*Adopted October 2011*

Praying for guidance for the journey  
... Honoring the mystery of God  
... Responding with spirits renewed  
... Moving courageously toward wholeness.



**Mission Statement**  
*Adopted October 2011*

Plymouth Church is an inclusive Christian Community welcoming you as you are, supporting you in your own Journey with God, and challenging you to live out the teachings of Jesus, individually, collectively, globally.

**No Matter Who You Are, or Where You Are on Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here.**