



The Bell

PLYMOUTH CHURCH
FORT WAYNE + UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
PLYMOUTHFW.ORG

From the Senior Pastor

Transition and Grieving Associate Pastor Retirement

Whenever a pastor leaves a church, it is a big moment. Even when leaving on good terms (retiring after 20 years of fruitful service here certainly counts!), it is painful. So it is important that we find ways to acknowledge and grieve this impending shift.

The United Church of Christ sets certain boundaries for all outgoing clergy. Sometimes these can feel unfair, in part because they signify the end of a relationship. There are certainly things we will miss about Rev. Ruth Phillips.



Here are some examples: Once Rev. Ruth retires, she will not be available to officiate at a wedding. She will not lead a funeral or memorial service. She will not baptize a child or grandchild here. We won't see her in worship. We won't get phone calls from her to check in on us pastorally. All aspects of her pastoral ministry with us will end.

It's because Rev. Ruth is so awesome that these realities will hurt as they sink in. I will miss being able to check in with her and hear her perspective as we make worship, programming, and pastoral decisions. I will miss her decades of experience, which I relied on, to better understand how processes and systems work here at Plymouth. I won't be able to call and ask her perspective on these matters anymore.

We have begun online meetings to have a chance to process this transition with other members. If you're able, you are encouraged to join one of the online video meetings to share what we valued and will miss about her time with us. If that's not for you, I encourage you to at least talk with another member or friend about this. Her last Sunday is June 6, and we plan on having an outdoor celebration at the church that afternoon. If you are able to attend, please come for this goodbye celebration.

Below is a list adapted from an article on "saying goodbye to your current pastor in a healthy way." These points serve as helpful guidance for us as a church.

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Worship and Plymouth

Livestream services begin at 10:00 am every Sunday on our [YouTube Channel](#). A link to our YouTube Channel will be posted on our Facebook page and included in the Weekly Bulletin every Sunday morning.

Plymouth also has a private Facebook group available to members called [Plymouth Generations](#). Join this Facebook group to communicate easily with other Plymouth people! You must already have a Facebook account to join this group.

Plymouth Church sends out the Weekly Bulletin to keep you up-to-date on things like online gatherings, ways to help others while social distancing, and other news. The Weekly Bulletin is sent out on Sundays at 8:30 am. If you are not receiving these messages, please check your spam folder. If you still are not receiving them, please contact Tayah at tnl@plymouthfw.org.

Associate Pastor Transition and Grieving

With Rev. Ruth retiring, we need space to grieve all that we will miss once she retires. Rev. Timothy Murphy will be offering an opportunity to gather with other members online and discuss what she has meant for us and Plymouth Church.

So on March 21, you can participate! This will be via Zoom; please use the link [here](#) to join in this transition process.

Senior Pastor Continued

1. Show love, regard, and even grief, for your departing pastor. This is one of the best things you can do for the new pastor.

2. Acknowledge the change in public ways. Especially in the case of a much-beloved pastor, this allows the congregation better to let go and prepare to receive the new pastor wholeheartedly.

3. Provide the congregation the opportunity to say thank you and good-bye to the outgoing pastor, even if things have not always gone well.

4. Find appropriate occasions—in worship and at other times—to thank the outgoing pastor.

5. Express appreciation in ways that are consistent with what you have done in the past.

6. Plan goodbye celebrations in keeping with the outgoing pastors wishes and preferences.

7. Provide information to the local media about the outgoing pastor’s accomplishments and future plans.

8. Do not invite the former pastor to return for weddings, funerals, or baptisms. This allows you and your former pastor to disengage fully from your relationship as parishioner and pastor.

If we follow these guidelines, this will help us collectively process this transition and prepare us to welcome our next incoming Associate Pastor, whomever God calls to us.

Peace,
Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Murphy, Senior Pastor

Theories of Salvation Education Series

Do we become Christians to avoid hell or to enter heaven? If not, what exactly are we saved from, and what are we saved for? Does God save us from oppression? From meaninglessness? What is “salvation” anyways? If you’ve ever asked any of these questions, an upcoming Adult Education series is for you!

April 18, Rev. Murphy will be leading a **four-week series on salvation**. We’ll be looking at basic salvation models in Christianity, including classic substitutionary models, moral example models, liberationist approaches, and working on articulating our own theories of salvation and why it matters. We’ll be meeting weekly via **Zoom, Sundays at 9:00 am**; we’ll be sure to “save” you a spot!

Return to Limited In-Person Services Starting in April

It’s been a year since our regular Sunday morning services were offered. The last standard Sunday service was March 8, 2020. We began with recording from our homes and editing the clips together. Then in July, we moved to livestreaming in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings. In August, we began offering a limited in-person option with livestreaming. That continued until mid-October, with COVID cases spiking causing a shift to pre-recorded services. That has been our practice since.

Now that COVID numbers have dropped approximately back to summer of 2020 levels, we are prepared to offer limited in-person services again starting in April. There will be one major difference, however.

Since October of 2020, we halted limited in-person services and switched to pre-recording worship services on Saturday, with them being available online by Sunday morning. We will continue with that practice (see page 4 on a solution to our tech challenges currently under way).

What that means is that starting in April, limited numbers of people can pre-register to attend, but what you will be signing up for is the Saturday morning recording production for the Sunday service. Masks will be required at all times.

We record each person separately. Rev. Ruth Phillips records her sections, then Rev. Timothy Murphy records his. The same procedure will continue, only with a few dozen people in the Sanctuary watching. All the individual pieces will be there, but it will definitely be a different experience.

If you want to experience the full service with its ebb and flow, the Sunday morning recording is your best bet. But, if you wish to be in the space with a few other people, watch the starts and stops, movement and coordination, your first opportunity will be on Saturday, April 3, where we will record the Easter Sunday service.

Recording begins at 9:00 am. No later than 10:00 am, Revs. Ruth and Timothy will have completed their sections and at that point, attendees will depart. Music will be recorded afterwards. It will be like a tv production, only for worship. If that sounds appealing to you, please sign up using Eventbrite, with a link being sent out the week of.

Even before that, we are offering a live, limited in-person Maundy Thursday service in the Sanctuary on April 1 at 6:00 pm. This will not be recorded and will be an actual service from start to finish.

Please sign up if you plan on attending!

From the Associate Pastor

Saying Goodbye and Moving On



Dear Plymouth Members & Friends,

In less than three months we will say “Goodbye” to one another. You and I will move on into the future chapter of our lives. A new horizon is expanding before us!

Preparing to retire, I am calling to mind so many memories with you! Twenty years and four months is the longest I have spent in one place! These have been incredibly meaningful and fulfilling years serving in your midst. Together we have experienced a multitude of joys and sorrows, achievements and challenges. And though this past year has been disappointing, compelled by the pandemic to stay apart, I feel fortunate in that we already had a history of relationships with and knowledge of one another to sustain us. Philosophically, I think it is better that this has been my last year than for it to have been a new associate’s first year with you.

On June 6, in worship we will incorporate the UCC Book of Worship’s “Time of Passage: Farewell” – ENDING AN AUTHORIZED MINISTRY. You and I will express “Vows of Release” by answering:

- Do you, the members and friends of Plymouth Church, release Rev. Ruth E. Phillips from the duties of associate pastor? Church responds: “We do, with the help of God.”
- Do you, Rev. Ruth E. Phillips, release Plymouth Church from turning to you and depending on you? I respond: “I do, with the help of God.”

Here are two pertinent sections to guide us from the UCC Ministerial code of ethics:

I COVENANT WITH MY MINISTRY SETTING TO:

- Not perform pastoral services within a congregation or for a member of a congregation, without the invitation of the current pastor of that congregation.
- Neither interfere with nor intrude upon the ministry of my successor, upon my departure from a ministry setting; and to deal honorably with the record of my predecessor and successor.

What happens to our relationship after June 6? If, by chance we do see each other in a store, the library, at a concert, “Yes,” we can acknowledge each other as people who know one another! If our paths meet, we can catch up on our families or on personal adventures. What I will not be able to do is accept invitations to coffee, lunch, baptisms, weddings, or funerals, or to discuss Plymouth other than a memory we share.

You as a congregation will enter your next era of ministry when a new associate pastor joins Rev. Timothy C. Murphy in pastoral leadership. Change takes patience, courage, and thoughtfulness. When your new associate pastor arrives, show this person how delighted you are to welcome them into your midst. Provide them the grace of time to acclimate and to learn your name and who you are. Remember that your extravagant Plymouth welcome is not only for a day or a month. Make the next year one continuous celebration!

Between now and June 6, it is my hope that we find times and spaces when we can safely meet to see one another and to enjoy conversation in person. I will always treasure you and the experiences we have shared.

May God’s joy and peace bless and keep you as you continue “Living faithfully into the Future!”

With deep affection and appreciation,

Ruth

Rev. Ruth E. Phillips



Dance of Life by Mary Southard

Donating for Sanctuary-Chapel Technology Improvements

Since COVID, we have tried and patch together our tech needs for an online format. Rather than continue band-aiding the problem, we are looking at an overhaul. One limitation we've discovered is that we cannot consistently rely on our livestreaming a live Sunday service to work properly. There are a number of other technical limitations to our Sanctuary video recording equipment, including the quality of the cameras and ability to record locally rather than onto YouTube. The latter reality means that there have been times when we've recorded a service with everything seeming to work only to find out that while video was recorded, there was no sound.

We need to fix this.

To that end, the Deacons' Worship Board has formed a Sanctuary-Chapel Tech Task Force to evaluate a proposal to substantially upgrade our video recording equipment to much higher resolution images, allow local recording, and provide a stable livestream. The proposal also includes the ability to livestream from the Chapel for adult education events or other activities that take place there.

The Task Force is busy evaluating the proposal to ensure that it meets our needs, as well as reaching out to various Plymouth boards and committees that have special funds that could be appropriate to help cover the substantial cost. In total, the cost runs at about \$62,000, with over half of it already committed. The Task Force hopes for the bulk of the remaining balance to come from various special funds in the next month.

However, individual members also have an opportunity to financially contribute to this project! Once we eventually return to regular Sunday morning in-person services, we still want to be able to livestream and record them on site, as well as our music series events. You can help make that happen. Checks should be made out to Plymouth Congregational Church with "Sanctuary Tech" in the memo line. Alternatively, you can donate online [here](#) or visit <https://www.plymouthfw.org/>, click on the "Contribute" tab, then the purple "Donate" button and make a gift in the "Sanctuary Technology" option.

We expect this project to be a major improvement in our technological capabilities and enhance our online presence for years to come. Thank you for helping out!

Forward,

Sanctuary-Chapel Tech Task Force

Monthly Supply Drive

The Evangelism & Marketing Board is excited to announce that our monthly supply drives have started up again! Our collection for the Boys & Girls Club was an incredible success, so big thanks to everyone who donated. To settle into our monthly schedule, our next drive will be March 27, from 9:00 – 11:00 am. We will be using the side entrance (port cochère) instead of setting up in the parking lot. Use the alley behind the church to access small driveway for the port cochère.



This collection will benefit our partner school, Fairfield Elementary. They are requesting help with stocking up their "incentive prizes" - little treats that students can pick out after earning Falcon Feathers for good behavior, good work, acts of kindness, etc. These small tokens of recognition are really exciting for the students, and they love picking out just the right thing!

Suggested items include: stickers, coloring books/small sketch books, scented and/or dry erase markers, fancy/funny pencils, fun/scented/mini erasers, key chains/bracelets/rings, "matchbox" toy cars, candy/Takis, squishy toys/stress balls, funny or character socks. Let your inner 8 year-old (or an actual, external child in your life) have a blast picking out treats for the students of Fairfield!

For the remainder of the year, we will schedule our supply drives for the last Saturday of each month, so keep your eyes out for announcements.

Plymouth People In Our Prayers

Archer Family, Carol and Wayne Bauer, Charlie Belch, Roberta Braunlin, Colleen Carteaux, Natasha Chemey, Kris Conner, David Cornwell, Wendy Crispell, Judy Crooks, Brad Crowder, Audrey and Chris Davis, Lynda and Mike Eckard, Lora and John Ehrhardt, Roy and Mary Gilliom, Eric Glenn, Robin Grimm, Joan Hartwig, Nancy Jordan, Marty Kabisch, Ginny Laudadio, Brian Laurenz, Carol Lewark, Joan Lipscomb, Sheldon Lockwood, Janet McCoy, Mary McCoy family, Bev McFadden, Jim Nelson, Bonnie Pennock, Mariah, Anna, Jackson and Quentin Pierle, Mike Popp, Tod Ramsey, Noel Resor, Anne Rowland, Patrizia Saladini-Stark, Jacqueline Sanders, Rick Schilb, Barbara Senn, John Shannon, Maureen Shea, Travis Sheets, Shirley Slater, Johanna Smith, Carol Tyndall, Larry Walker, Gordon Walter, Marian Waltz, Simon Western

Sympathy is extended to Traci Hamilton and Karen Goss on the death of Traci's mother, Jean Wible, January 9, Indianapolis.

Sympathy is extended to Valerie Pelz, daughter, and family and friends, on the death of Marge Feeback, January 10.

Sympathy is extended to family and friends on the death of Ron Hays, January 17, Angola.

Sympathy is extended to Riet Zwiep and family on the unexpected death of her grandson, Dylan Zwiep, 34, on January 22, Nashville, TN.

Sympathy is extended to David Siples, husband, and Nickki Siples, daughter, and friends, on the death of Erin Harney Siples, January 24.

Sympathy is extended to Jeffrey K. Dellinger and family on the death of his mother, Margaret Dellinger, February, 6.

Sympathy is extended to Karen Jenkins, family and friends, on the death of her husband, Larry Jenkins, Feb. 16.

Sympathy is extended to Janice Furtner and David Mendenhall on the death of her mother, Trilby Furtner, 96, March 4, Berne, and to Michael and Kyra Mendenhall on the death of their grandmother.



Good Friday Prayer Vigil Sign Up

April 2, you are invited to participate in the 12-hour Good Friday Prayer Vigil. Select a 15-minute time during which you will commit to being in prayer.



Our Plymouth practice and hope is that the connection between those who pray will create a continuous link throughout the day, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

The person before you will call you at the beginning of your time to pass along the vigil. When you complete your 15 minutes of prayer you will call the person after you. Complete instructions and prayer guides will be sent to you in Holy Week, prior to Good Friday.

Monday Noon, March 29 is signup deadline. We are using a new JotForm. Please click [here](#) to select your 15-minute time. The difference you will notice is that you won't be able to see who prays before or after you. That information will be sent to you by Rev. Ruth E. Phillips as signups are filled in. Questions or need help: call Rev. Ruth at 423-9424, ext. 322 or email rep@plymouthfw.org

Indiana-Kentucky Conference UCC COVID-19 Guidance

IKC guidance to congregations for Healthy Continuity of Ministry and Mission during the COVID-19 Pandemic – updated March 2021



We are seeing signs of hope and new life. While hope draws near, our collective health is still at risk. Therefore, we urge a gentle caution as you discern and assess the data for your incremental re-opening plans.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a significant factor in our lives for when and how we gather together. The extent of the virus's spread is abating and the hope of what vaccines will mean for our ability to congregate is bringing hope to many. The current abatement and the hope associated with vaccines, however, does not yet mean a return to "normal."

Click [here](#) to view the full guidance.

Dear Music Series supporters and friends:



I am sure you are anticipating the onset of spring and looking forward to our upcoming concerts. Our next concert is on March 21 PLUS we have added a concert on April 25! Both concerts will premiere on YouTube at 4:00 pm and remain online for 30 days for your enjoyment!

Due to some issues beyond our control, we have changed the programming. On March 21, we will present Robert Nance, pianist, performing a solo piano concert entitled "What's the Motif?" And on April 25, we will present a concert featuring local musicians in a program entitled, "A Celebration of Spring" featuring the music of Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi and more!

As per usual, we appreciate everyone signing up on Eventbrite to let us know you intend to join us for the premiere. The advantage? If you sign up, you'll get up to the last minute notices AND when in-person seating resumes, you'll be the first to know!

Please share this information with your friends and family. And if you are able, please make a donation to help support our local musicians!

Robert Nance
Director of Music

Upcoming Concert

Join us for Plymouth Music Series events livestreamed on our [YouTube Channel!](#) For the foreseeable future, all Music Series events will be held online without a limited in-person audience. We hope you will continue to support Plymouth Music Series by joining us online! Click the links below to learn about each event.

March 21, 2021 at 4:00 pm
[What's the Motif? | Solo Piano Concert by Robert Nance](#)

April 25, 2021 at 4:00 pm
[A Celebration of Spring | Local Musician's Performance](#)



Sunday School Events

Sunday School in Lent: Faces of Jesus

During Lent our Sunday school story boxes are focusing on the "Faces of Jesus." Vibrant illustrations (created by artist Anne Fowler of Godly Play Resources) focus in on Jesus' face as he grows from a baby, to a boy, to a man. We watch as Jesus answers his call through baptism and reflection, as he lives out his call through teaching and healing, and as the mystery of Easter brings his presence to us even still today.

While our in-person Sunday school classes often focus on separate lessons from Jesus' teachings, I appreciate that this year we are looking at Jesus' life as a whole. Story boxes are still available for families with elementary or preschool children. Videos featuring the weekly illustrations are available on the Facebook Plymouth Generations page for anyone who would like to watch.

Holy Week Photo Challenge

During Holy Week, families can join our photo challenge to document the places they come close to God. You are invited to use this challenge to remember the stories of Holy Week, reflect on God's continuing presence in your daily life, and share in a community project even while we are apart.

Photo prompt lists will be available at the Palm Sunday Parade and on the Facebook Plymouth Generations page. Plymouth people of all ages are encouraged to post their pictures—we all want to see each other's faces as we try to celebrate Holy Week together.



Palm Sunday Parade

All Plymouth people are invited to join us at 1:00 pm on Palm Sunday, March 28, for an outdoor Palm Sunday Parade. Kids, youth, and their families are invited to take part in the procession. We'll have palms & streamers to wave, and we *might* even have a donkey!

Onlookers are invited to either watch from their cars, or to keep good distance while lining our parade route around the church's sidewalk and parking lot.



April Birthdays



| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|---------------------|
| 3 | Sam Lipscomb | 16 | Monty Millage |
| 3 | Jessamyn Schmidt | 16 | Beth Price |
| 4 | Jacqueline Brabbs | 17 | Steve Ross |
| 6 | Sally Gerard | 18 | Debra L. Compagnone |
| 7 | Heather Brackeen | 18 | John Donley |
| 7 | Jeffery Kolkman | 19 | Maggie Jordan |
| 8 | Jeff Markley | 20 | Joni Sutton |
| 11 | Deb Miller | 21 | Gina Arata |
| 12 | Linda South | 22 | Rhys Rudolph |
| 13 | Thomas Baker | 22 | Mary Ann Sidell |
| 13 | Melanie Hollingsworth | 24 | Robin Ames |
| 14 | Isaiah Atienzo-Fisher | 24 | Sandra Moliere |
| 15 | Sharon Christian | 25 | Diane Lasley |
| 15 | Scott Rigdon | 26 | John A. Hoffman |
| 16 | Eric Gilliom | 29 | Bill Vrabel |
| 16 | Jane A. Meredith | | |

COVID-19 Vaccination Eligibility

The state of Indiana recently expanded the age range of who is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. **As of March 16, anyone 45 and older** can schedule to receive a vaccine.

If you are eligible, you can schedule an appointment [here](#). If you have difficulty registering online, you can dial 211 from any phone for assistance.



COVID-19 VACCINE

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Whoever You Are, Wherever You Are on Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here!