

The Bell

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Moments from the 13th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, 11/25



Thanksgiving donation to Just Neighbors, 11/25



Community Prayer Vigil for Immigrants, 11/2



Canto de Corazón concert, upcoming 12/14



Advent and Christmas

Rev. Dr. Timothy Murphy

Advent begins this year on Sunday, November 30. Because of the peculiarities of the calendar, we will be having our annual Hanging of the Greens prior to Thanksgiving after worship on the 23rd, which is two weeks away as I write this but has already passed by the time you receive this newsletter.

Our theme for this year's Advent season is "In These Days," which is a riff on Luke 2:1, which describes the timing of Jesus' birth "in those days." Just as Jesus was born in those days into a difficult time, when injustice and oppression defined itself as peace and prosperity, so we "in these days" await Christ being born again in our midst, God with us.

Here are all of the ways that we will be preparing ourselves "in these days" during the Advent and Christmas seasons, in addition to our regular 10:00 am Sunday services.

•Wednesday, December 3: Luminous Night Service, 7:00 pm

Luminous Night is a service especially for those who wish to have space for both lament and hope. Depending on what we are going through, stress we are feeling about our world, or past experiences we've had during this time of year, not everyone feels joyful or wants to immediately celebrate during the holidays. Luminous Night is especially for you.

•Sunday, December 7: Las Posadas Procession, 11:30 am

For the past several years, we have enacted the Mexican "Las Posadas" tradition, where the Holy Family seeks shelter and is repeatedly rejected, before ultimately finding a welcome place. This procession begins in the Folsom Room, travels throughout the church building, and ultimately concludes where it began with a party, including tamales, a Mexican Christmas tradition. Children and families are encouraged to attend!

•Tuesday, December 9: Make the Yuletide Gay, 7:00 pm

It's the newest holiday tradition! Don your gay apparel and cozy up next to three award-winning songwriters for a night of holiday classics: featuring Crys Matthews, Flamy Grant, and Heather Mae. This concert will be in the Sanctuary and should be a lot of fun! Tickets are required and can be purchased [here](#).

•**Sunday, December 14: Canto de Corazón Music Series Concert, 4:00 pm**

Jointly organized with Heartland Sings, this community choir sings exclusively in Spanish, providing a unique opportunity for choristers of all backgrounds to appreciate Hispanic-Latino culture and enhance their language skills. Come to enjoy some uniquely beautiful music of the season and have a Feliz Navidad!

•**Sunday, December 21: Carols and Cocoa, 9:00 am**

On this final Sunday of Advent, Plymouth members and friends of all ages are invited to gather in the Folsom Room as we do a sing-a-long of your favorite Christmas carols and enjoy some hot cocoa. This replaces Sunday School and Chapel Class that morning.

•**Wednesday, December 24: Christmas Eve Services, 4:00 pm and 10:00 pm**

This year Christmas Eve happens to fall on a Wednesday. We will be offering two services that evening. The first is our family service at 4:00 pm, which will include a time for Communion. Childcare will be available. The second service is our Carols and Candlelight service at 10:00 pm. There is no childcare for the latter service.

Beyond these worship and fellowship opportunities, we are going to try out something different ahead of the lighting of the Advent candles each week during Sunday worship involving children. Watch for it, or as the New Testament says repeatedly, “Keep awake!”

Oh, and of course, there is that little Plymouth tradition at the end of the year called the **Boar’s Head and Yule Log Festival**, with two services each on December 29 and 30. We hope to see you there for its 49th annual production!

“In these days,” there are many ways we can connect with others, look for Christ’s rebirth among us, and share the good news of God’s hope, peace, joy, and love with one another and our world.

Peace,

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



Showing Up for Each Other

Rev. Sara Ofner-Seals



In Romans 12, the apostle Paul writes about the marks of the true Christian. Among the qualities and behaviors he mentions is to “rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep.” Essentially, this is about showing up for each other and holding space for whatever our Christian siblings may be going through.

One of the most important ways we do this is through showing up at memorial services and funerals. Even if we did not know the person who died, and even if we barely know the family members of the one who died, part of our call as members of a Christian community is to show up in support of those who are grieving.

We may not realize how important this kind of support is for people. We may think to ourselves that our presence isn't important and won't make a difference. But the truth is, grieving family members are comforted knowing that their loved one was part of a supportive community that cared about them. Knowing that they are not alone, even if they don't know everyone in attendance, helps the family get through an emotionally draining experience.

When my own grandmother passed away, I was greatly moved by the number of people, from all walks of life, who showed up for her memorial service. She was not much of a churchgoer herself, but she was part of many other communities that were well represented at the service. Seeing all the people who made the effort to be there to honor her memory made a huge impact on me. I couldn't have told you any of their names, but their presence uplifted me in my time of loss.

This is an easy way for us to live into the covenant we enter into when we join a faith community. It's also a reminder that being part of a spiritual community isn't just about what we get out of it. It's also about what we can offer to others in return. That's what covenant means. And the good news about this particular commitment is that it requires little more from us than an hour or two of our time and our presence. We don't have to have all the right words to say. No extravagant gestures are needed. We just have to show up.

I encourage members of Plymouth to consider regular attendance at memorial services to be part of their ongoing commitment to the church community. I would even go so far as to say that if there is a Saturday memorial service, your presence is more impactful there than it is on Sunday morning. Sunday services come around every week, but for the family that is grieving, the memorial service only happens once. We can help make that singular occasion more meaningful with our presence. May we do so with gratitude and with grace.

Stories of Racism in the US

Winter Sunday School

Katie Watson

“Racism tells a lie about who we are. It says some people are better than others based on the color of their skin. But we know a deeper truth: All people are equally beloved children of God.”

This winter, the Adult Chapel class and the children’s Sunday School classes will meet together to hear six stories of the history of racism in the United States. These stories help participants understand the historical development of racism — not as abstract concepts, but as stories involving real people who felt fear, curiosity, righteousness and love. By gently noticing these patterns in a faith centered space, we create an opening for God’s truth to realign our vision.

Each week we will hear a story together. Then the children will have the opportunity to respond through artwork and play, and adults will continue in discussion.

Please join us upstairs in Room 204, at 9:00 am, January 11 - February 15.



Make the Yuletide Gay

A New Holiday Tradition at Plymouth Church

Tony Ray

Plymouth Congregational Church invites the community to embrace the warmth, joy, and spirit of the season at Make the Yuletide Gay, a festive celebration taking place on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. at 501 W. Berry St., Fort Wayne, IN.

Billed as “your newest holiday tradition,” the event encourages attendees to “don your gay apparel” and settle in for an evening of music, storytelling, and heartfelt holiday cheer. The program features three award-winning songwriters who will share a mix of beloved holiday classics and original works, blending humor, musicianship, and seasonal magic.

More than just a musical performance, Make the Yuletide Gay highlights the joy and resilience of the LGBTQ+ community — especially meaningful at a time when many voices face pressure to be quieted. The evening promises comfort, community, and a reminder of the power of celebration and togetherness.

Tickets are available for \$12.50, making this event an accessible and uplifting way to welcome the holiday season with friends, family, and neighbors.

Join Plymouth Congregational Church for a night of merriment, music, and shared holiday spirit — an event sure to become a cherished annual tradition.



Pride Center Receives Much-Needed Upgrades

Tony Ray

Over the past several weeks, the Pride Center (located in the adjacent building that we own and lease to Fort Wayne Pride) has undergone a series of meaningful improvements designed to make the space more welcoming, functional, and comfortable for everyone who walks through the doors. These updates reflect Plymouth's ongoing commitment to providing a safe, affirming environment where community members can gather, access support, and feel at home.

One of the most significant enhancements has been the refurbishing of the restrooms. The outdated flooring has been replaced with new, durable materials that brighten the space and improve accessibility. Updated fixtures have also been installed, modernizing the restrooms and creating a cleaner, more comfortable experience for all who use them.

Throughout the building, staff and volunteers worked diligently to repair holes that had accumulated in the walls and ceilings over time. These repairs not only improve the appearance of the facility but also enhance safety and structural stability. Fresh paint and refinishing bring new life to the common areas, offering a refreshed atmosphere that better reflects the Pride Center's mission of dignity and care.

In addition to these major updates, the Center has received a series of basic upgrades aimed at improving daily operations and the overall experience of our visitors. These improvements—though simple—make a meaningful impact on creating a space where the community can gather with pride.

We are grateful for the support, time, and labor that made these upgrades possible. As we continue to strengthen and expand the services we offer, maintaining a safe and welcoming environment remains at the heart of our work. The newly refreshed Pride Center stands as a visible reminder of what we can accomplish together and the vibrant community we serve.



Plymouth's Past

Monty Millage

Andrew G. Burry, an eventual member of Plymouth Church, was born February 2, 1873, near Undervillier, a French speaking area in Switzerland. In 1884, he along with his parents and six siblings, moved to America, settling in Berne, Indiana, where he attended school and first learned English. During his school years he worked odd jobs that included a book store, print shop and even a substitute teacher.

At the completion of his studies, Andrew went to work for Joe Welty at Central Christian Book Bindery in Fort Wayne. While soliciting for business in 1896, Andrew found an opportunity to make file boxes for Jenny Electric, which he made by hand. This endeavor would prove very lucrative, enough so that he went out in search of new work in box making. Soon he was making boxes for Fox Candy and Wayne Knitting Mills, among others.

In 1896, Andrew decided that college should be his next endeavor, and enrolled at Oberlin College in Ohio. However, his box making business was doing so well that he returned to Fort Wayne and named the business Fort Wayne Box Company. When a printing department was added in 1915, the company was renamed Wayne Paper Box Corporation. The business was eventually sold in 1955 to Container Corporation of America. Andrew was introduced to Ida Lister in 1907 through his sister Mary, and they were married in 1909. They would have two children; Ralph L. and Alice Louise (Mrs. John Hoffman).

Andrew was very much in the center of social service and civic life of Fort Wayne. He was president of Hope Hospital Board (Parkview), and a charter member and president of Fort Wayne YMCA from 1922-1926. In 1908, he was a part of a group of men who formed the Fort Wayne Rescue Mission, became the first president, and held the post for 17 years.

He was a charter member of the Fort Wayne Rotary Club and president in 1931. He was former director of the Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce, and chairman of their Industrial Bureau. If this were not enough, Andrew was a director of Lincoln National Bank & Trust from 1922 to 1973. He was named Fort Wayne man of the year in 1949, and was honored by the Allen County Council in 1973.

Andrew joined Plymouth in 1902 and was very active in all of the church's affairs. This included serving as Chairman of the Deacons and Trustees, and Sunday School Superintendent for 17 years. He was also an organizer and former president of the Associated Churches.

Ida died in 1962, and Andrew passed on January 23, 1975, just shy of his 102nd birthday. His grandson, John Hoffman, is a current member of Plymouth Church.

Financial Report

October 2025



	Month Actual	Month Budget	Month Variance		YTD Actual	YTD Budget	YTD Variance
Total Income	\$75,758	\$78,029	(\$2,271)		\$783,194	\$803,298	(\$20,104)
Total Expenses	\$114,410	\$109,809	\$4,601		\$773,094	\$798,687	(\$25,593)
rounding		\$1	(\$1)		(\$1)	\$1	(\$2)
Net Income (Loss)	(\$38,652)	(\$31,779)	(\$6,873)		\$10,099	\$4,612	\$5,487

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